

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT PROJECT

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on an innovative and original research project that helped identify factors in the local environment that are influencing young people's dietary and physical activity behaviours.
- 1.2 The research strategy, fieldwork, analysis and presentation of findings were designed and delivered by five enthusiastic and talented young people.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on an innovative research project which was undertaken by five enthusiastic and talented young people. The aim of their research project was to "identify factors in their local environment that were influencing young people's dietary and physical activity behaviours".
- 2.1.3 The overarching principal underpinning this research project was that adults needed to understand young peoples 'lived experience' in relation to the influences that the local environmental has on their health. Therefore, the research strategy, fieldwork, analysis and presentation of findings were designed and delivered by young people.
- 2.1.2 It is widely accepted that the environment where people live has a significant impact on their health. This concept is referred to as the 'obesogenic environment' which is defined as *'the sum of influences that the surroundings, opportunities, or conditions of life have on promoting obesity in individuals or populations.'* Examples of influences that contribute to an obesogenic environment are:
 - Prevalence of accessible fast food takeaways or access to healthy food options
 - Access to green spaces

- Access to safe active modes of travel
- How the built environment is designed to encourage active travel
- The prevalence of marketing that encourages un/healthy food options
- Feelings of safety, connectivity and belonging

2.2 Research Methodology

2.2.1 The young people used a variety of research methods, including:

- **Ethnographic and autoethnographic research:** Observing, reflecting and analysing the local environment and what people do. The data were collected using photographs and video.
- **Desktop research:** looking at evidence to understand the commercial and marketing strategies that influence consumer buying behaviour.
- **Experiments:** Using social media platforms to help understand how the algorithms target users with specific marketing campaigns.

2.3 Field work and data collection

2.3.1 The field work took place in a number of settings which included:

- **Leisure centres:** The focus was on marketing and food options in the café areas and vending machines.
- **Frodingham Road and Doncaster:** The focus was on the prevalence and accessibility of fast food establishments, marketing, consumer segmentation and opening times.
- **Close to home:** The focus was on the cycling and safety.
- **Green Spaces:** The focus was on safety and attractiveness of green space.
- **On-line:** The focus was setting up experiments on social media. Controlled inputs were used in the apps' search engine, and observations were made about how the algorithm generated targeted marketing materials.
- **Supermarkets:** Observational studies were undertaken in supermarkets to understand how product placement, marketing and pricing influenced consumer buying behaviour.
- **Focus groups:** This allowed an opportunity for an autoethnographic exploration of factors related to young people's experience when purchasing food on-line versus purchasing food in-store. This had a particular focus on on-line apps such as Just Eat and Uber Eats.
- **Value for money experiment:** A healthy meal for four people was cooked for under £10.00. The same amount of money was spent on confectionary. The study compared and contrasted the differences in nutrition and health.

2.4 Presentation of findings and outcomes

2.4.1 The young people arranged a conference, which took place in December 2019, to present their findings to policy makers who could influence improvements to services and the environment. Their conference was arranged, hosted and chaired by young people.

2.4.2 Some of the key messages from the research were:

- Environmental factors within a community can contribute, either positively or negatively, to people's health and wellbeing.
- Young people do not choose where they live, these conditions are imposed upon them which may create inequalities.
- Changes can be made locally to improve the environment
- Fast food tastes good!
- Technology such as Just Eat is making transactional arrangements much easier.
- The biggest impacts will come from policy change at a national level (eg marketing restrictions in supermarkets, banning offers on confectionary etc)

2.4.3 The conference provided scope to cover the research findings in detail through 5 different workshops and 4 keynote speeches.

2.4.4 At the end of the conference, participants were asked to make pledges to indicate how they will make changes to help develop a healthier environment. Work is ongoing to implement the actions from the pledges.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 For the Health and Wellbeing Board Members to:

- Note the excellent work undertaken by young people.
- Based on the young people's research findings, to offer any guidance or suggestions which will make environments healthier.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The young people have expressed a desire to continue working on this project. Furthermore this research is also complementing some of their other projects which are being led by young people, such as climate change and community safety.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, although any actions to improve the environment may have resource implications. There is

very good evidence that investing in addressing obesogenic environments can result in improving people's lives and saving money through positive health and wellbeing.

6. **OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

6.1 Improving the certain elements of the environment would assist in delivering the key priorities of the Council Plan, particularly around the 'Well' outcome.

7. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 Where appropriate, any actions that arise from the research project will be subject to an integrated impact assessment.

8. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 Not applicable.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board

- Note the excellent work undertaken by young people
- To offer any advice and guidance on how improvements can be made to environments (including workplaces, community settings, public settings) to make them healthier.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report – None