

Equitable Place-based Health and Care (EPHC) project 2019-2020

Community engagement in local authority air quality plans and actions

Poor air quality disproportionately impacts disadvantaged communities. Community concern about this topic was exemplified in the CLAHRC-NWC Old Swan Neighbourhood for Learning and continued interest has been demonstrated within the ARC-NWC EPHC theme through our conversations with members of the public (focus groups) and a wider range of stakeholders (ARCfest workshops). We are undertaking this work in collaboration with ARC-NWC Improving Population Health theme who are evaluating air quality improvement actions and their impact on health/health inequalities.

The purpose of our work in Year 1 (Oct 2019 to Sept 2020) is to inform the identification and development of future demonstration sites. We are aiming to:

- Investigate the ways in which communities are (or are not) engaged with decision-making and implementation of air quality plans/actions
- Better understand the contribution that community engagement (CE) can make to reducing health harms of air pollution
- Identify ways in which the potential for CE can be strengthened in the future.

The work has been affected by COVID-19 but real progress has been made:

1. We are **reviewing local authority action plans, annual air quality status reports and other documents** available on-line. Information has been accessed for most of the local authorities across the NWC. A summary report will be produced but initial findings indicate there is a lot of advice provided to the public, a few consultation exercises around specific plans and a relatively small number of other CE activities. However, there are indications that more public/CE is being planned in some localities.
2. We are currently working with the ARC MIDAS and Implementation teams at UCLAN to produce a **literature review** to learn from practice elsewhere. The draft review questions are:
 - What models and approaches have been used to engage the community in air quality plans and actions (including the rationale for these approaches, target groups, the purpose etc)
 - The barriers and facilitators associated with these different approaches
 - The extent to which health inequalities are addressed
 - If/how community engagement in air quality have influenced health related impacts or actions
3. Another phase of work is to conduct **interviews with local authority stakeholders and community activists (and observation of any CE activities)** to find out more about the approaches being taken, their objectives, challenges and successes etc. The timing of this work is dependent upon the lifting of lockdown restrictions and the capacity of residents and local authority staff to be involved.

We would like to involve a wider group of EPHC theme stakeholders in this work as soon as circumstances allow. Initial tasks include:

- For the literature review - making decisions about the focus of the full review (e.g. UK, European, non-academic literature?) and if possible, commenting on emerging themes identified from a review of an initial sample of abstracts before we move on to a full review;
- Considering the useful outputs from this first stage of the air quality project, and planning for the future phase of this work beyond year 1 of ARC.