

Healthy Colleges

An audit of Healthy School programmes working with Colleges in England

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1 Introduction

The Healthy Settings Development Unit at the University of Central Lancashire conducted an audit in liaison with Healthy School programmes in England to establish how many are working with Colleges. This took place between January – April 2005 and the findings are outlined in this report.

Colleges have been working to address health issues for a number of years. This has often been done in partnership with local health agencies and usually on specific topics such as drugs and sexual health. This work has been done at a grass roots level and but has not had a strong strategic lead or co-ordination. Over the last five years the concept of a Healthy College has emerged and is continuing to develop at a local, regional and national level.

2 What is a Healthy College?

Definitions

‘A Healthy College understands the importance in investing in the health and welfare of its staff and pupils to maximise achievement, through providing a physical and social environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. The concept of a Healthy College means thinking about how things are done as well as what is done. The process is as important as the outcomes. A health promoting College is concerned with health in its broadest sense, extending beyond traditional health education. It is concerned with wider issues such as empowerment, self esteem and the environment.’

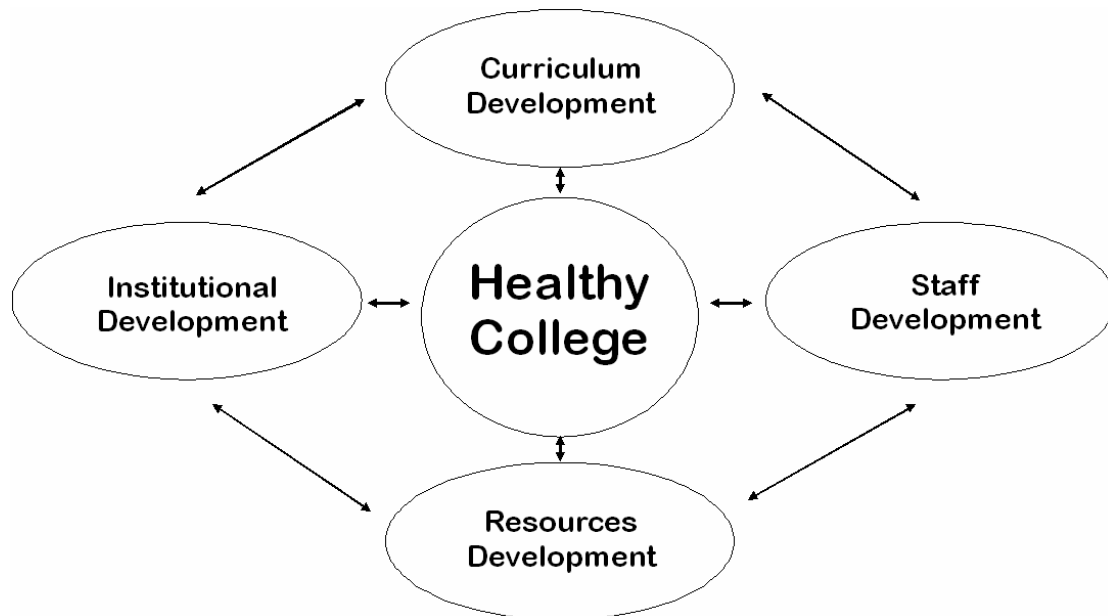
Kirklees Pilot Healthy College Standard

‘Key features of a Healthy College should include; the institutional procedures, values and policies; the environment; the curriculum and the staff/student relationship including pastoral support for students.’

O’Donnell and Gray, 1993

Health promoting College model

O'Donnell and Gray suggest that all aspects identified in their model must be developed jointly if the College is to achieve its goal of becoming a health promoting organisation.



The settings approach

At their simplest, settings such as schools and workplaces are convenient places for health interventions. However, healthy settings are about more than this, because they use whole systems thinking. This aims to integrate a commitment to health into the fabric of settings - within their cultures, structures, processes and routine life.

The settings approach is usually applied to organisational settings, but it is also part of broader-based initiatives such as Healthy Cities and the development of healthy communities and neighbourhoods by formal Government programmes, such as Healthy Schools. Others are well established and supported by WHO programmes but as yet not linked directly to any national initiative, such as health promoting hospitals. And yet others are not linked to any national or international programme, or are at early stages of development, such as Healthy Colleges.

The Healthy Settings Development Unit
www.healthysettings.org.uk

3 Key developments towards a Healthy College Concept

The Health Promoting College, HEA, 1993, outlined different approaches to Health Promotion by using six Colleges as case studies. This highlighted that Colleges were using a variety of approaches depending on their objectives, capacity and local support. The case studies described the following activities in Colleges;

- Health events in Colleges
- Developing input into tutorial sessions
- Health policy development
- Specific health projects
- Links to local health services
- Health campaigns

Since 2000 the Schools Health Education Unit extended their primary and secondary work to include the FE sector. They offer a student survey service that has been successfully trialled in Colleges. The survey asks questions about attitudes and lifestyle behaviours. (www.sheu.org.uk)

From 2001 Healthy School Programmes began to expand their work into a number of other settings, such as nurseries, youth clubs and FE Colleges.

In May 2002, the Health Development Agency in collaboration with the Healthy Settings Development Unit held a National Stakeholder meeting to discuss the future development of Healthy College and University initiatives standards. The meeting agreed in principle that a national initiative/network should be established and that it would be beneficial to take forward health and education targets.

In 2002 the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) produced a report 'Healthy Colleges: A study and report into how Further Education Colleges can promote health and well-being'. Working with five Colleges, this was a first attempt to define the area and to assess whether it was an appropriate time to promote the development of Healthy Colleges. It provides an extremely useful overview and list of recommendations.

In 2003, NIACE produced a report commissioned by the Department of Health, 'A Health Promoting College for 16-19 year Old Learners'. The aim of the report was to see whether a standard such as Healthy Schools would be useful in the FE sector. The report recommended that demonstration projects should be developed to pilot a standard, based on Healthy Schools. It provides an excellent overview of possible models and key issues. It highlights the huge potential of Colleges to develop a healthy settings approach.

In 2004 the Public Health white paper, 'Choosing Health, Making Healthy Choices Easier', the Department of Health, recognised the potential of developing Further and Higher Education as a healthy setting with the delivery plan stating;

'We will support the initiative being taken locally by some Colleges and universities to develop a strategy for health into the organisation's structure to create healthy working, learning and living environments, increase the profile of health in teaching and research, and develop healthy alliances in the community.'

Promoting Personal Health, Choosing Health

The responsibility and dates for this implementing this action are to be confirmed, with accountability lying with the Department of Health.

4 Audit Objectives

- To explore how many Healthy School Programmes have extended their work into a Healthy College setting
- Disseminate the findings to key stakeholders
- Draw out similarities and differences in approaches
- Make recommendations for further activity

5 Methodology

A questionnaire was developed and distributed to all Healthy Schools Area Coordinators, through the National Healthy Schools Network. This asked whether they were working with Colleges in their area, approaches being used and activities they were developing.

The initial responses were followed up by a series of telephone interviews to gain more information related to current and planned Health Promotion activities.

6 Findings

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Healthy College standards linked to Healthy School programmes

- **Kirklees Healthy College Standard**

The Kirklees Healthy College Standard began in 2001 and is currently in its pilot stage. Initial work was done with the Kirklees Healthy Schools Team and staff and students from Huddersfield New College to develop the standard. The aim of the standard is to make the physical, social and environmental health of staff and students a key priority, using a 'whole College approach'. Kirklees Healthy College Standard has developed a web site www.khcs.org.uk.

The topic areas for the Kirklees Healthy College Standard are;

Whole College Awareness

Active Citizens

Smoke Free Environment

Healthy Eating

Environment

Community Involvement

Student Wellbeing

Physical Activity

Staff Health and Wellbeing

Colleges work towards key performance indicators in each area to achieve Healthy College Status.

Colleges taking part in the Kirklees Healthy College Standard Pilot

- | | |
|--|---|
| Blackburn College | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blackburn College are part of Kirklees Healthy College Network and are involved with Blackburn Healthy Schools. |
| Bolton Community College | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bolton College are working on the staff well-being theme, supported by their local Healthy Schools Co-ordinator. They are bringing together a Healthy Colleges committee.• An existing staff wellbeing group has audited all staff and is beginning to formulate an action plan.• Health education work for staff and students has taken place during Freshers' week, which resulted in a large amount of interest from staff which has been followed up with relevant information. |
| Huddersfield New College | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Huddersfield New College have completed 'Whole College Awareness', audited, consulted with students and action planned 'Student Wellbeing' and are commencing work on 'Smoke Free Environment', Active Citizens' and 'Staff Wellbeing'. Initiatives at the College have included free water, expanded Open Door service (nurse/doctor, welfare signposting). |
| John Leggott College Scunthorpe | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• John Leggott College have recently received permission from the governors to pursue the Healthy College initiative and have appointed a Healthy College co-ordinator.• The co-ordinator has identified a body of interested staff and are in the process of identifying interested students.• The College have had a meeting with their local Primary Care Trust and are planning to work towards the |

- performance indicators for Whole College Awareness, Smoke free environment and Physical Activity in the first year.
- MANCAT Manchester**

 - MANCAT have established a working group comprising of senior management, site managers and sports and catering managers, meeting on a regular basis to review progress towards the Healthy College standards and work towards reducing health inequalities in Manchester.
 - Current work includes development of a well being policy, a water availability project, and work on the Physical Activity standard.
 - North Area College Stockport**

 - North Area College in Stockport have recently joined the National Healthy College Network and are piloting the Kirklees Healthy College Standard in the Stockport area.
 - The College have formed a Task Group and are planning to start work on College Awareness and Student Wellbeing.
 - The College hope to get support from Stockport Primary Care Trust and hopefully getting a Stockport Healthy College Standard up and running which will involve the other Colleges in Stockport.
 - StaffordCollege**

 - Stafford College are just becoming involved with Healthy Colleges looking to begin the process of getting Healthy Colleges recognised and understood within College.
 - Wigan and Leigh College**

 - There is a dedicated Healthy College Coordinator to develop whole College systems to improve the health of their community. The College is currently working towards accreditation for Whole College Awareness, smoke free environment, student health and wellbeing and staff health and wellbeing.

- **The Healthy College Network**

As part of the on-going developments involved with the Kirklees Healthy College Standard a Healthy College Network has been set up for individual Colleges who are interested in the Kirklees Healthy College Standard. There are over forty members from Colleges across England. The network meets regularly to share experiences and good practice.

- **Salford and Trafford Healthy College Pilot**

Salford and Trafford Healthy College pilot is co-ordinated by the Salford and Trafford Healthy Schools programme in partnership with Trafford South Further Education College. The scheme is based upon the topic areas of;

- Health Education Co-ordination and Policies
- Physical Activity
- College Environment
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Family and Community
- Healthy Eating
- Self Esteem

Safety
Drug Education
Sex and Relationship Guidance.

Within the College, staff training has been given on sexual health and drug education and consultations have been carried out with the students about their needs. The on-site nurse has accessed resources and materials from Healthy Schools and is in the process of gathering evidence for assessment.

- **Wigan and Leigh College**

Wigan and Leigh College are working in partnership with Ashton, Wigan and Leigh Primary Care Trust. In partnership with the PCT, a format for accreditation has been developed for Healthy College standards this includes monitoring and recording performance indicators. The College is also part of the Kirklees Healthy College pilot and the Healthy College Network.

- **Somerset Healthy College Programme**

Somerset Healthy College Programme are using a whole College approach and satisfying the Level 3 criteria of the National Healthy Schools Standard supported by a member of the Healthy Schools team providing support half day training sessions through the year. Priorities have been set for work under the categories of:

Curriculum
Policy
Environment
Community
Welfare

The programme has been running for over 10 years with Bridgwater College, Yeovil College, Richard Huish and Somerset College of Arts and Technology awarded Healthy College Status. The standard is expected to be reviewed under the new Healthy Schools structure.

Whole College approaches not linked to Healthy Schools

- **Telford College**

Telford College has a Health Promotion team, jointly funded by the Primary Care Trust, based at the College. A three year Health Promotion strategy for the College is being written to ensure that health services include prevention and that they link into the PCT's Health Promotion Business Plan. Current priorities include reducing smokers and second-hand smoking, reducing obesity, increasing physical activity, encouraging sensible drinking, reduce risk-taking in sexual behaviour, improving mental health, reducing sickness absence due to stress and integrating black and minority ethnic group work into all Health Promotion programmes.

The Health Promotion team also offer one-to-one Health Promotion advice sessions, peer education programmes, support for ethnic minority health issues and provision of health services such as Stop Smoking Clinics.

- **Furness College**

Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust supports organisations to develop a healthy workplace under their Partners in Health Award. This provides a framework for a whole systems approach aimed at improving the health and well-being of staff.

Furness College in Barrow-in-Furness have achieved the Silver Award through the Partners in Health Award. The College have developed a management group and undertook a baseline health needs assessment as part of the staff survey. The management team have focussed on how the physical environment, management structure, organisational change and communications process impact on health. Developments, as a result of working with Partners in Health, include a Staff Mental Health Policy, including a Stress Policy, a free counselling service, 'Thank-you' Day, healthy meals and events such as 'free gym day'.

- **Stockton Riverside College**

Stockton Riverside College have taken major steps to improve the health of their community over the past two years. The College joined the local Workplace Health Promotion Network run by North Tees PCT, achieving the award in 2003, which was then successfully audited and renewed in 2004. This demonstrates: a commitment to promoting and protecting the health of their employees; working towards a smoke-free environment; developing a drugs and alcohol policy; promoting healthy eating, physical activity and positive mental health; improving access to a range of services; reviewing current practice and policy and a commitment to equal opportunities reflected in the Colleges' core values and practices. Although the Award is geared towards an employee situation, attempts were made to include learners as well.

Stockton Riverside launched a Positive Lifestyle Initiative in 2003 to develop opportunities for activity involving deals for both staff and learners at local gyms. The College has been awarded the Silver Standard of the National Clean Air Awards for its work to restrict smoking in the College campus and promoting smoking cessation. It has also taken part in a number of other Health Promotion activities and campaigns including Men's Health Week, Fruity Friday, Sun Safe Awareness, Breast Cancer Awareness and developing a Health and Stress Management Group.

The College is now linking into the National Healthy College Network, looking at Healthy College Standards and is in positive discussions with their local Primary Care Trust for support.

Public Health and Health Promotion activity in Colleges

Through the Healthy School contacts made during this audit, a number of Colleges have also been identified where health work is taking place. The activity includes staff training, awareness raising events, educational workshops and gathering evidence, primarily focussing upon specific topics such as drugs and sexual health education.

- **York College**

York College have been working with their local Drugs Education and Healthy Schools Consultant to develop a Drugs Policy for the College, focussing on recommendations from the LEA drugs policy to ensure a consistent approach for 14-16 years old across the City of York.

- **Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College and the William Morris Academy**

Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College and the William Morris Academy, London is delivering a Sex and Relationships Education Programme as part of the Schools Teenage Pregnancy Programme. The programme discusses relationships, sexual health, risky situations, the body, STI's, contraception, teenage pregnancy and accessing local services.

- **North Tyneside & Tynemouth College**

North Tyneside Health Promotion Team work with North Tyneside College and Tynemouth College to deliver drug awareness training to College staff as part of the Drugs Education Team and have supported the Colleges health awareness week for students. In 2003 Year 13 students at Tynemouth College took part in a drugs survey looking at their awareness of the risks of substance misuse.

7 Discussion

This audit shows that the College sector is being more recognised as an important setting to tackle health inequalities and achieve health targets across a range of health topics.

This audit has highlighted a range of approaches that are either addressing specific health topics, population groups or using a settings approach. The approaches vary depending on local capacity and partnerships. The scope of this audit was to establish the number of Healthy School programmes that have been extended to include Colleges in England.

Some Healthy School programmes are being adapted and developed into Healthy College programmes at a local level. These areas will provide useful information and learning should a national Healthy College standard be developed.

In addition, participants also provided information about general health work that was taking place in Colleges. We have included this in the results because this gives a useful 'snap shot'. We are aware that it does not provide a comprehensive view of health work in Colleges in England,

8 Recommendations

- The Healthy College Network has attracted a high level of interest from Colleges and provides a much needed forum for sharing practice and linking Colleges and health professionals together. As the health work in Colleges continues to develop in the future this network will provide a valuable point of contact. National funding should be considered to build up and sustain the capacity in the network.
- While the Choosing Health Public Health white paper supports the development of local College initiatives, further guidance is still required on whether a national Healthy College programme is being considered. National, regional stakeholders need to meet with local health and College partners to discuss the co-ordination of Healthy College work. Discussions need to clarify future plans related to the mechanisms by which Colleges can become accredited to a Healthy College programme. A national Healthy College standard should be considered alongside the option of locally driven standards.
- Given that there are a growing number of health and College partnerships currently being developed it would be beneficial to have discussions on the future of Healthy Colleges as soon as possible.

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