



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CONTRIBUTION OF LOCAL POLICIES TO CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IN WIGAN:



Report Authors

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Background

The report examines the impact of local public policy on cardiovascular disease across the borough of Wigan. This study includes all policy linking and relating to nutrition, physical activity, tobacco and alcohol. The study assesses the potential population health impact of policy modification and considers the potential support for policy change at a local authority level.

In conducting this study, the authors considered international published evidence of 'what works', sought national consensus from a range of leading experts on the potential health impact of policy modification and attempted to secure local consensus amongst senior decision makers across the borough, on how receptive local conditions are to change or introduce related policy.

Introduction

Across England cardiovascular disease (CVD) - is the main cause of mortality accounting for over 40% of all deaths. CVD mortality in the borough of Wigan is significantly above both the national and regional average. Males in the borough have a 46% increased risk (compared to the national average) of dying prematurely from CVD whilst for females this is even worse with a 65% increased risk. A significant proportion of CVD, (80%) is avoidable, in a large part through creating an environment in which healthy lifestyle practices become the 'norm'. This cannot be tackled by the health service in isolation or by focusing efforts on treatment services. Improvements to health at a population level require an integrated, collaborative approach focusing on both individual and population level interventions.

Regeneration, planning, licensing, income, housing, education and employment are all major factors in the ill health that people experience and these are affected by regulation at a European, national and local level. However policies and strategies across these areas are not routinely analysed for the potential effects on health and well-being in the same way as they are for economic or environmental impact and as such a policy introduced to tackle a certain issue can often lead to negative health consequences.

There are opportunities for appropriate measures locally which promote and protect public health at a population level. These may have specific public health outcomes in mind – such as licensing and sales laws to control alcohol supply – or they may have alternative objectives which nevertheless, if planned appropriately, may help to address health issues. Examples are inner city regeneration, local planning legislation, or congestion charging, which can all indirectly influence health. ,Locally, through creating the right environment across the borough, it is estimated that we could prevent 600 premature deaths in the borough each year (Source NCHOD). The report therefore examines the health impact in relation to the four areas of alcohol, nutrition, physical activity and tobacco.

Health Impact of Alcohol

Nationally, alcohol is accountable for 5% of deaths under the age of 60 and its contribution to death and disability even exceeds tobacco. Additionally, there is significant societal harm linked to alcohol misuse. Alcohol related harm costs the UK economy an estimated £20 billion annually and costs the health service £1.7 billion per annum. In Wigan 26% of females and 36% of males consume more alcohol than their recommended amount. There are in the region of 3000 alcohol attributable hospital admissions annually (higher than the regional and national average).

Health Impact of Poor Nutrition

In the UK, around 70,000 fewer people would die prematurely each year if diets matched the nutritional guidelines on fruit and vegetable consumption, saturated fat consumption, added sugar and salt intake. Food related ill health is responsible for about 10% of morbidity and mortality and costs the NHS approximately £6 billion annually. Estimates of current obesity prevalence amongst adults in Wigan are 19% and obesity amongst year six children is 17%. In addition, poor diet across the borough accounts for a significant proportion of hyper tension, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

Health Impact of Physical Inactivity

Physical inactivity is a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, non-insulin- dependent diabetes, hypertension, some forms of cancer, musculoskeletal diseases, psychological disorders and obesity. It is estimated that physical inactivity in England costs £8.2 billion per year. In Wigan 3 in 5 residents only achieve low levels of activity (60% low or no activity). For NHS Ashton Leigh and Wigan the whole cost to the PCT of physical inactivity is estimated to be £5.9 million.

Health Impact of Smoking

Smoking remains the single largest preventable cause of ill health and premature death in the UK population, from respiratory disease (30% contribution), circulatory disease (13% contribution) and cancer. In 2006/07, it is estimated that 445,100 adults over the age of 35 were admitted to NHS hospitals in England with a smoking-related illness, this is equivalent to around 1,200 admissions per day. Across Wigan the estimated smoking prevalence is 26.1% however this varies across wards from 16% at the lowest to 47% at the highest. Smoking accounts for between 500 – 600 deaths per year in the borough.

Policies with Maximum Public Health Impact

There are a mass of policies that have a significant impact on the health (positive and negative) of a local population. Many of these policies can only be affected at a European or national level whilst the health impact of others may not justify the resource required to amend or introduce it.

Therefore, in order to help prioritise the policies that would have the most significant public health impact and that could be introduced at a local level in a borough such as Wigan, the report reviews the available international, national and local literature and then discusses the findings with

recognised national experts in the field of physical activity, alcohol, nutrition and tobacco control. The discussions sought to identify the policies that might have the greatest health impact at a population level and sought to identify any legal or legislative issues that would make it possible or impossible for the policy to be changed at a local authority level. The process allowed the experts to prioritise potential policy change in relation to health impact and local achievability.

The process generated the following policy changes had both a high impact and a high likelihood of adoption at local level:

Alcohol	Nutrition	Physical Activity	Tobacco
Minimum pricing	Providing healthier food in all public sector settings	Planning and transport policy favouring non-car modes	Smoke free films
Rigorous implementation of Licensing Act – including integration with planning and public health	Developing breast feeding policies and improving environments for breastfeeding	Health impact assessment of policies	Smoke free play areas in parks
Policy to increase brief interventions	Limiting fast food outlets through planning policy	Accessible high quality green space including safe routes to school	Prioritisation of illicit tobacco enforcement
Banning drinking in all public open Spaces	Economic incentives for healthier food businesses	Infrastructure for cycling and walking and improving open space for walking	Underage tobacco sales
Restriction on advertising		Enhanced access to free leisure facilities	

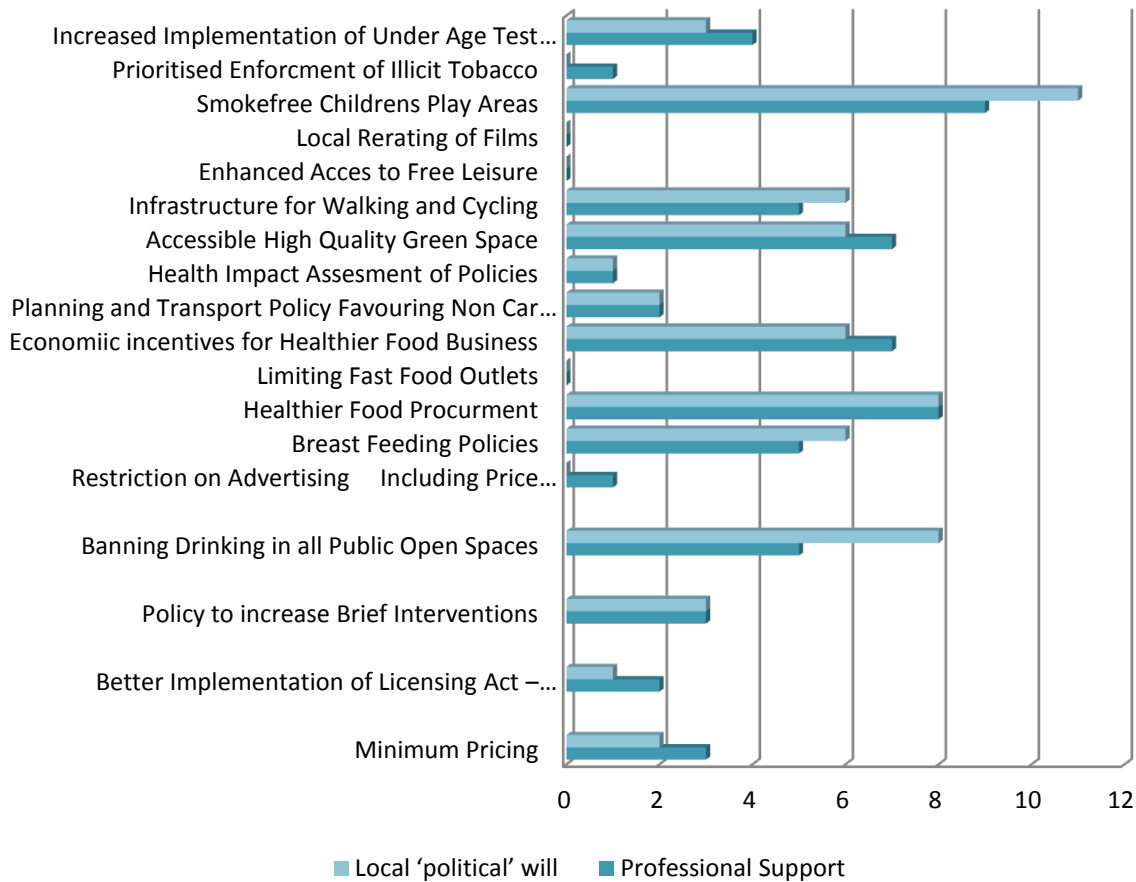
Local Acceptability

It is important to recognise that amendments to policies in a local authority area require significant senior level support. Local support is dependent on a range of factors including the current political and economic environment, competing local priorities, local demographics, political make up of the council and public support. Therefore a policy change that may be pursued and adopted at a given period in time, in one local authority area may be opposed in another and vice versa.

Therefore the report assesses the level of local support in the Wigan borough for the policies identified by the national review. This process allows the authors to prioritise those policies with the greatest likelihood of implementation in the borough. To support this process local stakeholder

interviews were conducted with 14 individuals and with 3 partnership workshops, to explore the current position in the borough in relation to identified policies and examine the potential for these policies to be implemented locally. Scores across interviews and workshops were collated to allow the report to identify the areas with greatest potential in terms of borough priority and senior support. The policies with most significant support, identified through this process are identified in the chart below:

Fig 5: Summary of Policy Across Topics



The chart highlights that Smokefree children’s play areas and healthier food procurement carried the most professional and political support. There is also strong support in the borough to examine the policies relating to green space, the walking and cycling infrastructure, incentives for healthier food businesses, restrictions on alcohol in public open spaces and further examination of policies in relation to minimum pricing of alcohol and policy relating to underage tobacco sales. There is no support either professionally or politically for enhanced access to free leisure, the local rerating of films and limiting fast food outlets.

The following policy areas appear to have the greatest potential for local implementation and should be discussed in detail through local community consultation process.

Alcohol	Nutrition	Physical Activity	Tobacco
Minimum pricing	Providing healthier food in all public sector settings	Accessible high quality green space including safe routes to school	Smoke free play areas in parks
Banning drinking in all public open spaces	Economic incentives for healthier food businesses	Infrastructure for cycling and walking and improving open space for walking	Underage tobacco sales

Costs for Policy Development

It is not within the scope of this review to consider full cost proposals for individual policy implementation. To do this for each policy area requires a significant amount of input to consider existing provision, identified budgets and future development strategy. The review however has identified required actions for the next stage of development and some outline costs moving forward based on a review of activity in other local authority areas.

Policy Area	Required Action	Cost of Implementation
Minimum pricing	Support for the Greater Manchester / North West minimum pricing policy to include consultation with key local stakeholders, review of strategy and support for the regional developments in this area.	Officer time in year 1 in supporting and facilitating the process. 0.2 WTE
Banning drinking in all public open spaces	In terms of the cost of alcohol control zones (aka DPPOs), this varies entirely dependent on the approach. i.e how widely LAs decide to consult, promote, sign it etc.	An average cost is around £10-30k (excluding costs of implementation (police time) Ref: Alcohol Academy
Providing healthier food in all public sector settings	There are fix areas where there is significant scope for nutritional quality to be increased, and in a more efficient manner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuade and influence decision makers so that a higher proportion of budgets are spent on healthier and safe food procurement • Identify, bring together and improve food buying knowledge of key procurement staff and groups involved in food • being intelligent and innovative in tackling the barrier of higher costs • using marketing and education to boost consumer demand. Facilitate and encourage food entrepreneurship • Secure provision of procurement training for producers and suppliers • Ensure change in contractual language of food 	Initial cost is officer time This could be built into the commissioning of the Healthy Business Awards 2012 contract. This would ensure no additional costs incurred In identifying a healthy procurement policy we anticipate that there should be no significant increase in procurement costs.

	procurement to improve the clarity, choice and standards	
Economic incentives for healthier food businesses	<p>There is a need to develop a healthier food business strategy. This needs to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all food-related issues have a greater influence in planning policy • Engage all local and regional authorities with the development and implementation of the strategy • Ensure the integration of existing key activities • Encourage all new developments to provide access to healthier provision • Encourage all new development to have a 'food impact assessment' • Further the development of retail outlets and innovative methods of delivery to benefit consumers, whilst securing supply and choice for all • Assess food supply issues included in Planning Policy Guidance notes 	<p>Initial costs are the development of the strategy, estimated at officer time 4 months. This could be built into the existing Heart of Wigan contract as a designated piece of work. No additional cost implications for the borough</p> <p>The strategy should be fully costed</p>
Accessible high quality green space including safe routes to school	<p>At present many local authorities do not know how much they spend on grounds maintenance, or whether other authorities are achieving the same or better results for less money. Without this information they cannot drive up value for money. Neither can they adopt a more intelligent procurement strategy for grounds maintenance contracts. There are significant savings that can potentially be made in maintenance of green space. For example, the average cost of maintaining one hectare of green space varies by a factor in excess of five, suggesting there is considerable scope for improved value for money in some local authorities</p> <p>Local authority budgeting and reporting on green space expenditure needs to be strengthened to enable better measurement of economy and efficiency. There are a breadth of green space interventions that could be pursued for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One local authority has developed a public private partnership approach and another has handed the management of one of its parks to a voluntary sector organisation. • A number of local authorities have developed voluntary benchmarking clubs or associations to compare the economy and efficiency of aspects of green space management, either locally, or between like authorities <p>We would therefore suggest an Open Space Audit and strategy to fully cost out required investment and potential savings. This work would need to integrate with the boroughs Green Heart Strategy.</p>	<p>Initial costs relate to developing a green space strategy including HIA on existing provision.</p> <p>Subsequent implementation of the green space strategy will obviously vary significantly depending on existing provision including investment and plans within the boroughs Green Heart Strategy, alongside policy specific recommendations outside of Green Heart</p> <p>To give an indication of potential investment levels. A similar approach undertaken in Knowsley indicated investment in strategy implementation in 2010/11 to be £1.6million</p> <p>Ref: Knowsley Green Space Strategy 2010-14</p> <p>In year 1, if the HIA on existing provision were to be undertaken through an external commission we would estimate a cost of</p>

		£50,000.
Infrastructure for cycling and walking and improving open space for walking	<p>Same issues exist as with green space identified above. Investment could range from simple signage measures through to more complex planning infrastructure investment providing a price range of between £10,000 through to several million pounds.</p> <p>Investment into cycling demonstration towns was approximately based on £10 per head of population. There is a review of cost benefit from Cycle England demonstrating a pay back of 3:1 http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/cycling-cities-towns/results/</p> <p>Examples of cycling infrastructure costs can be seen in Annex 1</p> <p>An infrastructure review would therefore need to be conducted in year 1.</p>	<p>Initial costs relate to infrastructure review of existing strategy and forward planning strategy including HIA on existing provision. If this was commissioned as a separate piece of work we would estimate it at a cost of £50,000.</p> <p>There is a significant amount of existing work within WLCT, and the local authority relating to this (in part through the Green Heart Strategy), but this policy area provides an opportunity to accelerate existing programmes.</p> <p>This could therefore potentially be delivered as part of an existing work programme.</p> <p>Heart of Wigan could manage this process, working alongside existing provision in Year 1 within existing budgets</p>
Smoke free play areas in parks	<p>The implementation of a voluntary smokefree code within playground areas on council owned land would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in a short service user scoping survey to evaluate public support and inform policy development • Policy development with People and Families and Places and Neighbourhood Departments • Smokefree and enforcement training for Park Rangers and Wardens • Development of play area signage and public information resources <p>Costing for the purchase of signage (excluding installation) work has been developed as part of the smokefree family's programme across 22 local parks.</p> <p>The programme would therefore look to ingrate into this work through the existing tobacco control programme</p>	<p>£2,000 per 300 people</p> <p>£1,500</p> <p>£2,000 per 75 trainees</p> <p>£8,000</p> <p>Ref: Heart of Mersey</p>
Underage	Delivery of tobacco age of sale train the trainer	£3,500.

tobacco sales	<p>programme to Trading Standards, presentation of training package for use with retailers and associated resources (age of sale posters and refusals registers)</p> <p>Subsequent sessions to local retailers would be undertaken by Trading Standards Officers. Each session would take 1.5 hours to undertake with around 20 retailers and. NB: Retailers are willing to pay a small training charge particularly when they have failed an underage test-purchase exercise as the training cost is cheaper than a fine. Normally Trading Standards Departments issue an informal warning for the first failed test purchase and request retailers to attend a course to prevent future incidents).</p>	<p>Cost are based on staff time @£500 per session</p> <p>A charge of £25 per retailer is usually administered by Trading Standards, which covers the cost of the training session</p> <p>Ref J. McCullough. Heart of Mersey</p>
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Conclusions

There is strong evidence of the impact of public policy on health and a number of examples where policy has been amended or introduced to create a healthier environment. Policy makers are increasingly aware of the health impact of public policy and are now accepting its importance for the prevention of ill health.

It is not appropriate simply to lift interventions from the effectiveness literature and apply them directly to local practice. A policy intervention that may be effective in one population may not necessarily transfer to another and this is reflected within the full report.

Whilst the full report recognises the importance to local stakeholders of improving health education and in some areas identified a reluctance to impose policy on communities, the report does highlight some key areas of consensus between peer reviewed evidence, expert opinion and stakeholder support.

The willingness of very senior local decision makers to support the review process gives a clear indication of the commitment across the public sector to improve the environment and introduce policy that will positively impact on the health of the boroughs population. It is important given the financial constraints facing the public sector that the full costing of any policy implementation is considered however this full financial impact review is outside the brief for this review.

The full report provides a solid foundation for future action across the borough and provides evidence-based recommendations for policy action which have also been through a local reality check with key senior decision makers.

Contact

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