WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Policy

Effective integration of health into urban spatial planning through spatial plans and impact assessment methods

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Research Context

- NICE commissioned research
- Integrating health into the planning process
- Mixed methodology
- 7 reviews
- Cross disciplinary team WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Policy/Centre for Clinical and Health Services Research
- Dissemination: publications + conference
Integration of health in the planning system through policies and appraisals: scope and limit, barriers and facilitators

Aims:

- **Policies:** To investigate the extent to which health issues are being addressed in spatial planning documents: - 10 case studies

- **Appraisals:** To investigate the extent to which health issues are being addressed in appraisals of land use plans and projects (SEA/EIA/HIA) and identify barriers and facilitators- 3 literature reviews
Consideration of health in spatial planning documents - case studies

• Cover range of areas in England, Wales and Scotland & many types of authority
• Planning documents analysed
• Case studies analysis:
  – five health issues/key ‘trigger’ words in spatial planning’s strategies and plans + other health issues
Consideration of health in spatial planning documents - conclusions

• The bad news:
  – most authorities were mediocre or poor in integrating health into planning policy
  – The system does not at present require effective health integration

• The good news
  – Some authorities did well, or very well, especially in relation to health inequalities and physical activity
  – There is generally good consistency between plans at all levels in an authority, from rhetoric, to policy, to detailed plans
  – The system does not impede effective health integration
Issues for discussion

• Why are some cities so much better at integrating health in planning policy?
  – Regeneration, inequity and deprivation?
  – Parallel health partnerships forged?
• Is there need for better legislation or just better guidance and sharing good practice?
• Can a proper focus on sustainable development cover health effectively?
• Are healthy plans resulting in healthy development decisions?
• Impact of localism agenda and NHS reform
Consideration of health in appraisals (SEA/EIA/HIA…) – literature review

- Focussed on appraisal processes of spatial plans and projects
- Based on earlier reviews of evidence:
  - Limited effectiveness of HIA/SEA/EIA in influencing planning process identified in 2 systematic reviews (37 studies)
- What are the factors that impede or facilitate effectiveness of appraisals?
Barriers to the consideration of health in appraisals

- **Knowledge and concepts**
  - The narrow, or broad, understanding of health

- **Partnership**
  - Differences between institutions, limited resources

- **Management and resources**
  - Lack of institutional support/delivery structure for HIA

- **HIA in planning process**
  - Timing of HIA v. policy development
  - Perceived inflexibility of the planning process
  - Poor quality HIA
Facilitators

- Broad definition of health
- Resourced, knowledge-sharing partnership at early policy stage/strategic level
- Joint post/broker organisation
- Build up capacity at institutional level
- National guidance to make up lack of statutory mechanisms
- Develop methodology/evidence base
- Think strategically
Issues for discussion

• Nature of HIA:
  – planning assessment instrument, quasi-statutory requirement
  – method of community engagement, partnership mechanism, knowledge production and management tool?
General conclusions

On research findings:

• Planning system is not the problem
• Barriers predictable and in the hands of the actors
• Difficulties are likely to worsen as resources for l.a. planning reduce
• But facing the problem could be an opportunity for a rethink!

On research methodology:

• Limited evidence base
• Post-development outcome evaluation of health integration needed