

The team at Westcotec continue the new series of stories behind their signs. For this first month, we have come to Next HQ in Leicestershire, where an air quality monitoring (AQM) sign has just concluded an eight-month trial and is now permanently on view.

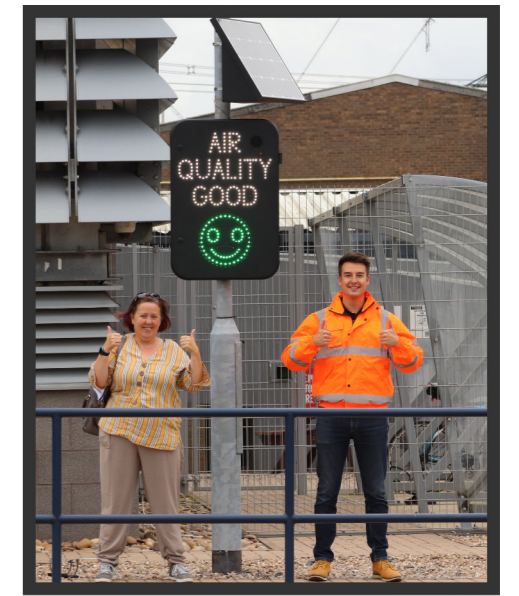
Where's the sign? You'll find the sign within the extensive Next Headquarters, a private work site just off the M69 at Enderby in Leicestershire.

What's the background? The Travel2Next Facilities Coordinator Sarah McAlinden was familiar with Westcotec and had chosen six speed signs specifically tailored to their on-site needs. Sarah's job also involves encouraging active travel reducing vehicle movement in or around the business. Sarah regularly sends out questionnaires on the theme of active travel and wellbeing, and typically receives thousands of responses from employees throughout the entire business. She had a substantial response on how COVID-19 has changed travel habits.

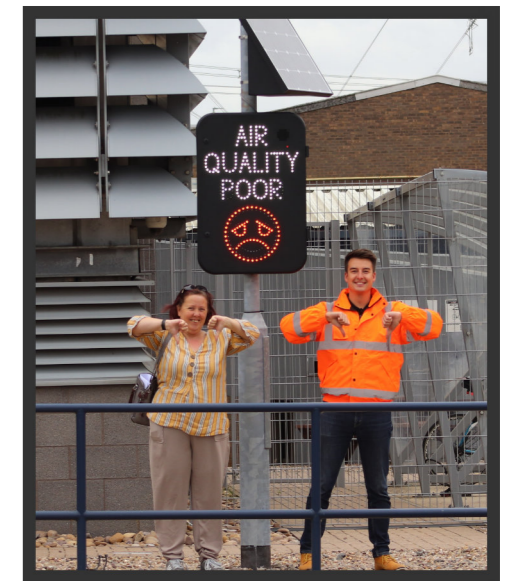
Why was there interest in an AQM sign? We mentioned it during the process of installing the speed signs and Sarah was immediately interested. She made enquiries within her department and received the go-ahead for a trial of the sign. She wanted staff who worked on site to be able to check air quality levels before deciding how they would travel to work. The aim is that when normal office working resumes, the AQM will encourage people to think differently to how they travel, especially those who live within walking and cycling distance.

How does the sign work? It's solar powered and portable. Its current location is outside the large Next multi-storey car park, but there are plans to move it to a location outside the on-site creche.

If air quality levels are good, there is a 'smiley' face with 'AIR QUALITY GOOD' legend displayed. If they are poor, then you will see a 'sad' face with 'AIR QUALITY POOR' legend displayed. The same information is also publicly available online, updated every two minutes, so you can check on air quality issues before coming in to work.



How simple was installation and ongoing maintenance? Solar-powered signs ensure a minimum of disruption during installation. There have been no technical problems with the sign throughout the eight-month trial period.



Has the sign done its job? Sarah explains: "We wanted to empower our people with knowledge and understanding about the air they were breathing," says Sarah. "The Westcotec sign gave us an ideal way of providing accurate information on air pollution that we could pinpoint to our precise location. By pairing this with an energetic communications message, we could be sure that everyone who came onto the site would have a better understanding of the health risks – and could play their part in making improvements to our air quality. "It has been a pleasure working with Westcotec. As well as demonstrating the highest levels of technical know-how, their flexible and friendly approach has made them a great team to work with."