Working Together to Promote Active Travel

Carl Petrokofsky
Public Health Specialist, Healthy Places team
Public Health England
1. PHE & Health and the Built Environment
2. Impact of Road Transport on Health
3. Reimagining how the public could interact with space and transport
4. What might we do about it
PHE & Health and the Built Environment
About PHE

Our functions and the things we deliver to our stakeholders:

We do this through world-class science, advocacy, partnerships, knowledge and intelligence, and the delivery of specialist public health services.
Healthy places

The built environment affects us all. The planning, design, management and maintenance of the built environment has a long-term impact upon people and communities.

It is widely acknowledged that the quality of life, prosperity, health and wellbeing of an individual is heavily influenced by the ‘place’ in which they live or work. (House of Lords, 2016)
Health and the built environment

A range of environmental factors impact on health and wellbeing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Built environment</th>
<th>Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Density and mix of land use</td>
<td>• Fitness, cardiovascular health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Housing quality, supply and affordability</td>
<td>• Obesity and diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Street layout and connectivity</td>
<td>• Cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transport</td>
<td>• Mental health and wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open space, play space, green space and community space</td>
<td>• Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to public services, employment and other services</td>
<td>• Respiratory health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to fresh food</td>
<td>• Accidents and falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Air quality and noise</td>
<td>• Wellbeing and community participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mitigation of extreme weather events and changing climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Healthy environments can:

- promote physical activity in everyday life (walking, cycling), which can help maintain healthy weights
- facilitate easy access to healthy, affordable food
- promote active travel, fewer injuries, connected neighbourhoods, cleaner air and economic development
The impact of road transport
The impacts of transport on health

Physical inactivity
Air Pollution
Road Traffic Collisions
Poor accessibility

Health Inequalities

Obesity
Cancer
Heart Disease
Diabetes
Lung disease
Child development
Mental health
Deaths & Injuries
Social inclusion
Community Breakdown
Economic, social & health opportunities

With acknowledgements to Lucy Saunders
• **Active travel** is walking or cycling as an alternative to motorised transport for the purpose of making everyday journeys.

• **Building walking or cycling into daily routines** is a key way of promoting physical activity.

• People who cycle for travel purposes (rather than simply for recreation) are **4X as likely to meet physical activity guidelines** as those who don’t.
## Physical Activity contribution to reduction in risk of mortality and long term conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Risk reduction</th>
<th>Strength of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>20-35%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHD and Stroke</td>
<td>20-35%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2 Diabetes</td>
<td>35-40%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colon Cancer</td>
<td>30-50%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast Cancer</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip Fracture</td>
<td>36-68%</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>20-30%</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s Disease</td>
<td>20-30%</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional limitation, elderly</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of falls</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osteoarthritis disability</td>
<td>22-80%</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Motorised road transport provides many benefits to society (access, comfort and convenience) and has become safer

2. Increasing car dependency has contributed to increasing inequalities

3. The most affluent receive more public spending on their transport needs than the poorest

4. Disadvantaged areas tend to have a higher density of main roads, leading to:
   - poorer air quality
   - higher noise levels
   - higher collision rates
Traffic Influences the Social Realm

**Heavy Traffic**

- "People don't communicate unless they have to"
- "Quite anonymous - we only know our immediate neighbours"
- "Ordinary, quiet people"

HEAVY TRAFFIC: 21,130 VEHICLES PER DAY
1.15 friends per person / 2.8 acquaintances

- "The traffic's like a mountain range, cutting you off from the other side of the road"
- "People just go from their cars to their houses"

**Light Traffic**

- "People stay for a while and put down roots"
- "There is really a sense of community - we look after each other"

LIGHT TRAFFIC: 140 VEHICLES PER DAY
5.35 friends per person / 6.1 acquaintances

- "We have some good neighbourhood friends"
- "There's good communication between the houses and a feeling of togetherness"

Re-imagining a more active world
What if streets were not just large car parks?
The adults might follow the children
What we might do about it:
Planning for a more sustainable, active and healthier future
Healthy places programme

With OGDs, wider stakeholders and local authority

System Leadership / Advocacy

Building Networks & Partnerships

Skills/ Capacity Building

Evidence

Strong network of partners

Development of and access to the evidence base

Tools, training and inter-professional learning
PHE Briefing and Evidence Reviews

Active Design
Planning for health and wellbeing through sport and physical activity

Everybody active, every day
An evidence-based approach to physical activity

Local action on health inequalities:
Improving access to green spaces

Healthy people, healthy places briefing
Obesity and the environment: increasing physical activity and active travel

planning healthier places – report from the Reuniting Health with Planning Project

planning healthy-weight environments – a TCPA unifying health
New tool on the wider determinants of health

http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/wider-determinants
Key Messages
Transport and Active Travel

- Develop and strengthen **cross-sectoral working** both within local authorities as well with other key local agencies;

- Support the involvement of transport planning colleagues in JSNAs, health and wellbeing boards and strategies

- Ensure **monitoring and evaluation** of Travel Plans

- Use **modelling tools** such as WHO HEAT on key transport issues to understand impact

- (and, of course, the new UCL Street Mobility Toolkit!)
Making active travel safer for children and families

- Ensure that Travel Plans for new developments prioritise active travel over car transport as part of designing safe and attractive neighbourhoods.

- Work with schools and workplaces on travel planning to promote safe modes of active travel to and from settings on a daily basis.
Promote active travel through design

- Design around the **user experience**
- Involve and take account of the **needs of different members of the community** (e.g., people with disabilities, children and young people, older people) to create local solutions
- Address possible **conflicts of interest** to meet local community needs;
- **Walking** is one of the least expensive and most broadly accessible forms of physical activity
In Summary

Investment in walking and cycling infrastructure or behaviour change programmes can be expected to deliver low cost, high-value dividends for individual health, the NHS, the transport system and the economy as a whole.

Health promoting transport systems are pro-business and support economic prosperity. They enable optimal travel to work with less congestion, collisions, pollution, and they support a healthier workforce.
Designing better places for walking and cycling
Thank you

Healthypeople.healthyplaces@phe.gov.uk