

Local Communities Monitoring Air Pollution

East End Quality of Life Initiative is working with the Environmental Strategy Service of Sheffield City Council – who are responsible for measuring air pollution across the city – and with Sheffield Primary Care Trust to maintain the current programme of pollution measurement in partnership with local communities.

Community Air Quality Monitoring of nitrogen dioxide in Sheffield started in 1998 in people's backyards in Tinsley using diffusion tubes which are changed every month. It began because local people were concerned about the effects of air pollution on their health and quality of life. The community air quality monitoring network has been extended to cover other communities in the city, involving Community Partners such as local forums, environmental groups, neighbourhood watch groups, and secondary schools.



Maurice Littlewood of Handsworth Forum changing a pollution monitoring tube

Why do local communities participate ?

- Community organisations are well placed to know the locations in their neighbourhoods where residents are concerned about air pollution.
- This brings the issue of air pollution down to the local level.
- It empowers local communities to better articulate their concerns about poor air quality, traffic and its effects on the community's health and quality of life.

What do community organisations do each month?

East End Quality of Life Initiative supports groups to get the local pollution monitoring set up. Every month on a set day decided by the community volunteers, they change the diffusion tubes. The tube details (batch number, tube number, site, date and time of change over) are written on a log sheet and sent with the exposed tubes to the laboratory for analysis. Before the set date in the next month unexposed tubes are sent to each group. This process takes no more than one hour per month. The results are sent to groups every month, usually in the form of a chart, or the full dataset if required.



Some examples of how air quality data has been used by local communities:

- Informed planning application concerns.
- Used in articles in community newsletters.
- Supported requests for improvements to public transport.
- Used to comment on draft Local Transport Plan.
- Used to support teaching of 21st Century Science in National Curriculum in Secondary Schools.
- Added to City Council data in areas where there was no air quality monitoring.
- Raised awareness that many people are living in polluted areas.

What does it cost?

Sheffield's Environmental Strategy Service has obtained funding from DEFRA to pay for the diffusion tubes analysis since 2003, and some of Sheffield City Council's Area Panels have contributed to help community organisations with the monitoring.

Research carried out between 2004-06 headed by Paul Dorfman at the University of the West of England, Bristol, recognised that "work carried out in partnership with Sheffield City Council represents good practice in the context of local authority consultation processes ... the creation of a 'community engagement vehicle' involving local community measurement of air quality via diffusion tube monitoring proved a successful experiment."

Further Information

Neil Parry, Project Co-ordinator, Telephone: 0114 2859911.

Email: neil@sheffieldct.co.uk

Barbara Rimmington, Research Officer, Telephone: 0114 285 9931.

Email: barbara@sheffieldct.co.uk

East End Quality of Life Initiative, c/o 10 Montgomery Terrace Road, Sheffield S6 3BU. Website: www.sheffieldeastend.org.uk

To find out more about air quality visit

www.cleanairsheffield.org or www.care4air.org

For information about Environmental Strategy Service visit

www.sheffield.gov.uk/environment/waste-and-pollution/air-and-noisepollution/air-quality

For information about Sheffield Primary Care Trust visit

www.sheffield.nhs.uk

