Clean Air Barnet Insight Report: 2025 Barnet Outdoor Air Quality

2025 Breathe London Outdoor Air Quality - Barnet.

This Clean Air Barnet Insight Report is based on analysis of full year air quality data measured in 2025 by five Breathe London community monitors, and comparison to 2024 data from the same locations. Due to changes in funding and management of the Breathe London network some of the monitors that operated in 2024 did not operate for all of 2025 and so have been excluded from this report.

The report is intended to inform decisions and actions to improve our air quality.

Summary

- Pollution levels were higher in 2025 at most locations and improvements in air quality made over recent years appears to have stalled.
- 2025 annual average air quality in Barnet met the UK legal limits but exceeded World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.
- Air Quality in Barnet was not better than the rest of London.
- Barnet had too many breaches of WHO average daily targets.

Analysis

Annual averages 2024/5

Table 1: Comparison of annual average NO2 and PM2.5 at Barnet nodes

Node	2024		2025	
	NO2	PM2.5	NO2	PM2.5
Christ's College Finchley Breathe	25.5	7.8	26.8	9.1
Cricklewood Lane	26.4	8.2	25.7	11.4
Mary Immaculate and St. Peter's Church	16.6	7.6	18.8	9.4
NW7 Hub	24.8	7.8	24.3	10.9
Residents Action on Climate and Health	22.8	7.9	22.2	11.0
Average	**23.2**	**7.9**	**23.4**	**10.4**

Recent years have seen improvements in measured air quality, but in 2025 this appears to have stalled. Across the five monitors $PM_{2.5}$ levels were consistently higher than in 2024. NO_2 levels were higher in 2025 than in 2024 for two out of the five locations. Table 1 above provides the annual data for each of the node locations.

The five Barnet locations met the UK annual limits but exceeded the World Health Organisation (WHO) NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ annual average air quality guidelines (10µg/m^3 and 5µg/m^3 respectively).

Air quality varies across Barnet. The NO_2 annual average was lowest at Mary Immaculate and St. Peter's Church and highest at Christ's College Finchley, both of which are “urban background” locations. Four of the five locations had averages above the WHO interim target of 20µg/m^3.

$PM_{2.5}$ was lowest at Christ's College Finchley, slightly lower than at Mary Immaculate and St. Peter's Church, and highest at Cricklewood Lane. Averages ranged between 9.1 and 11.4µg/m^3 - over 50% higher than the WHO guideline. While two locations met the interim target of 10 µg/m, meeting WHO guidelines will require improvements of around 50-60% in NO_2 levels and 30-40% in $PM_{2.5}$ levels.

In 2025 Barnet air quality was not better than the rest of London

We have ranked Barnet annual average air quality against the 162 Breathe London nodes that operated throughout 2025. **Table 2** provides these rankings on a scale of 1 being the best (i.e. lowest annual average pollutant concentration) up to 162 being the worst (i.e. highest annual average).

Three of the five Barnet locations are in the bottom half of London nodes.

NW7Hub and Cricklewood Lane ranked in the bottom half of London nodes for both NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$; Mary Immaculate ranked in the top half for both pollutants. The other two Barnet nodes showed high variance between their NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ readings with REACH being in the worst 20% of locations for $PM_{2.5}$ but in the top 50% for NO_2, and similarly Christ's College being in the worst 25% of locations for NO_2 but the top 25% for $PM_{2.5}$.

Table 2: Barnet nodes annual average ranking within London Breathe network

Ranking (From 162 Breathe Nodes across London, data downloaded via Breathe API, January 2026)				
	2025			
	NO_2	%	$PM_{2.5}$	%
Residents Action on Climate and Health	75	46%	135	83%
Christ's College Finchley Breathe	136	83%	41	25%
Cricklewood Lane	122	75%	152	93%
NW7hub	106	65%	127	78%
Mary Immaculate and St. Peter's Church	20	12%	57	35%

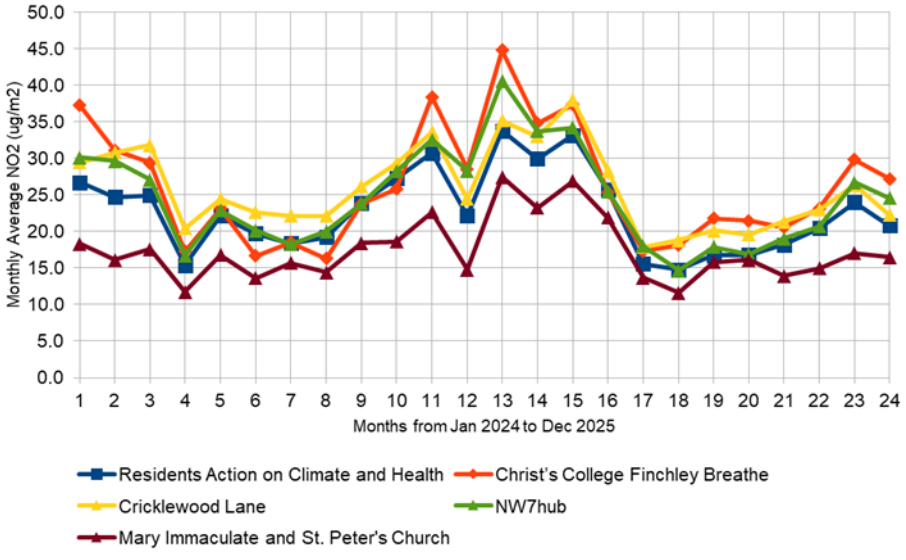
Monthly Averages 2024/25

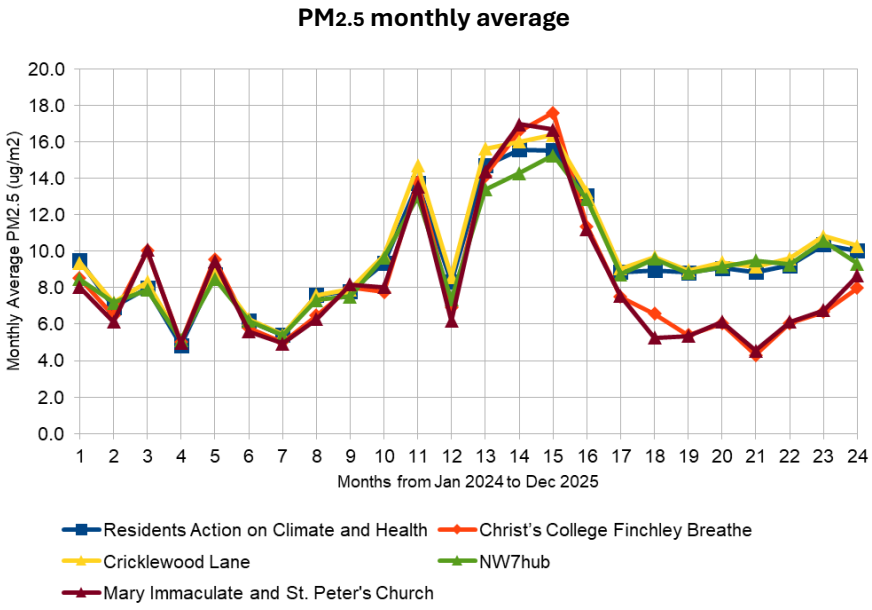
Monthly average recordings for NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ for 2024 and 2025 show monthly and seasonal variations. January to March sees higher levels of NO2 and PM2.5 with lower levels being in the summer of both years.

Mary Immaculate had the lowest NO_2 every month of the two year period while Cricklewood Lane and Christ's College Finchley had the highest in the majority of months.

In 2024, monthly $PM_{2.5}$ was broadly similar across the five locations while in the second half of 2025 a gap opened up with two locations (Christ's College and Mary Immaculate) being lower than the other three locations for the months of July to November.

NO_2 monthly average





Daily Breaches against WHO thresholds

Annual and monthly averages provide an indication of the level of long term exposure to air pollution. The WHO has set thresholds for daily exposure above which there is deemed to be a potential risk to health if the level is exceeded on more than 3-4 days per annum. As can be seen in table 3 below, in 2025 the thresholds for NO_2 were breached from 73 to 163 days and for $PM_{2.5}$ from 49 to 67 days.

At every site the number of $PM_{2.5}$ breach days increased significantly compared with 2024 with three of the sites seeing over 50% extra breach days.

Table 3: Comparison of total WHO threshold breaches for NO2 and PM2.5 daily average at Barnet nodes

Node	2024		2025	
	NO2	PM2.5	NO2	PM2.5
Christ's College Finchley Breathe	160	32	163	53
Cricklewood Lane	171	31	162	67
Mary Immaculate and St. Peter's Church	49	31	73	49
NW7 Hub	152	24	153	59
Residents Action on Climate and Health	123	28	129	66

Clean Air Barnet

Clean Air Barnet is an active participant in the Breathe London Community and in working groups facilitated by Imperial College.

While this insights report looks at outdoor air quality, conversations and briefings in the Breathe Community are increasingly about how air quality needs to be seen more as a public health issue and that focus needs to go beyond vehicle emissions to include the impact of sources such as agriculture, construction and commercial cooking.

Our Clean Air Barnet citizen science projects have highlighted that air quality is sometimes better outdoors than it is indoors. As people often spend over 80% of each day indoors, we are calling for more to be done to help people understand, and take action to reduce their personal exposure to air pollution.

For more information and insight reports please visit our website:
https://sensemakingcic.co.uk/