Developing Sustainable Partnerships for Local Health Improvement Strategies

Executive Summary Report

The Healthy Stadia Programme offers an effective and innovative means of tackling health inequalities, reducing social exclusion, building effective partnership working, engaging communities and supporting local authorities, primary care trusts (PCTs), sport and physical activity alliances (SPAAs), county sport partnerships (CSPs) and local strategic partnerships (LSPs) to meet local area agreements (LAAs) and other targets and locally determined needs.

This brochure introduces and summarises the work of the Healthy Stadia Programme. It gives a background to the Healthy Stadia concept, provides an overview of work to date, outlines the Healthy Stadia Toolkit and offers ideas of how the successes of the programme can be taken forward and built upon.

The Healthy Stadia concept

In October 2004, the North West Regional Public Health Group commissioned the Healthy Settings Development Unit at the University of Central Lancashire and the Federation of Stadium Communities to carry out a three-phase study. The remit of the study was to explore and develop a ‘whole systems settings approach’ to enable sports clubs in the North West to work towards becoming Healthy Stadia.

The Healthy Stadia concept is much broader than merely seeing a sports stadium as a setting for delivering health promotion messages. The whole systems settings approach enables stadia to advance their own objectives in relation to community engagement whilst working towards Government targets for public health, social inclusion and sustainable communities. The settings approach encourages organisations to forge links between topics and to work for long-term organisational change, thus increasing the likelihood that interventions will make an impact. By developing projects within the context of a healthy setting initiative, a more holistic and integrated approach can be achieved.

Sport plays an important part within communities. Many thousands of people in the North West attend a sports stadium each week, to watch their team, to work or to use the stadium’s facilities. Whilst health might not be at the forefront of their minds, stadia offer important opportunities for reaching large numbers of people and for improving public health and reducing inequalities. A Healthy Stadium is, therefore, one that promotes the health of visitors, fans and the local community – and one that provides a place where people can go and have a positive, healthy experience playing or watching sport.

The Healthy Stadia concept is firmly based on a commitment to partnership and requires a multi-stakeholder approach comprising three elements:

- creating supportive and healthy working and living environments
- integrating health promotion into the daily activities of the setting
- developing links with other settings and with the wider community.
From vision to process – how the concept was developed

Phase I of the programme consisted of a baseline audit of health-related activities (including smoking, healthy eating, green transport, safety, access, racism and violence, environment, community liaison, advertising and alcohol) at 30 professional sports clubs in the North West. This found wide variations in the range and depth of activities across stadia, mostly due to differences in size and available resources.

Four pilot stadia – Blackburn Rovers FC, Blackpool FC, Oldham FC and St Helens RLFC – were then selected to participate in Phase II of the programme. This consisted of research and development work with the aims of facilitating joint working between stadia, PCTs, local authorities, voluntary organisations, community groups and other agencies, and producing guidelines for Healthy Stadia development. There was a strong consensus that the setting of any minimum standards of achievement in health-related areas would prove problematic because of the enormous differences between stadia in terms of size and resources. It also became clear that stakeholders saw the processes of partnership working and community participation as crucial precursors to the establishment and attainment of health-related standards – and that there was considerable variation in how well established the processes were.

From process to action – how the process was implemented

In view of these findings and recognising that the success of the Healthy Stadia Programme rests on effective partnership working and engagement of communities, Phase III of the programme prioritised further development work with the four pilot stadia. This focused on building local partnerships and developing a toolkit and guidelines to facilitate stadia in developing and improving partnership working, thereby enabling better joint working on health-related initiatives.

The first task was to facilitate the formation of partnership groups that would help develop and test the toolkit. This involved working with lead stakeholders to agree who the partners should be and developing a core and extended membership appropriate to the needs of each particular partnership.

Once membership had been agreed, the next task was to develop appropriate terms of reference. The style of these reflected differences between both the pilot stadia themselves and the partnership groups. For example, Blackburn Rovers FC – a large, financially successful Premiership club whose Healthy Stadium programme has been championed and led by the Director of Public Health – emphasised the importance of funding, action planning, co-ordination and creating added value; whilst Oldham FC – a relatively small club with limited resources whose Healthy Stadium programme had developed a relaxed multi-disciplinary leadership style – took a less formal approach. The flexibility of the Healthy Stadia Programme allows stadia of all sizes and with a range of available resources to work towards and achieve Healthy Stadia status.

Potential Partners: Examples

- Stadia personnel
- PCT
- Local council
- Community groups
- Voluntary organisations
- Healthy School coordinators
- Police
- Sport England
- Leisure services
- Sport governing bodies
- Caterers
- Regeneration agencies
- Environmental agencies
- Sport and physical activity alliances (SPAA)
Terms of Reference: Examples

BLACKBURN ROVERS HEALTHY STADIUM AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Purpose of Partnership
To ensure that the potential of the football club and its stadium to have a positive influence on the health and well-being of its communities is maximised.

Objectives
- To share opportunities to work collaboratively
- To ensure full representation of appropriate agencies
- To develop an action plan
- To develop, implement and evaluate new initiatives
- To share good practice and cascade information within member organisations
- To ensure effective coordination avoiding duplication
- To provide added value by working in collaboration to address agendas of individual agencies
- To maximise resources and attract funding

OLDHAM FC HEALTHY STADIUM WORKING PARTNERSHIP

Purpose of Working Group
To ensure, through partnership working, that the stadium promotes the health of visitors, fans, players, employees and the surrounding community, and is a place where people can go to have a positive healthy experience playing or watching sport.

Objectives
- To ensure, where practical and possible, that health initiatives developed within the stadium environment:
  - reflect local need
  - support the Community Plan and Public Health Strategy
  - follow the guidelines of the Partnership Checklist
- To initiate two health initiatives per year and be open to opportunistic initiatives that may arise from time to time

The Partnership Checklist

Pilot stadia identified a need for a tool to facilitate partnership working. Whilst a number of tools are available, none are specific to stadia and most were found to be complicated and lengthy. A simple, clear and concise partnership checklist was created that could meet the needs of all stadia, irrespective of size and resources:

Leadership
- Who will lead the Healthy Stadium Partnership and on what basis will the leader(s) be chosen?
- Have the qualities and resources necessary for leadership been considered?
- Is there adequate representation from partner agencies and is a range of people needed to fulfill different leadership roles?

Strategy
- Does the Partnership have clear terms of reference, aims and objectives to guide strategy?
- Have local needs been identified and prioritised?
- Does the Partnership’s strategy link with policies and plans of partner organisations and other partnerships?
- Does the stadium have a corporate social responsibility vision and how can the Partnership’s strategy link to this?
- Does the Partnership have the support of senior managers?
- How will the Partnership be audited and evaluated?

Community Participation
- Are community and voluntary sector representatives involved?
- Do community and voluntary sector representatives need support in developing knowledge, skills and confidence?
- Is there a Code of Conduct to allow interests/needs of the community and voluntary sectors to be heard?
- Is information easily accessible to community and voluntary representatives?

Learning
- Have partners’ individual skills and knowledge been identified?
- Is there a process for sharing information, skills and knowledge between partner agencies?
- Are mechanisms in place to capture and apply learning?
- Does the Partnership have an up to date database of contacts?
- Does the Partnership have a strategy for disseminating learning?

The aim of the checklist is to assess partnership performance in relation to opportunity, good practice, ownership and vision. It is designed to be used by stadia in the initial stages of the programme, as a diagnostic tool to ‘test the health’ of the newly formed working partnership, providing a baseline from which to identify areas for improvement. It is also designed to be revisited at intervals in a process of continuous improvement – in order to highlight good practice, demonstrate achievements, profile capacity building and track progress in delivering shared objectives and service improvement.
Healthy Stadia Toolkit

Introduction

The Healthy Stadia Toolkit represents the culmination of the Healthy Stadia Programme. It incorporates the Partnership Checklist and the lessons learned by the pilot stadia through the three phases of the programme. The toolkit is a resource that will facilitate partnership working between stadia, PCTs, local authorities, voluntary organisations, community groups and other agencies to enable joint working on health-related initiatives. It is divided into three parts, which are summarised below:

- **Part One**: introduces the Healthy Stadia concept and outlines the benefits of becoming a Healthy Stadium.
- **Part Two**: details the process of becoming a Healthy Stadium, highlighting the five key elements of partnership working, leadership, strategy, participation and learning – and including case studies, key learning points and guidance on how to use the Partnership Checklist.
- **Part Three**: focuses on action, providing information and assistance for partnership working groups in developing and implementing their Healthy Stadia initiatives.

“A Healthy Stadium is one that promotes the health of visitors, fans, players, employees and the local community. It is a place where people can go to have a positive, healthy experience playing or watching sport.”

How to use the toolkit

The full version of the Healthy Stadia Toolkit is available from the Healthy Settings Development Unit (www.healthysettings.org.uk) and the Federation of Stadium Communities (www.stadiumcommunities.org.uk). The toolkit takes a self-assessment approach, offering the opportunity to develop sustainable relationships and strategies based on the five key elements and to implement health-related initiatives aimed at meeting local needs.

However, work with pilot stadia has shown that facilitation and support are key to the process, especially in the initial formative stages of the programme. The Healthy Stadia process brings together a diverse range of individuals, agencies and organisations – many of which, at first glance, may not appear to be health-related. This has required many partnership members to ‘think outside the box’ in order to broaden their understanding of health and identify their role and contribution to the partnership. This process can best be enabled by an external partnership facilitator able to bring credibility based on sound knowledge and experience of good practice in the field and able to apply this to the local context. Once the partnership group is working well, it should be possible for a nominated facilitator from within the group to fulfil this role.

For further information using the toolkit and facilitating Healthy Stadia work, contact:

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Part One: Getting Started

THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING A HEALTHY STADIUM

- maximisation of the positive role and impact of the stadium within its communities
- improved relationships with local communities
- sustainable health improvement initiatives improving the health and well-being of stadium communities
- opportunities to seek new sources of funding for collaborative work
- local, regional and national recognition of achievement
Part Two: Processes – The Five Key Elements

Partnership Working
- Partnership working – what does it mean and what is important?
- Who are your partners?
- How to build healthy sustainable partnerships
- Forming your Healthy Stadium partnership group
- How to use the Partnership Checklist
- Evidence of good practice – case studies and key learning

Leadership
- What is your vision and what is important?
- How to strengthen commitment
- Good communication
- Evidence of good practice – case studies and key learning

Strategy
- What is your strategy and what is important?
- What do you want to achieve?
- How can your strategy be linked to a corporate social responsibility vision?
- How will you know when you get there? Audit and evaluation
- Evidence of good practice – case studies and key learning

Participation
- What does it mean and why is it important?
- Effective community participation – key issues
- Capacity building and support
- Evidence of good practice – case studies and key learning

Learning
- Why is it important that you capture what you learn?
- How can you share good practice and key learning?
- Effective dissemination – ideas for action
- Evidence of good practice – case studies and key learning

Part Three: Action – Becoming a Healthy Stadium

- Identifying local health needs
- Deciding priorities and action planning
- Suggestions for initiatives:
  - healthy eating
  - physical activity
  - smoking
  - green travel
  - environmental issues
  - alcohol
  - positive mental health
  - men’s health issues
  - widening access
- Planning your initiatives
- Building corporate social responsibility
- Auditing and evaluating your work
- Securing resources
Progress and case studies

There is evidence of measurable improvements in sustainable partnership working within the pilot stadia partnership groups, which are showing dynamism, creativity and commitment to the Healthy Stadia concept.

Each pilot stadium has hosted regular partnership working meetings, agreeing aims and objectives, identifying partners, formulating terms of reference and developing detailed action plans around identified health-related topics. There is also evidence that the partnership groups are beginning to develop strong communication and dissemination processes, further strengthening the sustainability of the emerging partnerships.

Oldham FC and PCT both have scarce resources, yet their Healthy Stadium Partnership has agreed an action plan with two initiatives per year (the first being smoking) and is discussing potential opportunities offered by the School Sport Partnership and Physical Education School Sports and Clubs Links, in the context of Football in the Community. Blackpool FC’s Healthy Stadium Partnership has agreed terms of reference and is beginning to be a real driver for change, devising action plans on smoking, nutrition and travel. Blackburn Rovers FC and St Helens RLFC have been able to make faster progress, as detailed below:

BLACKBURN ROVERS FC
Blackburn Rovers Healthy Stadia and Community Partnership has begun a systematic examination of work currently being delivered at all schools in Blackburn in relation to Healthy School targets, to identify gaps that the Partnership might collaboratively address, with a particular focus on physical activity.

“It’s taken me five years to meet everyone I thought I needed to meet – at these meetings I’ve been introduced to the people in the Borough that matter and are able to make a difference and enable projects to get underway.”

Anthony Barlow, Football in the Community, Blackburn

Membership of the group includes representatives of the voluntary and community sectors, who have highlighted the needs of a football team for people with mental health problems. This team currently has little funding or support, and was unknown to the club prior to the formation of the partnership group – which has agreed to explore how support could be given and funding could be accessed.

Active travel is also firmly on the agenda and it has been agreed that the feasibility of the club being included in a new city wide cycle initiative be examined.

“I have a problem in raising the profile of active transport – this partnership enables transport to raise its profile and play a key part in the health agenda.”

James Syson, Transport Policy, Blackburn with Darwen Council

ST HELENS RLFC
This club is a North West Healthy Stadia pilot and is included in the Heart of Mersey Healthy Stadia Project (www.heartofmersey.org.uk). It is therefore a good example of what can be achieved by combining two approaches – i.e. the focus on partnership and community engagement processes with the development of initiatives linked to three major topic areas related to factors of Coronary Heart Disease – physical activity, smoking and healthy food.

Physical activity initiatives include a pedometer challenge (pedometers supplied as part of the Heart of Mersey Project), which has been taken up by 12 local firms who support St Helens RLFC. This will be extended to challenge Liverpool companies (supporting St Helens’ strategy of developing its services in Liverpool).

Links will be made to Healthy Schools Week, during which members of the club’s Academy will promote a ‘calorie map’ and the walking route from the station to the stadium. The calorie map will also be included within a Green Travel Plan event targeting schools along the route.

“It’s been good to learn what other stadia are doing.”

Gordon Pennington, ST Helens RLFC

As a result of the Healthy Stadium Partnership Group, the work St Helens already do in addition to rugby coaching, such as dance training and chair-based exercise, will be promoted through the Health Improvement Network in a more systematic fashion.

“Although we knew one another we needed this sort of focus to work together.”

Neil Davies, Health Improvement Specialist – Physical Activity, St Helens
Links to other initiatives

The importance of investing in capacity building for partnership development and community engagement has been confirmed by a number of related initiatives. These include Heart of Mersey’s Healthy Stadia Project (www.heartofmersey.org.uk), Business in the Community’s ‘Clubs that Count’ (www.bitc.org.uk) and ‘Active Engagement’ – a study by the North West Development Agency that identifies health and partnership working as key thematic areas, recommends partnership building with PCTs and local communities and highlights that clubs wish to interact more with their communities but often do not have the skills and resources to do so (www.nwda.co.uk).

The way forward: building on success

The Healthy Stadia Programme offers an effective and innovative means of tackling health inequalities, reducing social exclusion, promoting sustainable development, building effective partnership working, engaging communities and supporting local authorities, PCTs and LSPs to meet Local Area Agreements and other targets. The early outcomes highlighted above demonstrate the value of producing, disseminating and evaluating the Healthy Stadia Toolkit – although its utilisation and the wider development of the Healthy Stadia Programme ideally require external facilitation and support. Moreover, with the success of London’s bid to stage the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the time is right for such an innovative programme to send out a wider message about how the Games can act as a catalyst to create a ‘health legacy’ which delivers measurable public health improvements to local communities – not only in London, but throughout all regions of the UK. The Healthy Stadia Programme provides a potential platform to build on the ‘legacy’ themes highlighted in the Health Impact Assessment of the Olympic Bid.

Areas for future work include:

- Support for the pilot stadia to further develop and continue the health initiatives agreed in their Phase III action plans and to disseminate good practice across the region.
- Evaluation of the Healthy Stadia Programme, with particular focus on the development work carried out with pilot stadia and their use of the Toolkit and Guidelines in relation to partnership working and health improvement initiatives.
- Development of mechanisms to raise awareness of the potential for community engagement within the Healthy Stadia Programme and to enable community representatives to take a meaningful place in working partnerships.
Further Information
For further information or to discuss the development and facilitation of local work, please contact:

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To download the Healthy Stadia Toolkit, further copies of this brochure or the Report of Phases I and II, go to:
Healthy Settings Development Unit
www.healthysettings.org.uk
Federation of Stadium Communities
www.stadiumcommunities.org.uk

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