



Teesside  
University

Inspiring success

# Communicating Health as part of a Whole System Healthy University Approach

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# Key messages

- Running ad-hoc health promotion campaigns in isolation is less likely to achieve sustainable lifestyle change
- A comprehensive 'joined-up' approach i.e. whole-system approach much more likely to bring success



# The guidance package offers:

- An approach to health promotion activities which has a whole university approach embedded within it
- A planning framework for designing and developing campaigns and activities
- Advice on identifying key partners and potential for collaboration in delivering health promotion campaigns, events and activities



# Key Concepts and Terms

## Public Health

'the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society'  
(Acheson, 1988)

## Health promotion

'the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health' (WHO, 1986).



# Key Concepts and Terms

## Health Education

- Tends to involve simply giving information
- Can also include, health literacy, skills development, consciousness raising (Green and Tones, (2010)
- Less effective in changing behaviour

## Whole-systems approach

- Securing high level commitment and leadership
- Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders
- Combining high visibility health-related projects with system-level organisation and developmental change



# Key Concepts and Terms

- Health promotion campaigns, events and activities
  - Processes which aim to improve the health of the population via the communication of health
  - Different communication methods used e.g. social media, mass media
  - Focus on a particular population and/or health issue
  - Aimed at raising awareness, shifting attitudes or changing behaviours
  - Involve key stakeholders



# Key Concepts and Terms

- Social Marketing
  - used to develop activities aimed at changing or maintaining people's behaviour for their benefit.
  - commercial marketing ultimately seeks to influence consumer behaviour for profit, social marketing encourages behaviours that provide benefit for individuals and society as a whole



# Wider context and evidence base



- Nationally - Department of Health has lead on campaigns
  - + Key role of other issue-based charities also
- Locally – Public Health – PCT– develop and lead local campaigns
  - + Working with LA and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations
- Future changes
  - Public Health England (nationally)
  - Public health moving to local authority control (locally)

# Wider context and evidence base -Social marketing

National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC) - Established by Government in 2006, as the centre of excellence for social marketing and behaviour change in the UK.

## Going beyond messaging and communications

- Simply being aware of the risks will not change behaviour
- People often don't like being told what to or bury their heads in the sand
- Just using posters, media and leaflets is unlikely to make an impact
- One size fits all approach will not have the desired effect



# Wider context and evidence base -Social marketing – what works?

- Consistent messages over time from a credible source
- A focus on positives rather than negatives – although there are some exceptions where using ‘scare tactics’ has been shown to be effective (e.g. drink driving campaigns)
- Robust evaluation including short term and long-term health outcomes
- Agreed targets between stakeholders
- Must be clear which segments of the population are to be targeted
- Need to look at the problem through the eyes of the students
- Understand the reasons why people behave the way they do
- Bring about sustainable change
- Use a mix of interventions

## Wider context and evidence base

- In terms of Healthy Universities
  - Communicating health via high profile campaigns, events and activities can contribute to Healthy University goals through:
    - effective targeting of information
    - enhanced health awareness
    - increased consciousness of the wider economic, political, social and environmental determinants of health
    - integration of health into the routine life of the institution.
  - However, it is also clear that this communication will be more effective if it forms part of a comprehensive **whole system approach**
    - Health-enhancing policy
    - Create supportive living, learning and working environments
    - Develop life-skills
    - Strengthen community-level action – advocacy, mediation and enablement

# University Context



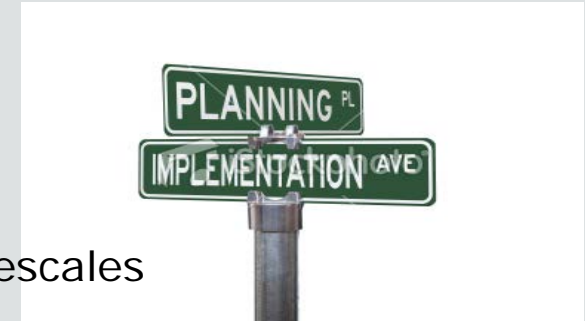
- Health promotion activities can take a variety of forms:
  - Half or full day events on a particular issue or number of issues e.g. healthy eating, mental health
  - Sustained campaigns focusing on a particular issue, or on different issues over a set period of time
- Types of activities can include:
  - Taster sessions, information stalls, interactive activities, workshops, short courses, comprehensive communications strategy, volunteering and training
- Communications methods used:
  - Website, social networking, texting, email, virtual learning environment, posters, leaflets, student newspaper, magazine and radio



# University Context

- Challenge of 'integrating' health within a university
  - Health not a central aim!
  - Therefore when planning and implementing campaigns essential to align to core business and objectives of the university
    - Volunteering and training
    - Curriculum – e.g student projects and assignments
    - Aligning to local, regional and national campaigns
    - Evidence-informed
    - Work across the institution and with external agencies
    - Try to build sustainability by building in to longer term annual cycle of university and community events/campaigns

## Planning and Implementation - What to consider?



- Academic year means working within imposed timescales
- Important to prioritise what campaigns to run
- Ensure effective use of, and appropriately targeted, resources
- Needs and priorities
  - Needs analysis can be time consuming and costly
  - Alternative options include
    - » Use existing information – staff surveys, specialist audits eg healthy workplace award needs assessments
    - » Harness undergraduate and postgraduate research – students carry out needs assessment for dissertation or thesis
    - » Student Union
    - » Service audits/usage – e.g student services
    - » school reps, course reps, retention officers, disability coordinators, HU steering group

# Planning and Implementation

- Who will lead the work?
  - Important to have named coordinator
  - However, also important to ensure the lead department does not focus the campaign to the detriment of others e.g. staff v students
  - Appropriate at times to segment population, however also significant overlaps in demography of students and staff
  - Therefore valuable to work in partnership across schools and departments and with external agencies
  - Important to ensure you have the right people round the table and have buy-in from all involved



# Planning and Implementation

- When should the campaign, event or activity take place?
  - Academic year poses time constraints
  - Annual plan of events – possibly linked with national events e.g world mental health day
  - However also, dependent on focus of campaign:
    - Flash-points for drop out?
    - Induction?
  - Timescales – what are aims and objectives of campaign? – awareness raising v changing behaviour
- Evaluation – must plan for this as well to measure success



# Consultation and partnerships



- Consultation will ensure effective targeting of resources
- Partnership working is key to successful whole university approach
  - Sharing expertise
  - Achievement of shared and individual objectives
  - Contribution of university to local public health programmes
  - Important to plan together to ensure buy-in and ownership
  - Be aware of the challenges



## Consultation and partnerships

- How do I identify key partners?
  - Mapping exercise – within the university and in the local area - who does what?
    - Statutory, private and voluntary sector
    - Local forums and committees
    - Student Union
    - Services/activities not branded as 'health' which are congruent with goals of HU

# Evaluation and Impact

- What will success look like?
- Evaluation must be included in planning of campaign or activity
- Key considerations during planning:
  - What are your aims and objectives?
  - What are your Critical Success Factors? Partners sometimes competing objectives!
  - Do your campaign targets, outcomes or KPI's fit with University or Departmental objectives?
  - What information do you need to collect – quantitative / qualitative?



# Evaluation and Impact

- Linking evaluation to overall aims and objectives
  - Raising awareness – no. of participants, feedback from participants
  - Changing behaviour, attitudes - Need short, medium and long term goals
- What type of evaluation?
  - Process
  - Impact and outcomes
    - Impact – immediate, shorter term effects of i=intervention
    - Outcome – longer term effects
  - Economic
  - Comprehensive - combination

## Example case study

- Re-thinking Student Mental Well-being at UCLAN
  - Used a Whole University approach
  - Clear aims linked to evaluation
  - Over 3 years changed attitudes, knowledge and behaviour