



Middlesbrough`s Healthy Towns Programme

Delivery and Outcomes

Gamini Wijesinghe

01642 728410

gamini_wijesinghe@live.co.uk

HEALTHY WEIGHT,
HEALTHY LIVES

National Healthy Communities Challenge Fund

- To test and evaluate diverse approaches to encourage participation in regular physical activity and making healthy food choices.
- Successful applicants would be designated 'Healthy Towns', to acknowledge their commitment and aspiration to promoting health in their communities.



HEALTHY WEIGHT,
HEALTHY LIVES



Background

- A competitive bid was delivered jointly by Middlesbrough Council and NHS Middlesbrough based on four distinct themes;
- Urban Farming, Active Travel, Enhanced Physical Environment and Youth Engagement.
- Middlesbrough successfully became one of 9 designated Healthy Towns.
- We received £4.1 million and worked at securing a further £6.1 million through match.

Overall Aim

The aim of Middlesbrough's Healthy Towns Programme was to develop a sustainable, collaborative and multi faceted town-wide approach to increase physical activity and healthy eating, focusing on the needs (and where appropriate demands) of local people in some of the most disadvantaged parts of the town to reduce health inequalities

Further 5 key Objectives

- To implement a social marketing programme to shape, design, develop and deliver 40 plus projects.
- Engage groups, families schools etc through community development approach to initiate a town-wide urban farming programme.
- Enhance the physical environment to increase numbers playing and being physically active.
- Address socio-cultural barriers and perceptions related to active travel.
- Provide training, support and resources to motivate young people to lead a healthier lifestyle.

Evaluation

- **Conducted by The Food, Physical Activity and Obesity Research Group at Durham University.**
- **A robust, if not ambitious outcome focused evaluation was envisaged based upon project lead interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and in some cases physical activity measurements using accelerometers, BMI data, computer based diet.**



1. Community Urban Farming

- Increase No. of allotment sites
- Growing food in public places
- Awareness raising activities and events
- Training, support and guidance
- Showcase/promotional venues



2. Enhancing play, recreation & the physical environment

- Build and enhance play areas
- Facilitate play actives
- Traffic calming measures to develop safe environments
- Walking & cycling activities
- Awareness raising activities
- Create a Cycle Track



3. Schools & Workplace Active Travel

Map and information resources

Direct engagement with schools

**Training, support and subsidised
cycles for schools and work places**

**Infrastructure improvements
creating safer cycling and walking
routes**

Town-wide Cycle Events

Youth & Community engagement: Junior Health Trainer Programme

- Primary School Mini Health Trainers and Digital Dance and Movement learning resource.
- Secondary School Junior Health Trainers and Dance Mats
- NEET Youth Health Trainers
- Town-wide Youth Dance programme



Urban Farming

- Over 100 growing groups
- 4 new allotment locations
- 60 derelict allotment plots now in use
- 31 Back alleys made over
- Vocational Training Centre being developed
- 2 Town Meal Events
- Food4health Awards and Courses
- Food Sustainability Strategy

Physical Environment

- **11 new or improved play facilities**
- **Natures World activity enhancements**
- **Newham Grange activity enhancements**
- **14 Youth Groups engaged**
- **Play activities across the Town**
- **Middlesbrough Cycle Circuit**

Active Travel

- 850 more school children riding to school
- 900 more adults cycling to work
- 9 Walking buses
- Numerous activity resources produced
- Cycle and walking routes
- Skyride Middlesbrough 2010 and 2011
- Cycle centre full to capacity

Communities for Health Initiative Fund

- 38 grants successful
- 1900 engaged in the activities
- Age ranging from 4 to 92!
- 92% participants increased physical activity
- Direct focused engagement and support
- Celebrating success and acknowledging aspirations
- Big Society!

However!

- **Intelligence that led to early decision making was not as robust as it could have been**
- **We failed to facilitate enough individual support to project leads early doors with regards Social Marketing (TPPM)**
- **Consequently segmentation was sometimes ambiguously applied**
- **Front line staff in some cases did not have enough skills in relation to health improvement**

Furthermore

- The time frame was far too short
- There were too many projects in the HTP and this severely stretched the core team
- Line management challenges
- Core team could have benefited from a part time PCT secondment
- Strategic buy in became a work-in-progress
- Reliance upon a “robust” Durham Evaluation

Evaluation

The report is currently under review. A number of areas have concerns from the Management Team and as a consequence this has been reported to the Board. Amongst other things the amount of quantitative data that has been collected is rather limited and the qualitative data is in some cases misleading as it is not contextualised within the framework as to how projects progressed.

Internal Evaluation

This is currently being redrafted to compensate in some way for Durham so as to offer more detailed analysis. Hopefully to be used for future intelligence led decision making.

However we can clearly qualify the following:

- Excellent collaborative and productive working between partners**
- A robust awareness raising campaign**

Furthermore

- 18 projects involved effective training
- 21 have created/improved infrastructure
- 15 provided resources for participants to continue
- 12 have been mainstreamed
- 7 posts received funding to continue
- Health Projects Development Manager
- Joint Commissioning Group

What can we conclude?

It is too early to tell whether the HTP has had an impact on long term behavioural change. Early signs are good. Prevalence of obesity in Reception and Yr 6 continues to decrease. Anecdotal observations/feedback tells us more people are growing produce, cycling more, spending more time outdoors and participating in physical activities.

However interestingly a survey hot of the press concludes:

- 60.3% choosing a healthier diet
- 50.7% taking more exercise
- 45% cycling and walking more
- 27.3% growing fruit and vegetables