



ENGLISH NATIONAL HEALTHY UNIVERSITIES NETWORK

EXPLORING NETWORKING MODELS - UPDATED

1. Introduction

The current Healthy Universities Network Development Plan includes the commitment to *'liaise with HEIs and partners in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to explore how this project can support development'* and to *'work with existing regional networks to explore ways of supporting development'*.

This paper sets out current networking activity relating to healthy universities at sub-national, national and international levels and is intended as a starting point for discussion about networking models which will take place at the National Healthy Universities Network meeting in September 2010.

2. Sub-National Networking

Networking at a sub-national level has developed to varying extents across England in the last 3-5 years. Below is a summary of activity we are aware of by region – we hope to be able to provide further updates at the meeting.

- **North West:** The current national network grew out of an informal network which originated in North West of England, but there has been no focused regional-level activity or networking.
- **North East:** VC representatives have met regionally and there was interest in a regional approach to Healthy Universities. A second meeting is planned to agree a forward plan.
- **Yorkshire and Humber:** The Regional Teaching Public Health Network (TPHN) established a Healthy Universities Network in the region in early 2008 jointly funded with HEFCE/Yorkshire Universities. The network has members from each of the HEIs in the region. The TPHN will close in September 2010 which leaves the future of the group uncertain. There is a general consensus that the group would like to continue if an appropriate support mechanism can be identified.
- **West Midlands:** There has been limited activity to date, but the West Midlands Public Health Workforce Development Network (formerly the Teaching Public Health Network) has a HEI/FE stakeholder group who plan to take forward the Healthy University agenda. The Network Manager has joined the National Network to represent this group.
- **East Midlands:** The 'Student Health and Welfare Group' is a current East Midlands University Association (EMUA) Group started in 2009. As a result of a shift in the

focus of EMUA, support for the group will be withdrawn from January 2011. There is general consensus that the group would like to continue if a support mechanism can be identified.

- **East of England:** To be reported at meeting.
- **London:** We are not aware of any regional-level activity.
- **South East:** We are not aware of any regional-level activity.
- **South West:** Regular meetings of TPHN have been organised in South West Region with regular Healthy University agenda items. Two pieces of regional work have been funded by Universities South West focusing on Healthy University related initiatives and sensible drinking initiatives. A regional seminar planned for 2011 supported by remainder TPHN funding to disseminate results of research projects and catalyse a regional healthy university approach. This workshop will also include information and updates on national projects.

3. Other UK Countries

Due to funding arrangements, the main geographical remit of the National Network is England. However, membership is open to interested organisations/individuals from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and we currently have two Welsh HEIs, one Scottish HEI and a Scottish NHS authority represented.

The Project team are currently communicating with relevant lead stakeholders in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales with a view to exploring future developments and collaboration.

4. International Networking

There is growing interest in Healthy Universities worldwide, with networks and initiatives being established within a number of countries and regions (e.g. Germany, Spain, Ibero-America, Asia Pacific). Mark Dooris has participated in telephone discussions exploring the potential for networking at a European level, and convened an exploratory meeting at the recent World Health Promotion Conference in Geneva to discuss opportunities for international networking. This was attended by 25 people from 11 different countries and identified a number of potential benefits:

- open up opportunities for research collaboration
- share good practice and lessons learnt
- show strength politically and develop lobbying/advocacy role
- share country-/region-specific health promoting university criteria and potentially agree common criteria
- facilitate and advocate for an integrated approach to addressing sustainable development and health, through both institutional policy/practice and curriculum/research.

It was agreed that rather than seek to develop an overarching international network, the first step should be to facilitate communication and links between existing national, regional and language-based networks. In order to facilitate this, existing networks will add links on their websites and Mark Dooris will propose a web-based 'hub' within the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) webpages.

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