

The Route to Health Improvement

Notable Practice Case Study

This practice relates to one (or more) of the below key features :				
Corporate Culture	Policy Development X	Collaboration X	Capacity Building	Governance

Background & Context:

Neath Port Talbot's Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Needs Assessment was prepared by partners from the County Borough Council, the Council for Voluntary Services and the NHS. One of the great advantages of this work was that it made bare the urgent need for a concerted collaborative effort to achieve health improvement in a wide range of areas. The Assessment revealed the hard facts about the comparatively high levels of smoking, drug and alcohol abuse in the County Borough along with concerns about obesity, poor diet and sedentary lifestyles.

Neath Port Talbot's Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership – leaders and senior managers from each partner agency – together agreed that tackling these issues would be a key priority for the first Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy. Moreover, they decided that the progress made in this should be a real test of the effectiveness of their partnership working.

Consequently, in 2004 the Partnership established a multi-agency Health Improvement Group to oversee and steer the development of Strategic Health Improvement Plans for physical activity, nutrition, and smoking.

The Health Improvement Group used Health Alliance Grant money to commission an independent review of the health improvement resource in the County Borough. This provided additional insights and some local service mapping which built on the Needs Assessment. Then, in February 2005, the Health Improvement Group agreed to set up task and finish partnership working groups to develop the following plans:

- Neath Port Talbot Physical Activity and Health Action Plan
- Towards a Smoke-free Neath Port Talbot: A Strategy for Tobacco Control
- Neath Port Talbot Nutrition and Health Action Plan
- Reduction of Infection Action Plan for Neath Port Talbot

Description & Characteristics:

Each plan was drafted by a multi-agency working group with representation from all partners in the Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership. Partners agreed to share the responsibility for leadership and co-ordination in developing these plans. The CVS led for physical activity; the local Authority for tobacco control; the Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust for nutrition and the NPHS for infection control. Each plan represents the culmination of substantial activity by members of the working groups – all of whom have input their expertise. Each working group has considered the evidence of need for a local action plan, the policy and strategy context, the evidence base for recommended actions, the resources available and the process for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. All four plans have been the subject of consultation and each has been amended to reflect local stakeholders' views.

Why was/is this initiative/approach successful?

This approach was successful because the four Strategic Health Improvement Plans – known locally as the SHIPS – provided the Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership with clear information concerning the vision, strategic objectives and actions recommended by the working groups.

Each plan followed the same template and although they are diverse in content and organisation, each working group has considered four key areas for action: knowledge and awareness; access and opportunity; support and motivation; and raising the profile – and the focus on these areas is reflected in the plans.

The approach was also successful because it engaged all partners together in the process of strategy development; it helped establish working relationships between key officers and managers across service boundaries and these relationships are now proving crucial to the next stage of implementation. The approach also enabled partners to learn from each other and to gain insight into each others' agencies – their responsibilities, operation and expertise.

Measures of Success:

Our measure of success for this work is the achievement of several outcome targets for health and well-being, which we have established in our Community Plan, including:

- To reduce the prevalence of obesity
- To ensure all communities have access to fresh fruit and vegetables
- To increase the proportion of adults who exercise sufficiently to satisfy BMA recommendation of five 30 minute periods of moderate intensity physical activity per week
- Reduce the percentage of the adult population who undertake no healthy physical activity
- To increase the proportion of the population aged 16+ who are non-smokers
- To increase the number of smokers accessing smoking cessation services

However, although less tangible, our success might also be measured by the extent to which the work undertaken to date leads to a greater 'maturity' in collaborative working in Neath Port Talbot.

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