

Health and Environment Public Engagement (HEPE) GROUP

European Centre for Environment and Human Health

What is HEPE?

HEPE is a group made up of members of different communities from across Cornwall who have a shared interest in how human beings interact with the environment, both positively and negatively. Members of HEPE have diverse 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 in Truro, we are part of the University of Exeter College of Medicine & Health. The Centre includes researchers with different specialities, including public health, ecology, psychology, epidemiology, 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?

Since April 2020, HEPE meetings have moved on line, via Zoom. Business meetings are held every four weeks on Thursday mornings 10:30-11:30. Here 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. Two weeks after each business meeting, we hold an informal meeting, also on Thursday mornings 10:30-11:30; these are an opportunity to catch up and have a chat.

Sometimes invitations are sent out 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 which are sent via email or in the post.

Between meetings, HEPE members can also be 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. By using different ways of working, our aim is to give HEPE members options in how they take part and how often.

When it is safe to resume face to face activities, we will take up our varied programme of workshops and seminars, working with local partners to provide activities that are interesting and sometimes an opportunity to expand skills.

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.

Ground rules

Purpose of the ground rules:

These ground rules represent an agreement from the group about how we work together. They include what we can expect in between meetings, and how we expect to behave during HEPE meetings. They are intended to help the group to work effectively.

In Brief: HEPE members can be expected:

- To treat each other and staff with respect and courtesy.
- To recognise that the purpose of the group is to inform research.
- To play an active and constructive part in discussions.
- To make use of the complaints procedure, if there is any dispute. (see page 8)
- To inform Kath or Rita if they wish to step down.
- To treat information shared by HEPE members and researchers as confidential.

HEPE members can expect:

- To be welcomed and listened to.
- To be able to contact a designated member of staff before and after each meeting by phone or email.
- To have any accessibility needs taken into account where possible.
- To be made aware of opportunities to be involved in research.
- To be kept up to date with research progress and receive feedback on meetings.
- To have travel expenses for attending reimbursed and a 'participation payment' to acknowledge their time. (see page 5)

Most often the ground rules will just be a reminder of our expectations of one another. Though, should someone grossly or persistently breach these rules they may receive a warning or be asked to leave the group.

General ground rules

1. Everyone should be listened to and treated with courtesy and respect.
2. When planning face to face meetings, we will circulate email and telephone contact details for a designated member of staff who can answer questions and help address any accessibility issues.
3. Some face to face activities may take place outside normal office hours, sometimes there may be a reason for members to try to contact Centre staff, or ask to be contacted, after five or on a weekend. HEPE members should, however, recognise that this is only in **exceptional** circumstances.
4. HEPE is supported from research funding in order to make sure that the research undertaken by the Centre is informed by and serves the needs of the wider community. Centre staff may sometimes be able to signpost information and training to help HEPE members do this. But we are not a service provider nor can we give individual advice on access to services.
5. It is OK to decide not to attend any particular meeting or to take part in a project. But if you do take part, we expect you to contribute to discussions actively and constructively.
6. HEPE can expect researchers to provide them with feedback on their contribution and the progress of research projects.
7. HEPE can expect to be offered a 'participation payment' in line with current policy. (see page 5) and to receive reimbursement of travel costs for face to face meeting.
8. Disputes will be resolved using our complaints procedure (see page 8)
9. HEPE keeps in touch using a shared email list. Other personal and contact details members share with staff are solely for the purpose of Centre and University administration and staff will not share this information with other group members.
10. HEPE members should contact Centre staff (currently Kath or Rita) if they would like to be removed from the HEPE mailing list.
11. If a member has not been in contact for over a year Centre staff will write to ask if they wish to remain on the mailing list. If the member does not respond to this correspondence they will automatically be removed from the list.

12. Confidentiality:

Information from HEPE correspondence and meetings including:

- Personal disclosures
- Research projects and ideas being discussed

Should not be shared outside the group unless explicit permission has been given.

- No one can speak to the media or press as a 'HEPE member' without the prior agreement of HEPE

Ground rules for meetings:

1. Show respect to one another by:
 - Listening when someone is talking
 - One speaker at a time; not talking over someone, waiting until they have finished
 - Give everyone space to talk; involve quieter members
 - Raise hand to make a comment
 - Give each person time to talk and don't think that what we have to say is more important than the person speaking
 - No questions or ideas are stupid
2. Agenda:
 - Stick to the agenda
 - Everyone should have chance to influence the agenda
3. Prepare for meetings; read materials that have been sent out in advance
4. Each meeting will appoint someone to make note of jargon
5. Normally meeting notes will be taken by a member of Centre staff.
6. Consider time management and allow each to have a view
7. Give space for thinking
8. Being emotional is ok and accepted in this group

9. Confidentiality:

Information from HEPE meetings including:

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Information about Payments: Public Participation Involvement Reimbursement (“Thank you” payment)

A ‘thank you’ payment will be offered to HEPE members in recognition of the time spent preparing for and attending these meetings. The participation payment is currently set at: £20 for an online meeting up of an hour, and £30 for a half day online meeting. Payment will be made into a bank account for which sort code and account number details are required.

Attendance at a training event will not normally attract a ‘thank you’ payment.

Travel expenses will be paid when we are permitted to meet in person, and we will update you then with the new processes.

If you have any issues with payments or claims please contact us.

Rita Alflatt or Kath Maguire

Telephone: 07827897962

Email: hepe@exeter.ac.uk

HEPE Complaints Procedure

Things don't always go the way we all hope they will. Sometimes we might say the wrong thing or do something that upsets a member of the group. It is useful to have a clear way to deal with this if it happens. These procedures are intended to help us sort out problems.

Principles

- We always want to hear if someone is unhappy about anything happening in HEPE.
- Where possible complaints will be resolved by the agreement of the people involved.
- We will acknowledge receipt of all complaints and will try to resolve them within 28 days of the complaint being received.

Informal Resolution

If you have been offended by someone's behaviour it is best to try and talk to that person directly if you can. They could be a HEPE member, an employee of the university or a partner organisation. If you do not feel confident about talking to someone who has offended or upset you, you may ask Kath Maguire or Rita Alflatt to speak to them, informally, on your behalf.

Formal Procedure

If you do not feel able to seek an informal resolution, or have tried talking to them and are still dissatisfied, you should complain in writing to Kath Maguire or Rita Alflatt. Your complaint should clearly explain what it is that has concerned or upset you and, if possible, what you would like us to do about it. This will help us to resolve the problem.

Kath or Rita will try to contact all the people involved in the complaint, within ten working days of receiving your complaint. They will try find out each person's point of view. They may also ask for copies of any written documents that would help them understand what has happened. If you are not comfortable discussing your problem with Kath or Rita you can raise it directly with the Centre Director, Professor Lora Fleming.

If your complaint is about an employee of the university or one of its partner organisations we will inform the appropriate Human Resources Department. They will try, if possible, to resolve the problem at this stage.

A decision will then be made as to what further action is required. This may include being asked to take 'time out', leave the group or engage in mediation if appropriate. The decision will be communicated to everyone involved.

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