





## Key findings

- We identified and included 44 relevant documents, with most research from the UK and of qualitative or case study design.
- Understanding participatory initiatives is challenging, as studies provided limited detail about activities, implementation and how they were intended to work or did work in practice.
- Effective initiatives tended to have long-term investment of resources, and a mix of different elements.
- Key elements of effective initiatives are: the strengthening of community capacities for influencing; building of relationships within and across communities and organisations; and development of spaces for safe and equitable participation and knowledge-sharing.
- Many factors can affect initiatives, often reflecting deep-seated political issues, and local power dynamics within communities, and between professionals and the public.
- There can be both positive and adverse outcomes for different communities, individuals, relationships, and the decision-making process.
- Initiatives such as participatory budgeting and community organising can support community capabilities and strengthen civic relationships, leading to more effective policy advocacy.
- Context-specific support from facilitators can enable change, but they can also exert power and influence outcomes

***Initiatives may be at particular risk during times of limited resourcing; undermining individual and community capacities to participate, and requiring organisational leaders to think/act differently***

## Further information

This work is part of the School for Public Health Research's Places and Communities programme. More information on [this project](https://sphr.nihr.ac.uk/research/places-communities/places-communities-what-is-known-stakeholder-views-and-research-synthesis-wsa-wp1/) can be found at: <https://sphr.nihr.ac.uk/research/places-communities/places-communities-what-is-known-stakeholder-views-and-research-synthesis-wsa-wp1/>

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