

People in Public Health

Expert Hearings

In June 2008 a series of three expert hearings, or discursive workshops, were held at Carnegie Headingley Stadium at which a range of speakers presented evidence from their own experience to an inquiry panel and a public audience. Invited experts came from around the country and represented NHS, local authority, voluntary and third sector stakeholders and a range of perspectives including academics, practitioners supporting lay workers, commissioners and lay people. Speakers were asked to address two of the following four questions, aimed at generating debate around the 'thornier' issues relating to lay involvement in public health:

1. *Why should we bother involving lay people in public health roles? Why should lay people bother getting involved?*
2. *What has been found to work and in what contexts, and what has not? What are the best approaches to involving lay people in public health?*
3. *What are the challenges in involving lay people in developing/delivering public health/health promotion activities and how do these impact upon sustainability and practice?*
4. *What should the government/public sector be doing to support local people to be active in their communities?*

The information on the following headings is available below:

- [NICE Guidance on Community Engagement](#)
- [Springhead Tenants' & Residents' Association](#)
- ['Making Breastfeeding Fashionable'](#)
- [Thornhill Health & Wellbeing Project, Southampton](#)
- [Health Communities Collaborative, South of Tyne and Wear](#)

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- [The Community Health Educators Project](#)
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NICE Guidance on Community Engagement

Prof Chris Drinkwater has a longstanding interest in community development and community engagement through his involvement in the development of a healthy living centre in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Chris spoke about the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guidelines on Community Engagement, the development of which he has been involved in, alongside health professionals, patients, their carers and the public. The presentation gave a brief overview of the framework for community engagement and covered a range of issues including: prerequisites and challenges, organisational and culture change, levels of engagement and power, infrastructure and evaluation. Chris offered a view on the broad field of community engagement from the perspective of the NICE guidelines and highlighted some key issues for consideration. The NICE guidelines on Community Engagement are aimed at a range of people, from policy-makers and commissioners, to community representatives.

Further information can be found at <http://www.nice.org.uk/PH9>.

[Click here to view Chris Drinkwater's presentation.](#)

Springhead Tenants' & Residents' Association

Jenny Scott is based in Bradford and describes herself as 'a very active community activist' and is involved at both grassroots and strategic levels. She set up Springhead Tenants' and Residents' Association with the help of a neighbour in 1999, has been involved in the Patient and Public Involvement Forum at her local hospital, and is also a member of the local community network. Jenny also runs a youth group in her local community and is currently setting up a project based around teenage pregnancy. This aims to offer a 'safe place' for teenagers where they can access sexual health information and contraception. Jenny's presentation highlighted the difficulties and challenges that small, community-level projects face both in terms of sustainability and accessing funding.

'Making Breastfeeding Fashionable'

'Little Angels' Breastfeeding Support is a community interest company set up by mothers, for mothers to offer peer support around breastfeeding. Michelle Atkin is one its' directors and, in her presentation, she described the transition from being a volunteer-led group to becoming a social enterprise, independent of the NHS. Michelle offered a peer support perspective with regard to the struggle to access long-term strategic funding, and the service being recognised and acknowledged by professionals. Her presentation covered topics including: why promote breastfeeding, how to promote breastfeeding through peer support, partnership working, challenges and successes. Michelle offered insights concerning the challenge of partnership working with the public sector, the use of lay people in delivering peer support for breastfeeding, and the advantages of using both paid workers and unpaid volunteers.

Thornhill Health & Wellbeing Project, Southampton

Gwyneth Baker is a Community Health Development Officer for Thornhill Health & Wellbeing Project (THAWP) and Pauline Vaughan is a volunteer on the project. THAWP is based on an estate in Southampton and is run by a partnership of New Deal for Communities, Southampton City Council, Southampton PCT and the residents of Thornhill. Gwyneth discussed how THAWP was established and the training programme offered for volunteers which has been accredited by the National Open College Network. The course has been developed to reflect participants' interests and helps volunteers develop skills and knowledge for promoting health and wellbeing in their community. Gwyneth also spoke about the challenges in involving lay people in activities and how these problems impact upon sustainability and practice. Pauline spoke about the project from the perspective of a volunteer. She highlighted the range of activities that THAWP offers, including smoking cessation, Tai Chi and other exercise classes, and activities geared toward diet and nutrition. Pauline also talked about the positive outcomes that she has personally gained from being involved in the project.

Health Communities Collaborative, South of Tyne and Wear

Maggie Woodward is from Gateshead PCT and works on the Gateshead Healthy Communities Collaborative (HCC), South of Tyne and Wear. The HCC consists of eight teams comprised of members from a variety of backgrounds including health, the local authority, voluntary sector and local residents. Maggie gave a brief history of how the project started, the collaborative methodology used, what was easy, the challenges and some examples of activities that are offered by the project. Community members, Maureen Middleton, Pat Nesbitt and Lesley Watts, who volunteer through the HCC, talked about the activities that they have been involved with in their local communities. These include the 'Superman Play', which was devised to raise awareness of a bowel cancer screening programme in a fun and entertaining way, and the distribution of beer mats to promote bowel cancer awareness.

[Click here to view the HCC presentation.](#)

June 13th 2008

The Community Health Educators Project

Jon Hindley is a co-ordinator for the Community Health Educators (CHEs) programme, which is part of the Healthy Living Network, Leeds. Jon provided a brief retrospective of the programme including origin, history and philosophy. The nature of the project was explained along with a description of its' two main components: the training of community members, and CHEs sharing simple healthy living activities and messages with their peers. The presentation covered issues such as challenges facing the project in relation to its nature and set up, what worked well in terms of member retention, creation of the "CHEs family", training, employability, community coverage and capacity building. The presentation concluded with a brief summing up of the project, what has not worked well and an explanation of the projects' current and future plans.

[Click here to view the CHEs presentation.](#)

Lay Health Trainers: Learning from the USA

Shelina Visram is a Postgraduate Research Associate at Northumbria University. Shelina's presentation had two foci. The first explored the challenges to implementing the national health trainers programme in the UK. Shelina's presentation drew upon previous and ongoing reviews of the existing health trainers literature, as well as a local evaluation of the programme in the North East of England. The second part of the presentation explored findings from Shelina's recent trip to two sites in the USA, where lay workers have an established role in delivering public health activities, particularly amongst underserved populations. These projects are 'Project REACH' (Racial and Ethnic Action for Community Health) in Atlanta, and the North Carolina Breast Cancer Screening Programme. The presentation concluded with key learning from the US which could be applied in UK context, including implications for health trainers.

[Click here to view Shelina Visram's presentation.](#)

Speakeasy

Paul Casey is assistant project manager on the Speakeasy Programme. The FPA's (Family Planning Association) Speakeasy course for parents and carers is a nationally available course that offers non-threatening, group-based training to enable parents and carers to talk positively and confidently with their children about sex, relationships and growing up. Paul's presentation addressed some of the challenges involved in delivering the Speakeasy Facilitator Training Programme and how these challenges impact upon sustainability and practice. The presentation provided a brief explanation of the Speakeasy course and information about the Speakeasy Facilitator Training Programme. The presentation discussed issues both from both an organisational perspective, and from the perspective of lay people. Paul highlighted why organisations should bother involving lay people, and why lay people should bother getting involved.

Further information can be found [here](#).

[Click here to view the Speakeasy presentation.](#)

Healthy Communities Programme

Liam Hughes is the National Adviser for Healthy Communities for the Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA), an agency working with local government. Liam's work for the IDeA includes advising the Agency on health and health inequalities and supporting the Healthy Communities Programme (and related work streams) around local partnerships. Liam's presentation provided a brief overview of the Healthy Communities Programme with examples of what works in getting lay people involved in public health. Liam presented a range of initiatives working successfully around the country. He also addressed the issue of what the public sector, and local government in particular, can do to support this work. Liam indicated that further research and evaluation are necessary in order to put additional initiatives into practice.

[Click here to view the IDeA presentation.](#)

Practice Experience of Involving People in Public Health

Gwen Ellison is the Health Trainer Hub Lead for Northumberland Tyne and Wear. Her presentation was based on her experiences of being involved in a range of community-based activities in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. These include developing a Healthy Living Centre and a Healthy Living Network and developing the health trainer programme. Gwen's presentation raised a number of key questions: 'lay people' - who are they? What is public health/health promotion? What is sustainability? The presentation included information about the challenges and opportunities for involving lay people in public health delivery and also in development and planning. The presentation discussed the value and knowledge that lay workers bring to their community and some of the barriers that are encountered.

[Click here to view Gwen Ellison's presentation.](#)

June 25th 2008

Volunteer Tutors and the Expert Patients Programme

Anne Kennedy is a Research Fellow in the National Primary Care Research and Development Centre. Anne spoke about the national evaluation of the Expert Patients Programme (EPP), a government programme to provide self care support for people with long term conditions. Anne used the findings from four of the studies that formed part of the national evaluation to discuss the challenges of managing and sustaining the EPP voluntary tutor workforce. The presentation drew upon a process evaluation looking at how the EPP was rolled out by PCTs; a survey of volunteer tutors; a case study of a voluntary sector run EPP; and an evaluation of the on-line tutor programme. Some background to the EPP was provided, along with information around how volunteer EPP tutors were recruited, and challenges that the EPP faced. The presentation concluded with some suggested solutions to those challenges, noting that the programme is no longer managed by the Department of Health.

Further information can be found [here](#).

Making Public Health & Health Promotion Everyone's Business

Farzana Latif has worked in education, health promotion and public health and is now an independent consultant in Public Health, based in Slough. She has been involved in the health trainer initiative and many of the examples of training discussed in the presentation relate to this work. The presentation focused on some of the challenges involved in recruiting and training lay people, particularly among seldom heard groups, including those whose first language is not English and those who have been excluded from the education system. Farzana highlighted the need to draw upon innovative, inclusive approaches to engaging and supporting people who might be put-off by traditional approaches to recruitment and training. She described a training model with three different levels: Level 1 - working with communities to raise awareness; Level 2 - working in groups to raise awareness and Level 3 - working on behaviour change on a one-to-one basis.

Commissioning for Health and Well-being

Penny Spring is a Consultant in Public Health at Nottinghamshire County PCT. Penny presented from a commissioner perspective, and highlighted the context in which public health commissioning is now taking place and the challenges presented by this. The key issues addressed were the challenges in involving lay people in public health and the opportunities that the new commissioning framework might bring. Penny gave a brief description of the commissioning process and current issues, such as World Class Commissioning, NHS reorganisation and the commissioner/provider split. Penny raised key challenges, including limited sharing of good practice, lack of evidence and ineffective third sector commissioning. Penny provided suggested possible 'next steps' for commissioning to support lay people in public health, highlighting World Class Commissioning as an opportunity to do things differently.

A Long-term and Strategic Investment: Hull PCT

Jo Stott is the Public Health Lead for Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust. Jo's presentation looked at the importance of involving lay people in public health and the challenges to their involvement. Issues such as the value of lay people, payment/incentives and professional attitudes were highlighted, as well as the need to build positive relationships with individuals, communities and the voluntary sector. Jo looked at what the government and public sector should be doing to support local people to be active. Examples of successful work in Hull were given including Healthwise Hull, the work of Community Health Development and Public Health Outreach Workers, work with the Gypsy & Traveller Community, and the Voluntary Sector Procurement process. The presentation concluded with a summary of why lay involvement is important.

Walking the Way to Health

Unfortunately, Stella Goddard was unable to attend the expert hearings at short notice but has kindly provided a copy of her presentation.

Stella Goddard is the Project Manager for Walking the Way to Health. Walking the Way to Health (WHI) is the largest national body promoting led health walks. It is a joint initiative between Natural England and the British Heart Foundation. The main aim of WHI is to encourage people, particularly those who take little exercise, to get involved in regular, short walks and to access their local green spaces. Using volunteers to deliver led health walks provides a viable, replicable way to provide sustainable health walks. The main topics covered are: why involve volunteers and advantages to both the organisation, walk leaders and participants. The presentation also highlighted the needs of volunteers, such as having their costs reimbursed, knowing what is expected of them, and knowing who can help them, along with support offered to volunteers through networks, advice and walk leader training.

Further information can be found at: <http://www.whi.org.uk/>

[Click here to view Stella Goddard's presentation.](#)