

The Whitehaven and Workington Neighbourhood Management Initiative Areas (NMIAs)

A Health Impact Assessment of Housing, Worklessness, Primary Care and Children's Services

Executive Summary

The Workington and Whitehaven Neighbourhood Management Initiatives, as jointly commissioned a Health Impact Assessment which was carried out by Durham University. This Health Impact Assessment also forms part of the West Cumbria Health Floor Target Action Plan. The Health Impact Assessment had two aims:

- a) to assess the impact of current policies and programmes on the health of local residents
- b) to make recommendations to improve future positive health impacts and to reduce negative ones

The study used literature reviews and interviews to gain information about the impact of NMIA initiatives on health.

Summary of Findings

Nearly half of adult residents reported their health as 'not good' with a third of residents in NMIAs having long term health problems or disability. Levels of sedentary lifestyle, poor diet and hospitalisation are also higher than average. Primary care data shows that high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, diabetes and asthma are the most common health problems. The rates of smoking are also high in both NMIA compared with the Cumbrian average.

Both NMIAs experience significant levels of deprivation, with Workington NMIA experiencing higher levels of social housing and deprivation overall. This has the greatest impact on social housing estates which tend to be located in the areas covered by the NMIA.

Refer to table below for further information.

Issue	Workington	Whitehaven
Population	9,300	14,000
Life Expectancy ¹ (best ward in Cumbria 91.3)	Moorclose – 77.3 Moss Bay – 71.8	Mirehouse - 73.2 Sandwith - 75.2 Harbour - 73.1 Kells - 75.8 Hensingham - 77.2
Smoking Prevalence ²	33%	19%
Death from circulatory disease ³ SMR = 100 anything over is above average		Sandwith – 188 Mirehouse - 161 Harbour - 134
Death from cancer ⁴ SMR = 100 anything over is above average	Moss Bay – 144	Kells - 152
Limiting long term illness/disability ⁵	Moss Bay 27% compared to 24% across NMIA wards	
Claiming Incapacity Benefit/Sickness Disability Allowance ⁵	Moss bay 23% compared to 16% across NMIA wards	

Housing & Health

The social housing within the NMIA's contributes to the health outcomes of residents. Poor heating, damp, cold, and lack of green spaces can have a negative impact on resident's health. The lack of clean and green public spaces discourages outdoor activity and social cohesion, and often encourages anti-social behaviour and general neighbourhood problems. Housing decency rates (reasonable state of repair, reasonable modern facilities/ services e.g. bathroom/kitchen and a reasonable degree of thermal comfort) for Whitehaven are low with only 48.2% of houses meeting the standards.

Worklessness and Health

Traditional employment in mining and the chemical industry has been lost and this has led to a large number of people in the NMIA's who are workless. The majority of worklessness is health related although the numbers have

¹ www.statistics.gov.uk

² Cumbria Quality of Life Survey 2006

³ Data for 1998 - 2002

⁴ Data for 1998 0 2002

⁵ Department for Work and Pensions 2002

remained relatively stable in recent years. However, there are now more people who are long term claimants and more are related to mental health problems.

1,000 IB/SDA*	Workington (Moss Bay)
1,500 IB/SDA	Whitehaven (Sandwith)

August 2006 (Source: Department for Work and Pensions – www.dwp.gov.uk)

* *Incapacity Benefits/Severe Disablement Allowance*

Current initiatives that focus on getting people back into work have focused on new claimants rather than long term ones. This has the potential to have a negative impact on health due to the continued exclusion from employment for long term claimants.

Primary Care and Health

Primary care services have a major role to play in reducing health inequalities as they are generally based within local communities. Whitehaven has 6 GP practices (with some residents travelling 6 miles to access practices in Egremont) and Workington has 5 city centre based GP practices. Client feedback suggests that the majority of people are satisfied with their GP practice; however there is a high dissatisfaction rate with the lack of dental services within the NMIA's. Travel issues were also identified by Whitehaven NMIA residents due to reduced bus times. Hospital services are also under review. A number of short term initiatives which pre-dated the Neighbourhood Management Initiative, have been trialled in the NMIA's including exercise on prescription and Citizen Advice Bureau advisers in doctors' surgeries. However, these were withdrawn when Health Action Zone money ceased.

Children's Services

A range of issues relating to children were identified as being problematic including: teenage alcohol misuse, domestic violence, Not In Education, Training or Employment (NEET) and teenage pregnancy (Whitehaven).

Schools in both NMIA's engage well with the Healthy Schools Initiative and the development of Extended Services and Local Delivery Platforms to address the more vulnerable young people within the NMIA's should have a positive impact on the health of young people.

The work of Children's Centres in both NMIA's provides group activities and individual support for families which is often health focused.

The lack of access to sexual health clinics, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and a dentist were felt to be key factors in having a negative impact on young people's health.

Summary of recommendations

General

Economic regeneration would have a significant impact on health through the creation of job opportunities.

Increasing access to services within local communities including benefits advice, and delivery of brief interventions around smoking cessation with a wider variety of key partners e.g. JobCentrePlus

Housing

Changes to housing policy need to be informed by health improvement evidence; this would hopefully lead to a raising of housing decency standards, particularly in the Whitehaven areas. The installation of better heating and insulation together with attractive neighbourhood environments that encourage walking and offer good access to services and amenities will have a positive impact on the health of residents within both NMIA's.

Worklessness

There needs to be better dialogue between Job Centre Plus and local GP's regarding services on offer, this could be achieved by better liaison with GP practice managers. Job Centre Plus needs to have an increased presence in local communities, which will help to ensure that employees do not progress from long term sickness to claiming Invalidity Benefit and thereby having a positive health impact. It could also assist with engaging with 'lost' long-term claimants.

Primary Care

The positive impact of primary care services on health inequalities is limited due to services being reactive rather than proactive to finding cases and providing treatment. Improved partnership working, particularly with advice agencies could increase the accessibility as well as the impact of primary care services on health inequalities.

Children's Services

Further work needs to be developed around support for teenagers including employment opportunities to improve NEET figures, and recreational opportunities that improve young people's health outcomes.