

# **CLARE IMOGEN BEATTIE**

## **THE IMPACT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT ACT 1995, PART IV (AIR QUALITY) ON THE AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND**

### **ABSTRACT**

Air quality management as required by the Environment Act 1995, is the means by which the UK is improving local air quality in relation to seven pollutants with harmful health effects. The Act requires local authorities periodically to review and assess current and future air quality. Air quality is judged against specified objectives, and where any of these objectives are predicted to be exceeded an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be designated. Following such designation an Air Quality Action Plan is prepared and implemented in order to improve air quality.

This thesis examines the practice of air quality management in urban areas of England, over the four years following the implementation of the Act. The methodology adopted consisted of four annual questionnaire surveys, supported by 9 detailed case studies. In both questionnaire surveys and case study analysis a number of professions were surveyed to gain an understanding of the interactions and collaborative processes being undertaken within and between local authorities and other agencies.

Data are used to develop a theoretical perspective of air quality management and to formulate a set of conceptual models, which are tested against practice. The research presented in this thesis represents the most comprehensive investigation of local authority officers and other agency staff in relation to air quality management practices that has been undertaken. The research evaluates the capability of local authorities in the technical and managerial aspects of air quality management and represents a definitive statement of how the Environment Act 1995 is being implemented by local authorities in England.

Data presented demonstrate that between 1998 and 2001 urban local authorities have made substantial progress in their knowledge and understanding of local air quality issues from their position prior to 1998. It is apparent that local authorities have differing capabilities to managing their local air quality. The managerial aspects of implementing air quality management are not as well advanced as the technical aspects. The formulation of a practice based model suggests improvements to the managerial aspects of air quality management identified as inadequate by the evidence presented. The structure of the model reflects a strategic management model of working. The thesis concludes with a suite of recommendations for the future practice of air quality management and for the development of science policy research in the field of air quality.

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