

## Re-uniting Planning and Health: tackling the implementation gaps in evidence, governance and knowledge, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (January 2015-June 2017)

This ESRC interdisciplinary seminar series has an overall aim of considering how public health can contribute to urban planning and the delivery of healthy sustainable communities. This series offers a forum for academics and practitioners to discuss the obstacles to reuniting planning and health and identify workable and economically viable solutions that help deliver health outcomes, wellbeing and equity in cities and neighbourhoods. The series is organised by the Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environment at UWE in collaboration with Public Health England (PHE) and partners from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University of Liverpool, Cardiff University, Newcastle University and Bristol University. This ESRC seminar series supports Public Health England's Healthy People, Healthy Places Programme.

The first seminar organised by Public Health England on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 brought together 70 delegates from across the country, representing academic, health and planning professions. Many local authorities attended. Findings included the issue of difference in evidence base between planners and public health practitioners, the need to address silos, the need to build capacity and for change in policy at national level. Eg:

1. To reconnect planning and health, research councils need to change the way research priorities are set, to challenge medical paradigms and the instrumental mindset of cost effectiveness.
2. There is a need to develop integrated policy-making across professions and build bridges to better understand the roles of planners and public health professionals and by so doing to better identify their evidence needs.
3. At national level, The NPPF needs to give planning for health a higher priority. Priorities include reducing fuel poverty and designing urban environments that are dementia friendly.
4. At local level, local authorities need to:
  - a. Find ways to integrate public health into the planning evidence base.
  - b. Address the issue of viability: shift the meaning to understand the long term impacts of new development on health.
  - c. Use Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) and share data with public health to inform the local plan.
  - d. Engage with communities to generate the health evidence base for the local plan.
5. Health Impact Assessment (HIA) has been identified as a useful tool, but we need to further research when and at which level to use it. In particular it is important to research HIA effectiveness and also to develop HIA at strategic level (ie Local Plan).
6. Capacity building: there are needs for a reform of planning education, for a Healthy Planning Research Institute and to develop cross-fertilisation between public health and planning.

Some of these themes will be explored in subsequent seminars. Further information

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/et/research/spe/seminarseries.aspx>

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