

Health and Wellbeing Board

1. Reference Information

Paper tracking information	
Title:	Surrey School Air Quality Programme
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Related papers	Surrey Healthy Weight Strategy for Children, Young People & Families, 2017- 2022

2. Executive summary

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Surrey School Air Quality Programme and present early evaluation findings.
- 2.2 The Surrey Air Alliance partnership was awarded £145,188 through the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Air Quality Grant Fund to improve the air quality around targeted schools, in/within 2km of an Air Quality Management Area.
- 2.3 The Surrey School Air Quality Programme was taken forward to: give school children an increased awareness of the health impacts of poor air quality; to understand what they could do to improve local air quality and reduce exposure; and encourage behaviour change to increase active travel and reduce vehicle idling outside schools.
- 2.4 The successful project has run throughout the 2018/19 academic year and some activities will continue into the 2019/20 academic year.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the early evaluation findings of the Surrey School Air Quality Programme.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Surrey School Air Quality Programme supports delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy, Priority One: Helping people in Surrey to lead healthy lives.

5. Detail

Background

5.1 Air pollution is an important determinant of health. The biggest health burden is understood to be from long-term exposure to small particulate air pollution which is estimated to decrease life expectancy by an average of six months. District and borough councils have the statutory duty to assess air quality and declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) if there is a potential breach in the standards. There are currently 27 locations across nine of the 11 district and boroughs in Surrey that have been declared AQMAs.

5.2 The Surrey Air Alliance (partnership of Environmental Health Officers from district and borough councils and Surrey County Council's Transport and Public Health) was awarded £145,188 through the DEFRA Air Quality Grant Fund to improve the air quality around targeted schools, in/within 2km of an Air Quality Management Area. This report provides an update on the programme and presents early evaluation findings. The Surrey School Air Quality Programme supports delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy, Priority One: Helping people in Surrey to lead healthy lives.

Surrey School Air Quality Programme

5.3 The School Air Quality Programme offered a package of complimentary measures to targeted primary/secondary schools, in/within 2km of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The objective of the programme was to: give school children an increased awareness of the health impacts of poor air quality; to understand what they could do to improve local air quality and reduce exposure; and encourage behaviour change to increase active travel and reduce vehicle idling outside schools. The project has run throughout the 2018/19 academic year and some activities will continue into the 2019/20 academic year.

5.4 Programme measures included: Theatre in Education (TiE), a bespoke production based on air quality and sustainable transport to/from school; lessons and whole school assemblies delivered by a specialist provider, including support for pupils to measure local air quality at roadside, playground and around the school site; educational resources to support lessons in relation to air quality; school travel planning intervention; Bikeability training (basic level to support children to learn to ride a bicycle as well as advanced level for cycling on busy roads); an air quality element to the existing Golden Boot Challenge (which encourages active travel); and an Air Quality Summit (school conference).

5.5 In addition to this programme, a county-wide communications campaign ran for six weeks in September to November 2018, targeting parents/families to raise awareness about the impact air pollutants have on childrens' health and encourage parents to use alternative modes of transport to and from school. The campaign channels included radio, bus backs/bus stop advertising and digital/social media.

5.6 The programme was delivered across nine district/boroughs; Guildford and Surrey Heath were ineligible for the programme as they were in receipt of separate DEFRA funding under a ministerial directive. Programme delivery was led by the Surrey County Council (SCC) Safer Travel Team, in partnership with SCC Public Health and Spelthorne District Council (project management), with support from Surrey Air Alliance partners.

Early evaluation results

5.7 A total of 48 schools in Surrey have taken part in one or more of the core measures on offer (Theatre in Education, air quality workshops and/or anti-idling campaign):

- 40 schools held a performance of a bespoke theatrical production on air quality and sustainable travel, reaching a total of 2,156 pupils. 100% of adults (teachers/school staff) surveyed thought the show was an effective or very effective way to communicate the health impacts of poor air quality and what pupils could do to improve air quality around their school.
- 31 schools took part in air quality workshops and whole school assemblies run by a specialist contractor, reaching a total of 7,435 pupils; and five schools were supported to host anti-idling events. One of the events coincided with National Clean Air Day on 20 June 2019 and received positive media coverage. A formal evaluation of workshop/assemblies and anti-idling event elements is due in August 2019.

5.8 In addition to the core measures, over 2,500 pupils across 46 schools received additional subsidised cycle training; seven schools received training to develop their School Travel Plans; and air quality toolkits/teaching resources were prepared by a specialist provider and distributed to all schools in Surrey.

5.9 With respect to the media campaign, there were over 16,000 views on the Healthy Surrey webpage making it the most viewed page on the website during the campaign period. Facebook was the most popular social media channel to reach and engage with parents. There were 41 Facebook posts during the campaign period which appeared 98,970 times, generated 1,253 link clicks and 600 engagements, such as comments, shares and likes. An external evaluation of the media campaign was conducted, which included 300 interviews with parents who regularly drive their children to and from school. The evaluation findings suggest that although there was relatively low awareness of the campaign, the campaign was strongly liked, conveyed new information and was felt to discourage people from using their cars on the school run.

5.10 In July 2019 an Air Quality Summit was held to further disseminate the messages of the programme. The Summit was attended by 56 school representative, across 23 schools and elements of the School Air Quality Programme were shared through workshops/presentations. For example, the London Sustainability Exchange presented the school workshops and resource toolkits they delivered and a school showcased/shared their experiences of taking part in the programme.

Further elements

5.11 The final element of the programme will be taken forward in October 2019. SCC hosts a sustainable travel challenge, the 'Golden Boot Challenge'. The challenge will be rebranded as the 'Green Boot Challenge' and supported by a new mobile phone app, which adds an air quality element. The new Green Boot Challenge will be piloted with 20 programme schools to coincide with International Walk to School Month in October. The challenge will be App and White Board based, allowing parents/child to record their journey and mode to school and calculate mode share shifts and emission savings. The October pilot will enable a full launch of the Green Boot Challenge to 150-200 Surrey primary schools in June 2020.

5.12 We are planning to undertake a final survey and focus groups to enable evaluation of the programme as a whole, with the final evaluation report being completed by the end of the year.

6. Challenges

6.1 We found that schools were initially slow to sign up to the programme. However, we were able to adapt some of the initiatives following feedback from schools to support

elements to be delivered in such a way as to minimise the impact on school. For example, we adapted the initial offer of classroom resources to provide facilitated classroom workshops.

7. Timescale and delivery plan

7.1 The programme has run throughout the 2018/19 academic year and some activities will continue into the 2019/20 academic year.

8. How is this being communicated?

8.1 The final evaluation report will be disseminated through the Surrey Air Alliance partners to district and borough colleagues and through the Surrey Prevention and Wider Determinants of Health: Priority One Board to health and wider partners. The evaluation report will also be shared with Surrey schools by the SCC Safer Travel Team. Findings of the evaluation will be reported back to DEFRA and local authority partnerships.

9. Next steps

- Following an unsuccessful bid to the DEFRA Air Quality Grant Fund 2019/20, we will need to identify funding streams to continue the core elements of the Surrey School Air Quality Programme into 2019/20, including: Theatre in Education drama workshop; class workshops, including air diffusion tube monitoring, and school assemblies; and anti-idling events
- SCC has invited each borough/district council to contribute funding if they would like to participate in the programme in 2019/20. SCC will also contribute some funding, as well as provide the officer resource to manage and deliver the programme countywide. The programme will require a minimum of five district/boroughs to contribute in order to move forward. As this will not be funded through the DEFRA Air Quality Grant, it will be open for all boroughs/districts to participate.
- We plan to submit a bid to the DEFRA Air Quality Grant Fund in autumn 2019 to enable us to extend the School Air Quality Programme into 2020/21