



# Brent Air Quality Action Plan Engagement Insight Research Report

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## Summary Report

JANUARY 2022

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# Background and aims of the research

Kaizen was commissioned by Brent Council to support with community engagement and outreach around the development of a new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

Brent Council is reviewing and updating its 2017-2022 Air Quality Action Plan. This plan will span the next 5 years (2023-2027) and will detail the current status of air pollution in the borough and what action the council will take to reduce pollution emissions and pollution exposure, and increase awareness of air pollution amongst Brent residents and businesses.

Exposure to poor air quality has the most impact on those who pollute the least<sup>1</sup> – the AQAP is an opportunity to address these environmental injustices and health inequalities.

To do this, the council is keen to ensure that Brent's whole community have the opportunity to help to shape the plan and that those who are most impacted by the health impacts of air pollution have their voices heard.

In the development of the AQAP, the aim is to carry out community engagement at two points to ensure strong community input into the plan:

- **Phase 1:** Before the draft AQAP is produced – so views of residents can input into the initial draft of the AQAP
- **Phase 2:** At the point that the AQAP is produced and is out for public consultation

The aim for phase 1 engagement was to gather views from a representative cross-sectional sample of residents so the council can have confidence that the findings are robust. In particular it was important to include less heard and quieter voices alongside the views of residents who are passionate about the issue of air quality.

This report covers views gathered during phase 1 engagement.

## What we did - Approach

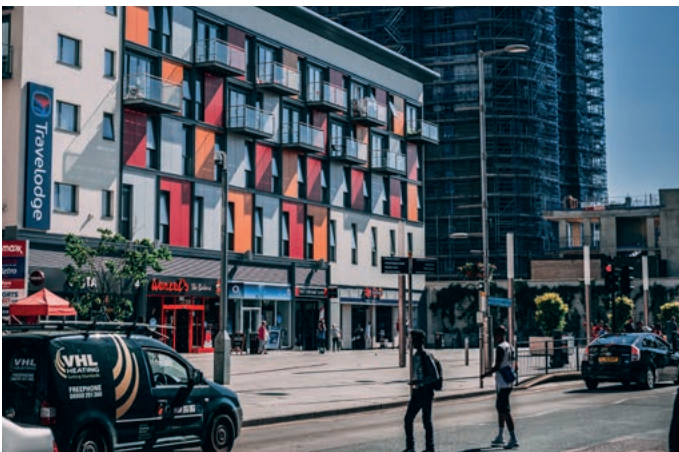
We conducted twenty-seven days of outreach over a two-week period in October 2021. The Kaizen engagement team carried out engagement at different times of the day and on different days of the week (weekdays and weekends) in order to capture the views of a broad range of people. The engagement days were spread out over twenty-one locations of the Borough, including all Town Centres in the borough and all Air Quality Focus Areas (AQFAS)<sup>2</sup>, to ensure that a broad range of people were engaged.

We engaged and spoke with four hundred and eighty-eight people on busy high streets and on quiet residential roads as well as speaking to people in libraries, shopping areas, leisure centres, corner-shops and parks. We also door-knocked in some areas.

The online survey was hosted by Brent Council and was open for two months (October and November). This was published on Brent Council's website and social media, as well as distributed through Brent's resident networks. Seventy-four people gave their views online.

1 Barnes et al., 2019 - Emissions vs exposure: Increasing injustice from road traffic-related air pollution in the United Kingdom. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1361920919300392#!>

2 AQFAs are as defined by the Greater London Authority's 2016 London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory.



# What we did - Methodologies

In order to reach a broadly representative range of community members we employed a variety of different methodologies<sup>3</sup>:

- Face-to-face conversations with individuals
  - This was the primary method and was carried out via outreach engagement across Brent. Most conversations were for approximately 20-25 mins; there were also many that were 45 minutes or longer with residents who were particularly keen to say more or who had additional needs that meant it took longer.
- Pop up / street focus groups
  - This is a Kaizen developed methodology that takes the group discussion element of a traditional pre-arranged focus group but delivers it in the community setting as a group discussion. This was carried out via outreach.
- Telephone interviews
  - A hotline was setup to allow people wishing to share their views to arrange a telephone interview when convenient for them. A phone conversation was available in a variety of different languages to help reduce language barriers.
- Online consultation
  - The online engagement option was hosted by Brent Council, and was promoted both by Brent Council and by the Kaizen team who had business cards with the URL for the online survey that they gave to people who said they wanted to give their views that way.

## About the data

We analysed both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data and findings in this report (unless otherwise stated) are drawn from individual conversations only. For charts, and in text, figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number so on occasion the total will be other than 100%. Statistics relate to the total percentage of people who answered a particular question, rather than to the total number engaged, as not all questions were answered by everyone.

For the open questions we performed thematic analysis, hand coding for themes that emerged using the principles and approach of Grounded Theory. The term 'Grounded Theory' refers to theory that is developed inductively from a body of data, rather than from the preconceptions of the researchers.

The people who were engaged were broadly reflective of the Borough demographics, based on the 2011 census and the GLA population projections to 2021 (for age and gender).

3 The questionnaire was developed by Brent Council and Kaizen.

# Headline stats

## What we did

- 27 days of outreach engagement with individual and small group conversations
- Engagement over twenty-one locations of Brent, including all Town Centres in the borough and all Air Quality Focus Areas (AQFAs)
- Online survey promoted by council and open for 2 months

## Who was engaged

- 488 people gave their views
  - 303 people shared views in-depth in one-on-one conversations in the community
  - 3 people gave their views over the phone
  - 108 people took part in 35 Street Focus Groups
  - 74 people gave their views online
- 86% live in Brent. 27% work in the Borough and 2% run a business in Brent
- Those engaged via outreach were broadly reflective of the known Brent demographics, in contrast to those who responded online who were not representative of the Borough demographics
- 94% of people engaged via outreach said that their views had never been consulted before (83%) or not much before (11%)

## Views on air quality and air pollution

- 53% think that the air quality in their local area is bad or very bad
- 85% believe that air quality is important or very important to them as an issue
- 69% are “quite” or “very” concerned about the indoor air quality in their home or place of work
- 94% think there’s a connection between air pollution and health
- 51% think air quality in Brent has worsened in the last 3 years.
- 33% of people said they had personal experience of health problems made worse by pollution in their local area
- Traffic, petrol or diesel cars and deliveries and freight via road are perceived to be the top contributors to air pollution in Brent

*“Improved over the lockdown due to less traffic, but now a lot of public driving & avoiding public transport.”*

*“Massive lorries, and parked cars idling for ages.”*

*“I can see it, taste it, smell it and feel it behind my eyes. I’m talking about pollution.”*

*"I don't open the windows as much as I don't want to infect my home environment."*

*"Asthma - made my breathing worse."*

## Priorities for Brent's Air Quality Action Plan

- 80% said that improving air quality should be a high priority for the Council (ranking 4 or 5 on a scale of 5)
- There was large majority support for all of the proposed AQAP priority themes
- The themes that were highest ranked as priorities were cleaner transport, monitoring air pollution, and awareness raising of public health impacts

*"Air quality is a very important issue. We need lots of action."*

*"Brent currently has very poor air quality and related poor public health. Brent needs to start acting decisively to tackle these as it's current track record is abysmal. It must prioritise active travel as a matter of urgency as this will improve air quality as well as improving public health and tackle the climate emergency."*

*"The car is currently king in Brent and this needs to change in favour of active travel to affect any significant change in air quality."*

*"You are not going to get people to use their cars less, this will be difficult but you need to concentrate on things that will help those being impacted-children in schools and plant trees!!! Improve the electric car infrastructure too to make it a more appealing and easier switch from petrol."*

