

European Centre for Environment and Human Health Health and Environment Public Engagement (HEPE) GROUP

What is HEPE?

HEPE is a group made up of members of the community from across Cornwall who have a shared interest in how human beings interact with the environment, both positively and negatively. Members of HEPE have different backgrounds and experiences which they use to inform and enrich the research undertaken by the European Centre for Environment and Human Health. <http://www.ecehh.org/about-us/engagement/>

What is the European Centre for Environment and Human Health?

Based in the Knowledge Spa, Treliske in Truro, we are part of the University of Exeter Medical School. The Centre includes researchers with different specialities, including public health, ecology, psychology, statistics, economics and qualitative research. The Centre's research focuses on the many and complex connections between human health and the environment. Further information can be found on our website: www.ecehh.org

What does being a member of HEPE involve?

The core HEPE meetings are held four times a year at the Centre. At these quarterly meetings the group discuss work that is happening at the Centre, and proposals for new research, with researchers from the Centre. They are asked to offer their perspectives as members of the public on developing the research, carrying out the research and putting the findings into practice. HEPE members are also given updates about projects they have already contributed to. HEPE members are offered a refund on travel costs they have when attending meetings and a thank you payment.

There are sometimes invitations to take part in additional one-off meetings about a particular research project, or opportunities to volunteer for a committee or project steering group. These meetings often involve reading documents in advance.

Between the quarterly meetings, HEPE members are also contacted by email and asked for advice about documents or research proposals. Researchers often ask for feedback about how readable and understandable their documents are. Some HEPE members who find it difficult to attend meetings are able to continue to take part in this way.

What qualities does a HEPE member need?

- An interest in relationships between human health and the environment, both positive and negative.
- A friendly and approachable manner.
- Reliability, trustworthiness and integrity.
- Respect for different points of view.
- The confidence to speak at meetings.
- The ability to listen to others.