A qualitative evaluation on the impact Health in All Policies (HiAP) has had at an English upper-tier council using semi-structured interviews

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Introduction

The UK faces a range of health and care challenges, with a greater focus often on treating illness and disease rather than preventing them from occurring.

One way to make this shift is to consider the health impacts of everything we do, called Health in All Policies (HiAP). The focus is typically on economic, environmental and social factors, which contribute around 50% of what makes us healthy (1). Councils are often best placed to influence these.

Leicestershire County Council (LCC) has taken on this approach, and this research aims to understand its impact.

Methodology

A HiAP logic model at LCC was initially developed to inform the selection of questions for semi-structured interviews and to understand how effectively different sections are implemented at LCC.

In total, 11 staff members came forward for an interview. Completion of HiAP training at LCC was the only prerequisite for participation.

To meet the aims and objectives, interview questions were split into the following three sections:
1. Participants' perspectives on HiAP, including their subject knowledge and the council's role.
2. Participants' experience of using HiAP products, including the training and health impacts e-form.
3. Impact and recommendations, including successes and challenges for the future.

Thematic analysis was performed using an inductive approach. Inclusion was based on the importance to the aims and objectives, alignment with HiAP guidance and frequency of mentions.

Participants by department (proportion)		Participants by seniority (proportion)	
Public Health	2 (18%)	**Senior**	3 (27%)
Env & Transport	5 (45%)	**Mid-management**	5 (45%)
Chief Execs	4 (36%)	**Operational**	3 (27%)
Total	11 (100%)		

Results

The six key themes from the analysis are presented in the table to the right.

The most common sub-themes are also presented.

The frequency of themes were also broken down by level of seniority.

Theme 1 – Intersectoral collaboration is key	Theme 2 – The council's role and corporate support	Theme 3 – The positive impact of HiAP training	Theme 4 – The impact on policy	Theme 5 – Challenges with implementation	Theme 6 – Recommendations to grow HiAP
Focus on win-wins and working across non public health teams	The principles of HiAP are embedded within the council's Strategic Plan	Mention of the social, economic and environmental factors when asked about what makes a person healthy	Impact on policy change example shared, mainly planning and transport	Limited funding	Targeted performance based funding
Public health support is critical	Recognising the role of the whole council	Positive impact on confidence	HiAP has visibility across the council	Team capacity and prioritisation	HiAP department champions/advocates
HiAP has improved working relationships		Enhanced understanding of the building blocks for health	Examples shared bottom left	Difficulty showing the impact on health outcomes	Making training mandatory for all staff

Examples of the HiAP impact raised by participants

Planning – Health Impact Assessment requirement within the validation list.

The training helped to inform the approach within the wider determinants of health for the **Health Determinants Research Collaboration.**

Local Transport Plan – Health and wellbeing outcomes are now part of monitoring.

Planning – Shift in thinking about the role of developers from mitigating individual negative impacts to building a community.

Conclusion

There are strong examples of HiAP in practice at LCC and these should be utilised to enable other areas of the council to flourish, by seeing the impact it can have. The HiAP team should ensure this is part of ongoing evaluation, building up a collection of real-life examples and quantitative evaluation on uptake of various tools available.

The HiAP successes have provided a solid foundation for the future use across LCC, with some areas still in their infancy. If appropriately resourced, monitored and supported long-term, population health improvements can be realised and the approach seen as an exemplar for other areas to take forward and learn from.

Next steps for the HiAP team

1. Consider the recommendations raised by the study participants.
2. Rolling out the approach to other settings and partners.
3. Focus on a mixed-method evaluation, bringing in quantitative measures.

References

1. HEALTH AFFAIRS. 2014. *Health Policy Brief: The Relative Contribution of Multiple Determinants to Health Outcomes.*

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