

# Reducing the health harms of outdoor air pollution in Yorkshire and Humber:

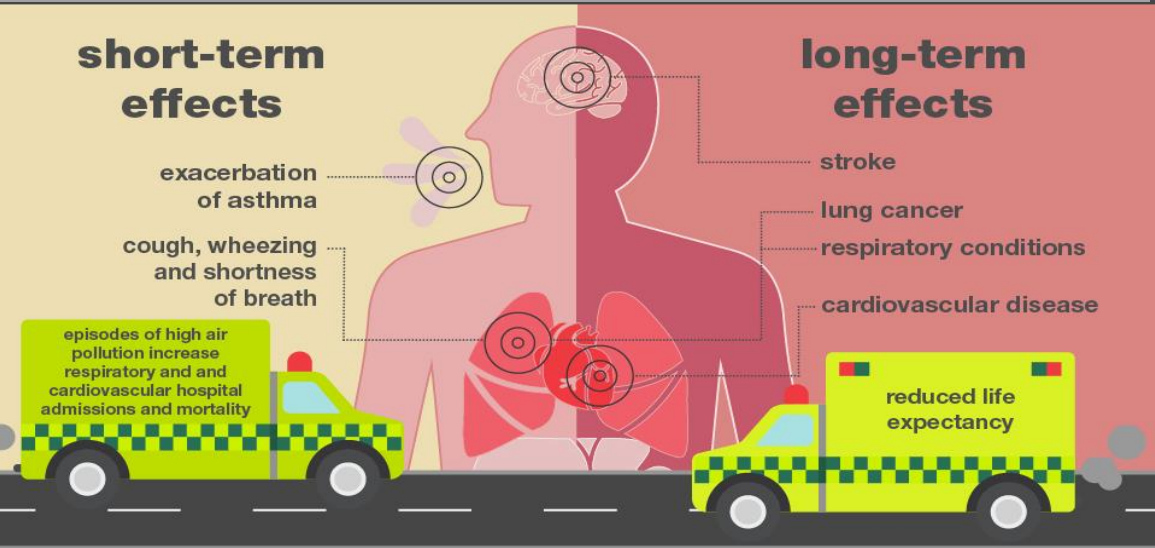
Local Authority actions, challenges and support requirements

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PIPPA BIRD, PUBLIC HEALTH REGISTRAR

# Background – why I conducted the review

## 1) Health and inequalities impact of air pollution



## 2) PHE Strategy 2020-2025

- Smoke-free society
- Healthier diets, healthier weight
- Cleaner air
- Better mental health
- Best start in life
- Effective responses to major incidents
- Reduced risk from antimicrobial resistance
- Predictive prevention
- Enhanced data and surveillance capabilities
- New national science campus

## 3) Different progress, challenges and support requirements



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# Approach

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## Aim:

To identify priorities for PHE Yorkshire and the Humber work to support regional reduction of the health harms of outdoor air pollution.

## Methods (Jan-Mar 2020):

- Group discussions with Local Authority partners  
13/15 Local Authorities, 51 people from range of roles

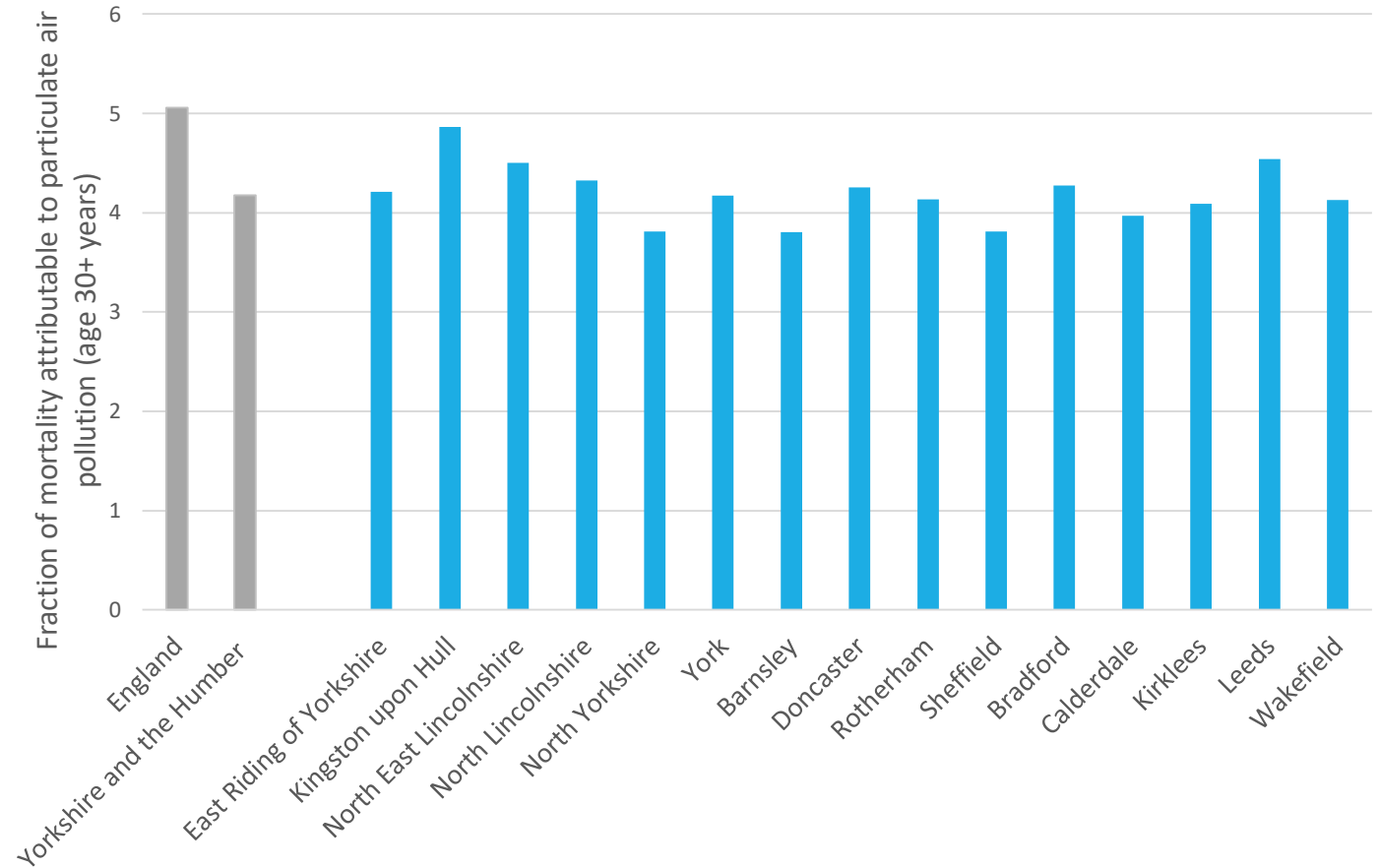
Role	Number of participants
Public health	20
Environmental health	23
Transport	3
Housing	1
Other	4

- Informal discussions with PHE staff
- Document review

# Context and the air pollution challenge

Local Authorities ranged from large urban areas with high levels of traffic pollution, to small towns and rural areas with generally lower levels of air pollution.

Recent increases in prioritisation and interest in outdoor air pollution across the region.



# Facilitators and challenges for action on air quality and health

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## Facilitators

- Committed Local Authority teams
- Declaration of climate emergency
- Legal duties and targets
- Data on air quality and health
- Air quality champions
- Environment in the council structure and targets
- Collaboration across the system
- Funding commitments
- Recognition of wider public health benefits

## Challenges

- Legal vs. public health limits
- National funding priorities and timing
- Local economy-environment tensions
- Housing pressures
- Transport strategy and road building
- Public transport infrastructure
- Competition with cities for resources
- Political awareness and interests
- Local culture and geography
- Complexity of evidence base
- Data and measurement
- Limitations to local impact
- Inequalities and vulnerability

# PHE materials and support that were helpful

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Guidance

## Health matters: air pollution

Published 14 November 2018



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

## Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health



### Communities of Improvement (COI's)

Communities of Improvement are defined strategic networks that are jointly owned by the Y&H Association of Directors of Public Health and the Y&H Public Health England Centre

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# Suggestions for future PHE work on air pollution and health

**1) Development and sharing  
evidence**

**2) Sharing information on  
effective interventions and  
supporting implementation**

**3) Support for communication,  
advocacy and awareness raising**

**4) Facilitation of collaboration  
and sharing best practice**

**5) Other suggestions for action**

# Suggestions for future PHE work on air pollution and health

## 1) Development and sharing evidence

- Evidence summaries on different sources of pollution and different contexts
- Support with local area data

## 2) Sharing information on effective interventions and supporting implementation

- Sharing case studies
- Support for evaluation
- Evidence on controversial interventions
- Tailored materials on intervention for partner organisations

## 3) Support for communication, advocacy and awareness raising

- Clear messages on economic development and clean air
- Non-technical materials and FAQs; tackle disinformation
- National campaign or support for regional campaigns
- Positively framed messages
- Support on behaviour change and community engagement
- Messaging for health professionals
- Messaging on the link with climate change
- Messaging on the link with other public health topics
- National website on air pollution and health

## 4) Facilitation of collaboration and sharing best practice

- PHE engagement with existing groups across the region
- Focus on air quality in PHE groups

## 5) Other suggestions for action

- Closer connection between universities and PHE
- A key PHE contact
- Support for local projects and funding applications
- National cross-government advocacy

## Health effects of air pollution

### short-term effects

exacerbation of asthma

cough, wheezing and shortness of breath

episodes of high air pollution increase respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions and mortality

### long-term effects

stroke

lung cancer

respiratory conditions

cardiovascular disease

reduced life expectancy

