

## Sheffield's Clean Air Movement: A Local Environmental History

**Lead supervisor:** [Dr Kathy Davies](#)

**Research Centre or Department:** [Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research \(CRESR\)](#)

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### Project summary

Sheffield has a compelling history of leading clean air campaigns and was the first city to introduce by-laws against smoke emissions. In 1889, 6,000 residents signed a petition calling for stricter measures against industrial pollution, and in 1909 the city hosted the national Smoke Abatement Exhibition. By 1973, Sheffield was almost completely covered by smokeless zones. In 1989, Sheffield became the first local authority to invest in automated technology to measure traffic emissions, and in 2023, the Sheffield Clean Air Zone was implemented in the city centre to curb air pollution from motor vehicles.

This project will map Sheffield's clean air movements from the late nineteenth century to the present day. Using local archives and online newspaper databases, the project will shine a light on perhaps the most significant environmental initiative in the city's history. There will be particular focus on the messaging behind clean air campaigns and the materials used to promote these movements, as well as broader public discourse on the benefits of regulating for clean air. The project findings will be communicated via a digital pamphlet, which will be published online.

During this internship, the successful candidate will develop their archival research skills, their ability to synthesize primary and secondary research findings, their understanding of environmental and public history, and their experience distilling research findings into a public-facing resource. This will involve working with their supervisor (Dr Kathy Davies) in Sheffield Archives and Local Studies Library, analysing historical documents, and engaging with secondary literature to support analysis. The successful candidate will also gain experience working in a collaborative and multidisciplinary research centre focussed on applying research in a policy context.

This project will contribute to preliminary research and stakeholder engagement for a larger project – 'Was the Past More Sustainable?' – and future exhibition titled 'Sustainable Futures Past', which recently received funding from the South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre.

### Specific skills and experience required for this project

*Please also refer to the advert on our jobs pages for the person specification for these internships*

- Experience using archives (online/ in-person)
- Experience engaging with historical scholarship
- Excellent organisation skills
- Excellent written communication skills
- Basic digital design skills (using Canva, for example)
- Ability to work to a tight deadline
- Ability to work independently on a clearly defined project
- Ability to travel to Sheffield on a weekly basis

**Project location**

City Campus

Home working may be available

**Project delivery**

The project can be carried out full time or part time – minimum 3 days per week.