

New rules for burning solid fuels in York



From 1 November 2026 the whole of City of York Council's area will become a **Smoke Control Area (SCA)**, to help improve local air quality and health. In a SCA, residents and businesses are not allowed to emit prolonged smoke emissions from any chimney attached to a building when burning solid fuels in stoves or open fires.

We are bringing in these rules to improve lung health in York. There is increasing evidence that air pollution inside the home is as harmful as air pollution outside. Smoke from solid fuel burning produces dangerous PM_{2.5} particles which can have very serious health impacts, especially in vulnerable groups like children, elderly people and those with pre-existing conditions.

In a Smoke Control Area, you can continue to burn solid fuels at home, but you must follow the new rules. See the summary below:

If you have an Open Fireplace

- You must switch to using authorised **smokeless** fuel
- You must not burn any wood on an open fire, although a small amount of dry wood kindling can be used to light the fire.

If you have a DEFRA-Approved Stove

- You can continue as normal using seasoned, dry wood. Retail packaged firewood should be labelled as 'Ready to Burn'.
- If you use authorised smokeless fuels already in your stove, you can continue to use them

If you have a Non-DEFRA Stove

- **Multi-fuel stoves (those with ash pans/grates):** switch to authorised smokeless fuel only
- **Wood only burning stoves (no ash pan/grate):** will need replacing if conversion kit isn't available (check with manufacturer)

How to check your if your stove is approved

- **Check on the appliance itself** – look for a metal plate or sticker on the stove. Common markings include ‘DEFRA approved’ or ‘Smoke Control Exempt’. The plate may include a DEFRA exemption number.
- **Check the manufacturer’s documentation** – look in the user guide or original sales paperwork. You can also contact the manufacturer with photos of your stove so they can confirm DEFRA approval status.
- **DEFRA online database** - You can check if your stove is approved by searching the manufacturer name and model number at: smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk/appliances-php/appliances-phpcountryengland/

Authorised Smokeless Fuels



Authorised fuels include naturally smokeless fuels such as anthracite, semi-anthracite, gas, low volatile steam coal and specific brands of manufactured solid smokeless fuels.

All manufactured solid smokeless fuels must be certified as ‘Ready to Burn’ and carry this logo to be sold for domestic use.

The list of fuels authorised for use in Smoke Control Areas is available at: smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk/fuels-php/england/

Authorised smokeless fuels are sold by many supermarkets, petrol filling stations and DIY stores across York. You can also seek advice from your fuel merchant.

Further Advice and Support

For further information on Smoke Control Areas or if you require clarification of the new rules, please contact us:

City of York Council, Public Protection (Air Quality)

Telephone: (01904) 551525

Email: public.protection@york.gov.uk

Visit: york.gov.uk/air-pollution/smoke-control-areas

If you are concerned about the cost of heating your home as you are on a low income, there is help and advice available.

York Energy Advice offers free support on energy issues to anyone in York on a low income, or aged 65+, or experiencing a long term physical or mental health condition or disability.

Website: yorkenergyadvice.org.uk

Call: (01904) 922249

Email: info@yorkenergyadvice.org.uk

YorEnergy provides advice to help residents make homes more energy-efficient, sustainable, and affordable www.yorenergy.co.uk

Call: (01904) 211221

Email: hello@yorenergy.co.uk

City of York Council, Home Energy Efficiency Team

can advise on current grants available to York residents for energy efficiency and low carbon retrofit measures

york.gov.uk/housing/home-energy-efficiency

Call: (01904) 555520

Email: saveenergy@york.gov.uk