

## Community involvement in local air quality plans and actions

**Update: October 2020**

The **Equitable Place-based Health and Care (EPHC) theme** is developing research plans on the topic of air quality, examining ways in which the community voice can be strengthened in local decision-making.

We started by holding **groups conversations** with local residents to find out what they thought about the air quality where they lived and how communities could help address the issue – a summary of the findings can be found at [https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/EPHC-Air-pollution-Summary\\_3\\_Feb2020.pdf](https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/EPHC-Air-pollution-Summary_3_Feb2020.pdf)

We then investigated the ways in which communities have been engaged with **local area air quality management plans** across the North West Coast and the findings show that a lot of advice is offered to the public but it is unclear how that is received or understood. Several authorities have organised public consultation exercises around local plans but ongoing forum that provide opportunities for the community to influence air quality decision making are not common. However, there are indications that more public engagement is being planned in some areas.

The current phase of our work is a **literature review of international evidence** on community engagement in air quality research and actions. The review will give us further insight about the approaches that have been used in engaging communities in this area.

The questions for the review are:

- (i) What approaches have been used to engage communities in air quality plans and actions?
- (ii) What are the barriers and facilitators to community engagement in air quality plans and actions, and how do these differ across the approaches used?
- (iii) To what extent do community engagement approaches contribute to addressing health inequalities and health-related outcomes?

The great thing about this review is that researchers are not working alone – we have an **Air Quality Review Working Group** which meets on Microsoft Teams, and includes a social enterprise, 3 Public Advisers and 2 local authorities. Each person is bringing a different perspective and valuable insights as a result of their background and experience.

Group members are actively involved in reading journal articles and considering the emerging findings from the review. The group will soon be discussing what outputs will be useful for practitioners and communities and we will consider how the information can be used in the plans for the next phase of the EPHC work – this is to establish **demonstration sites** in the North-West Coast where communities can be involved in the development and evaluation of air quality improvement interventions.

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