Connecting and Developing Synergy Between Health and Sustainable Development Agendas

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‘Public health, sustainability and climate change agendas are so inextricably linked that they need to be considered as one broad overarching system... Higher education is a large, distinctive and hugely influential sector that has both the potential and the responsibility to lead for change regionally, nationally and globally, thereby catalysing integrated policy and practice responses.’

Healthy and Sustainable Communities

UK Sustainable Development Strategy: Five Principles

Living within environmental limits
Respecting the limits of the planet’s environment, resources and biodiversity - to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity.

Achieving a sustainable economy
Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.

Using sound science responsibly
Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the precautionary principle) as well as public attitudes and values.

Promoting good governance
Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people’s creativity, energy and diversity.


Integrative examples

- Active travel
- Food and health
- Smoking
- Curriculum development
Sustainable transport policies are increasingly developed and championed across HE sector → action on climate change by reducing carbon emissions and tackling obesity & other chronic diseases by promoting physical activity.
Virtuous circle for sustainable travel and health

- Improved sustainable transport facilities
  - More investment in other health and public services which enables...
  - Reducing levels of demands for health services which enables...
  - Less traffic, fewer injuries, improved air quality...
  - Encourages more active travel (walking, cycling) which leads to...
  - Increase physical and mental health of the local population...
Obesity Map – a public health issue linked to food and physical activity both central to sustainability debates
Case study

Healthy and Sustainable Food @ UWE

Date added: 8th November 2010
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Case Study Summary

Food is an issue that clearly highlights the interconnectedness of health and sustainable development agendas. UWE have developed a whole-system approach ensuring that they focus on multi-pronged aspects of food and health including procurement, catering, retail, education and research. This case study highlights what has been achieved, what is still to do and the challenges a comprehensive food and health strategy presents for universities.

Resources

Download full Case Study

Related Guidance Package:

Communicating Health Messages as Part of a Whole System Healthy Universities Approach
Bristol Good Food Charter

✓ Procure healthy and sustainable food that supports local economic prosperity
✓ Provide opportunities for people to grow, cook and eat good food together
✓ Serve only good food to your students or employees, visitors, wider university community
Smokefree policies

These can improve health & environment by reducing:

- Air pollution from smoke
- Passive smoking
- Cigarette butts contribute to environmental damage caused by non-biodegradable filters & toxins leaking into ground & waterways.
- Butt litter – environmentally distasteful
Universities can embed health & sustainable development into core business through curriculum development linked to research and knowledge exchange.

Induction                      Volunteering
Programmes                   Student Unions
Modules
Group discussion

In your institutions:

• Have you any examples that illustrate the integration of health and sustainability?
• Identify the barriers you observe or anticipate from taking this integrated agenda forward.
• Are there ways of overcoming these difficulties?
• What are the opportunities for the future?