

## Community involvement in local air quality plans and actions

### Update: November 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.

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. For more information about the background to the review, please see our October 2020 update.

Our initial analysis has identified different underlying approaches to community engagement in air quality initiatives including:

- Environmental health literacy (raising awareness about the way the environment affects health)
- Participatory democracy (citizen involvement in public policymaking)
- Social action (residents coming together to improve their lives and solve problems important to them).

The studies used a range of frameworks and methods such as:

- Citizen science e.g. air quality monitoring, modelling, smell reporting
- Education and training e.g. workshops, internships
- Environmental and health assessment e.g. surveys, screening, storytelling.
- Policy review or development e.g. workshops, on-line games.

Positive outcomes include:

#### **Individual and community**

- Increased knowledge and awareness
- Capacity building
- Empowerment
- Motivation to act
- Self-efficacy or greater feeling of control

#### **Statutory and other agencies**

- Networks extended
- New forum for resident involvement
- Policy changes
- New procedures or guidance
- Education programmes

An ARC-NWC research bite is coming soon and our forthcoming journal article will explore these, and other important themes in greater detail.

Our **Air Quality Review Working Group** meets on Microsoft Teams, and includes a social enterprise, 3 Public Advisers and 2 local authorities. The group are currently discussing what outputs from the review will be useful for practitioners and communities. We will also 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. It is likely, however, that this work will be paused until local authorities and communities have greater capacity to be involved.

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