

LAF conference 27 March 2013

Workshop notes: How can LAFs better engage with health departments?

Dr Jane Morris set out a case story showing how a patient's mental health had improved after getting involved in walking in the natural environment.

Miranda Ashwell gave a presentation looking at:

- The importance of an active community
- What are the local policies on health and where they can be found?
- What is being done to promote a more active way of life?
- Discussion: how can the LAFs get more involved?

Key points:

The focus in health is now moving to prevention via work in the Public Health sector, especially focussing on the less active.

The restructuring of Public Health delivery from April 2013 from NHS to local authorities may provide good opportunities for LAFs to get involved in health.

Recommend that LAFs look into the following areas:

- Healthy Lives, Healthy People strategy: physical activity fits in with key priorities
- Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG): a GP-led group which buys in services and will need to know the local priorities
- Joint Strategic Needs assessment (JSNA): provides a profile of the local area
- Public Health Outcomes Framework: identifies key priorities, can be used to measure how Local Authorities are doing
- Health and Wellbeing Board, who will develop a Health and Wellbeing strategy and there may be a local Health and Wellbeing group who will deliver this. The LAF needs to identify how the Health and Wellbeing board is structured and what is the local group- the LAF may be able to provide them with local information and influence their agendas. LAFs can use the levers in the Health and Wellbeing strategy in discussions
- NICE guidance to Local Authorities relating to walking and cycling
- NICE guidance relating to the built environment
- Let's Get Moving: Physical Activity Care Pathway- tool for GPs

Physical activity and local communities:

Delegates completed the General Practice Physical Activity Questionnaire (GPPAQ) - which is used by GPs to look at people's activity levels, and were given a handout about Start Active, Stay Active – the new guidance for physical activity

Importance of creating physically active communities - How does the LAF reach users in deprived areas? Can LAFs get their messages across via GPs, schools, local community services, pharmacies and charities that have same focus as LAFs?

Comments and questions from delegates:

There were different levels of awareness of the way the health service operates regarding public health across the delegates.

❖ Why should LAFs get involved?

Lack of funding for RoW- but potential funding through the Health and Wellbeing budget, which is ring fenced. LAFs should contact their Health and Wellbeing Board to see how they can help and challenge the Local Authority and Director of Public Health.

By April 2013, the JSNA and Health and Wellbeing strategy will be complete, there is an evidence base relating to why outdoor recreation is important. The Director of Public Health needs to know the local picture, which LAFs can provide.

❖ How does the LAF get involved?

Find out what's available locally e.g. the JSNA will identify any proposed work relating to ethnic minorities.

Contact the Director of Public Health or Public Health programme lead or the Health and Wellbeing portfolio holder. Find out the priorities in the local area (e.g. ageing population/ obesity/ cardiovascular problems) and couch the LAF arguments accordingly. They need to know what's happening locally, and LAFs can provide this information.

Examples:

Shropshire: using old WfH coordinators, now funded by Sustainable Transport as walking coordinators, work locally, develop forums, pressure groups and feed into the LAF

Lancashire: Use NICE guidance to promote and find a way into talking to the Director of Public Health

Leeds: contacted the portfolio holder for the environment. There's a lack of funding for RoW- but there may be potential funding through the Health and Wellbeing budget

Delegates discussed the need to nag local authorities regarding planning applications for roads and the importance of providing routes suitable for walking and cycling and the importance of getting involved at an early stage to get the LAF message across and listened to.

❖ How can I convince LAF members? Who can talk to LAF members?

- Authors of the Health and Wellbeing strategy and the JSNA
- Programme lead
- Director of Public Health
- Council member with the portfolio for Health and Wellbeing

It should be a 2 way dialogue- they will all benefit from the local contact provided by the LAF

Actions suggested:

LAFs:

- Understand the various strategies
- Make those contacts
- Use the key facts in any discussions
- Raise the profile of the LAF and make it happen

Natural England:

- Should remind Local Authorities of their statutory duties relating to LAFs - especially relating to planning applications for highways.
- Distil the information provided into guidance on what to do with health –and include something on Huddle