

CASE STUDY: WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD PUBLIC HEALTH CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

The Cheshire and Merseyside Healthy Providers Network (C&M HP network) is a voluntary, professional, peer support network formed in the summer of 2012 that aims to provide a unified approach to health improvement across Cheshire & Merseyside (C&M). The network currently meets on a bi-monthly basis and is keen to establish an online forum as well. Its purpose is quite simply to provide a collaborative forum for acute and provider trusts to work together on the common theme of improving health and reducing health inequalities.

Network membership is comprised of staff with senior organisational responsibility and accountability for health improvement initiatives, both at individual and organisational level, typically represented by assistant directors of nursing and health improvement managers. The network has support from the directors of public health and Board level support from all participating organisations. Senior management support is provided by Liverpool Community Health Trust via a consultant level (public health) chairing role. Strategic support is provided by Liverpool Community Health and Alder Hey Hospital but operationally it works on a distributed leadership model, with all participating organisations actively leading on specific work streams.

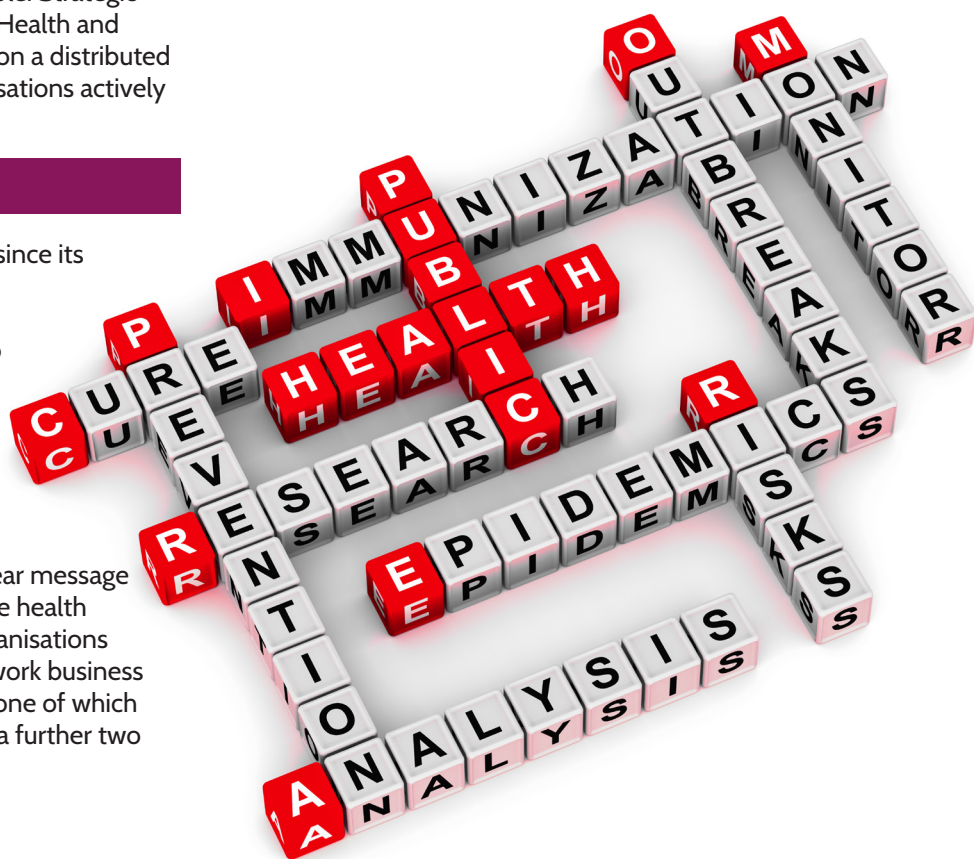
Key Outcomes

The C&M HP network is continually evolving since its inception in 2012. One of its main outcomes is providing a framework of public health excellence for individuals and organisations to work towards. This framework is endorsed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and all participating organisations are supported to achieve WHO's "healthy hospital and setting" status.

This is highly regarded and demonstrates a clear message of integrated working approaches between the health sector and local authorities. Of the eleven organisations that are currently actively participating in network business two organisations already hold accreditation, one of which achieved this with the network's support, and a further two are working towards this.

In addition to this the C&M HP network has also achieved:

- Branding and identity of the Cheshire and Merseyside Healthy Providers Network (CMHPN) with subsequent annual communication and campaign plans.
- Cheshire & Merseyside Directors of Public Health funding and support, and a Public Health Observatory commitment for refreshing the 'Top Tips for Healthy Providers' publication in 2014.
- Network newsletters for cascading consistent health promotion messages across all partner organisations, showcasing successes.
- Peer support for all network members in tackling health promotion challenges, e.g. WHO/HPH accreditation applications and guiding individual organisations with their public health strategies.
- Supported Mersey Care High Secure Services in gaining their WHO accreditation.
- Production of the WHO Accreditation Step by Step framework document.



- Stakeholder engagement and objective setting sessions completed, sharing of ideas, best practice and support for tackling barriers.
- Established core membership that has sustained the group.
- Partnerships with Public Health England and CHaMPS collaborative service in place to deliver coordinated campaigns.
- Aligned Provider Health Promotion Campaign Calendar - Consistent messages delivered across the region and network organisations e.g. Sun Safety: a network member organised I-Van and identified members of staff who required treatment, Stoptober: A network member reported contact with over 1,000 staff and 35 sign ups, another persuaded a colleague to sign up and she has become the face of the campaign.

Key Aims

In C & M there was a local desire and willingness to work together on joint health improvement initiatives to avoid duplication of effort and share good public health practice. The C&M PH network was developed as a result of providers across Cheshire and Merseyside wishing to come together to share good practice and to support each other in adopting a sustained and consistent approach to the implementation of health promotion strategies within acute and provider trust settings.

The network has a clear vision: “C&M Healthy Providers Network are committed to putting health and wellbeing at the heart of every contact with patients, clients and its own workforce and to promote WHO accreditation for all provider settings in C&M”.

After attracting investment and support from the regional directors of public health at the end of 2013, and following an objective setting session with its network stakeholders, the future aims of the Health Promoting Provider Network are to:

- work collectively to identify opportunities and enablers to implement health promoting strategies within acute trusts and provider settings, for the benefit of staff, service users, their families and the communities they serve.
- support provider organisations to aspire to gain World Health Organisation (WHO) and/or Royal Society of Public Health accreditation.
- establish a repository of best practice examples, e.g. job descriptions, annual reports
- coordinate network-wide health promotion campaigns

The network has set itself seven core objectives to enable these aims to be met:

1. Increase membership: engage local secondary care trusts as a priority, and where necessary seek executive support from local directors of public health (DsPH) to influence the engagement of their local secondary care Trusts.

2. Health promotion campaign delivery: In conjunction with the Health Promotion Calendar, CMHPN Quarterly Newsletters, Public Health England initiatives and supporting appropriate social marketing campaigns with the CHAMPS collaborative service.
3. Increase the number of HPH accredited members: With a specific focus on influencing Secondary Care Trusts to commit to becoming accredited health promoting organisations.
4. Produce evidence-based resources: Revise and review the previous 'Health Promoting Hospital Top Tips' in collaboration with the public health intelligence network, WHO Guide and Benefits of Membership documents.
5. Raise the profile of the network
6. Sustainability and Exit Strategy Plan for April 2015 and onwards
7. Build public health capacity of the network and its members

Key Stages of Set-Up

Set up of the network was led by the executive lead for public health at Alder Hey Children's Hospital, who contacted directors of nursing to ask for their support in improving the health and wellbeing of the population that the network serves. The first meeting was held in June 2012 and terms of reference and membership outlined, with further meetings taking place on a bi-monthly basis since.

How it Works

Current participating organisations include:-

- Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
- Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust
- Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Liverpool Women's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- The Royal Liverpool University Hospital NHS Trust
- Mersey Care Secure Services NHS Trust
- Cheshire & Wirral Partnerships NHS Trust
- Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust
- The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust

Readymade Forum

The network has established a ready made forum for acute and provider trusts as well as local authority commissioners to engage with, in order to increase public health activity at organisational and individual level. This allows a unified approach to be adopted in C&M, as social marketing campaigns have a single delivery forum. Such organisations are significant local employers and centres of community activity so they can, and should, play a significant role in improving health and reducing inequalities.

Resources

The network primarily operates on an informal and voluntary basis with shared responsibility across all member organisations. The network's success and potential has been recognised by C&M Directors of Public Health who have provided resources to aid with its administration. They have also pledged their support towards encouraging local health care providers to actively engage with the network.

Further academic support from the region's public health observatory has also been made available to refresh the 'Top Tips for Healthy Providers' publication in 2014.

Key Challenges

- **Engagement** - engaging some local organisations has been challenging, yet project support between meetings is increasing active participation.
- **Capacity** - currently there is limited capacity within organisations to ensure health and wellbeing is treated as a priority, however it is hoped that the capacity created through the network will help to address this.
- **Evaluation and Impact** - difficulties in establishing exact footfall figures for public/staff health promoting contacts that have been achieved following our coordinated campaigns. The 'Top Tips for Health Promoting Providers 2014' will provide evaluation recommendations to help enable this impact to be measured.

Key Learning

It has proven difficult at times to ensure that membership of the group is correct. Some organisations have taken time to respond to emails regarding joining the group and this has been difficult. On reflection it might have been better to ask existing group members to nominate a contact first, in order to gain a health promotion lead and to contact them directly. In 2014 the network will be working with local directors of public health to galvanise support for the providers in their areas.

Sustainability

Communication messages are agreed at each meeting and then fed back to providers, this process ensures that health promotion is being discussed at all levels and is focused on as a priority, thus ensuring sustainability of the initiative.

Next Steps

- The ambition is to have participation by all acute / provider trusts across C&M by the end of 2014.
- Explore growing the network beyond C&M for profile raising and potential benchmarking best practice with other regions.

- The 2014 health promotion campaigns will be launched, and linked to the shared priorities of network members, the C&M DsPH, PHE and champs collaborative service.
- Launch the 2014 'Top Tips for Healthy Providers'.

Supporting Material

The following are available as appendices to this case study:

- Appendix 1 - Network Work Programme
- Appendix 2 - Network Newsletter

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