



Liverpool
Public Health
Observatory



Top tips for healthier hospitals

An executive summary

Janet Ubido, Lyn Winters
Matthew Ashton, Alex Scott-Samuel
Janet Atherton and Fiona Johnstone

Liverpool Public Health Observatory and
Cheshire and Merseyside Public Health Network

Published November 2006

Working towards a healthier Cheshire and Merseyside

Foreword

Top tips for healthier hospitals - an executive summary

“Prevention is everyone’s business” is an often repeated statement. For healthcare providers there is a growing expectation that everything they do should be informed by its possible impact on health. Some have adopted a systematic approach through becoming health promoting hospitals, others have implemented separate initiatives on lifestyle

issues. Already, in the North West, almost all healthcare providers have smokefree environments. But there is more to do if the NHS is to achieve world class health and health care. This guide is a welcome stimulus, bringing together the evidence base for preventive action, which everyone should use to improve the health of the North West.



Dr Ruth Hussey
*North West Regional
Director of Public Health*



Mike Bone
*Chief Executive,
The Cardiothoracic Centre -
Liverpool NHS Trust*

Top tips for healthier hospitals

Contents

About this guide

This is an executive summary of *Top tips for healthier hospitals*. It was commissioned by the ChaMPs Federation of Directors of Public Health from Liverpool Public Health Observatory. The full publication is available on request from the ChaMPs Public Health Network or www.champs-for-health.net

The summary highlights the range of recommended top tips referred to in the full report.

Evidence exists for these interventions to be implemented in secondary care to improve the public health in Cheshire and Merseyside.

ChaMPs Public Health Network

St Catherine's Hospital
2nd Floor, Admin Block
Church Road
Birkenhead
CH42 OLQ

Tel: 0151 488 7776
www.champs-for-health.net



Introduction 4

Provide smoking cessation services and a smokefree environment 6

Provide opportunities for healthy eating 8

Provide opportunities for physical activity 10

Encourage sensible drinking of alcohol 12

Improve mental health and well-being 14

Promote sexual health 16

Acknowledgements 18

Introduction

In producing *Top tips for healthier hospitals*, our aim is to offer senior managers in acute, specialist and mental health NHS trusts top tips for making a positive contribution to improving public health in Cheshire and Merseyside.

While public health has done an excellent job in describing the health needs of communities, what needs to change, and by how much, a continuing challenge is to identify the **actions** required to deliver change.

Top tips for healthier hospitals is the first in a series designed to support partners in focussing on the actions they can take to improve health, and has been modelled on the *10 high impact changes for service improvement and delivery: a guide for NHS leaders*, which have had significant impact on service planning the NHS.¹

Cheshire and Merseyside Public Health Network (ChaMPs), in conjunction with Liverpool Public Health Observatory, produced this research in summer 2006. It provides a similar set of top tips for high impact public health changes in the secondary care setting. This includes acute, specialist and mental health providers.

Top tips is closely tied to the Choosing Health priority areas, and draws together evidence, national policy, and targets (National Health Service; Public Service Agreements; and Local Area Agreements) as well as examples of local good practice, for each Choosing Health priority area. It aims to highlight the important impacts that factors like poor diet, alcohol misuse, and poor mental health and well-being can have on hospital services.

There are practical suggestions for effective interventions in each priority area. Examples of the impact and benefits of interventions have been given for each area. Quantification of costs and benefits is more difficult, however, because evidence is either not available or is generally based on populations other than secondary care.



Top tips for healthier hospitals

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is currently assessing costs and benefits of interventions for all of the Choosing Health issues, to be completed during 2007.²

There is an expectation through both national and local policy that NHS organisations take all possible actions to improve health. This executive summary supports this process by focussing on top tips that will deliver health improvement in acute settings. Further guides are planned for other settings, such as local authorities and workplaces.



Fiona Johnstone
*Chair, ChaMPs Public Health
Network Federation of
Directors of Public Health and
Director of Public Health,
Halton and St Helens*

ChaMPs Public Health Network

Cheshire and Merseyside Partnerships for Health (ChaMPs for Health) is a public health network for primary care trusts, local authorities, NHS trusts and wider organisations.

The network's mission is to build partnerships to promote and protect public health and well-being, and develop capacity and capability in the public sector.

For more information visit our website at www.champs-for-health.net or contact the network support team on 0151 488 7776.

Liverpool Public Health Observatory

Liverpool Public Health Observatory is an NHS research and development unit in the Division of Public Health at the University of Liverpool. The observatory was founded in 1990 and was the model for the regional public health observatories established across England in 1998.

The observatory staff consists of a part-time director, three researchers, and an administrator. Although LPHO is an NHS unit, we are closely integrated with the Liverpool University Division of Public Health. Our website is www.liv.ac.uk/PublicHealth/obs

¹ *10 high impact changes for service improvement and delivery: a guide for NHS leaders.* London: NHS Modernisation Agency, 2004

² www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=503272

1. Provide smoking cessation services and a smokefree environment

“The combination of smoking cessation services with NRT is one of the most cost-effective healthcare interventions. Success rates can improve from 2% for people with no help at all to 20% for those using a clinic and NRT.”

Patients

Hospitalisation provides an ideal opportunity to encourage smoking cessation; patients generally are more concerned about their health and more receptive to health promotion advice.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Identify smokers and establish a thorough tobacco history, supported by routine audits.
- Deliver oral and written information to patients on the damaging effects of smoking and the health benefits of giving up.
- Provide access to smoking cessation services for all patients.
- Provide access to nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and other smoking cessation medications for all patients.
- Provide access to specialist smoking cessation staff for all patients.
- Integrate smoking cessation counselling into the treatment plan for certain patient groups.
- Refer patients to community smoking cessation services at time of discharge.

“Tobacco related diseases cause 30% of all admissions in an ordinary medical ward.”



Top tips for healthier hospitals

Staff

Staff who succeed in quitting not only benefit their own health but also provide effective role models and are likely to be more enthusiastic about giving smoking cessation advice to patients.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Provide a full range of smoking cessation services for all staff.
- Provide training in health promotion for all staff.
- Provide specialist smoking cessation staff.

Community

It is important that hospitals offer a good example of a health promoting setting. Additionally, providing a smokefree environment helps protect patients, visitors and staff from the dangers of passive smoking.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Establish a smokefree environment in buildings and grounds.
- Ensure smoking cessation information and services are readily available to patients, relatives, other visitors and hospital staff.

“There are twice as many hospital admissions among smokers as non-smokers.”



2. Provide opportunities for healthy eating

Patients

The NHS has a corporate responsibility to offer healthy nutritious food and to lead by example in helping to improve people's diets.

Providing more nutritious food to improve patient recovery times can achieve savings far higher than those achievable from trying to cut the cost of food and catering services.

"In one study involving 55 vending machines, reducing the prices of low fat snacks by 10%, 25% and 50% increased the number of items sold by 9%, 39% and 93% respectively."

Top tips for effective interventions

- Ensure all food provision actively and continuously supports healthier choices.
- Identify patients with a need for diet counselling.
- Offer brief interventions and/or counselling on diet.
- Establish programmes for particular patient groups.
- Provide access to pharmacological treatment and surgery in certain cases.
- Ensure referral to follow-up support in the community.

"The prevalence of obesity in England has tripled since the 1980s, leading to a growing number of people with diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, strain injury, joint problems and hormone related cancers."



Top tips for healthier hospitals

“Almost a quarter of people are obese; obesity reduces life expectancy by an average of nine years.”

Staff

Studies show the positive effects of healthy eating interventions in the workplace include a decrease in blood cholesterol of between 2.5% and 10%.

Training in health promotion for all staff would help them play an important role in promoting healthy diets to patients and visitors.

Top tips for effective interventions

- As above, ensure all food provision actively and continuously supports healthier choices.
- Actively promote healthy eating through changes to the physical environment, incentive schemes and promotional programmes.
- Offer health checks to address weight, diet and activity and provide ongoing support.
- Provide staff training:
 - enabling health professionals to discuss potential weight management options with interested patients
 - to create specialist staff including at least one dietician in each PCT area.

Community

The Chief Medical Officer recommends that the proportion of high quality local suppliers of food to the public sector should be increased substantially. This would benefit the local economy as well as improving the quality of food on offer.

Top tips for effective interventions

- As above, ensure visitors find that all food provision actively and continuously supports healthier choices.
- Substantially increase the proportion of high quality local suppliers of food used.
- Train food buyers on the impact of food and diet upon health.
- Establish a specialist obesity service in each PCT area, based in either secondary care or primary care.



3. Provide opportunities for physical activity

Patients

Opportunistic advice, discussion, negotiation or encouragement by staff are cost effective and successful methods of increasing physical activity among patients.

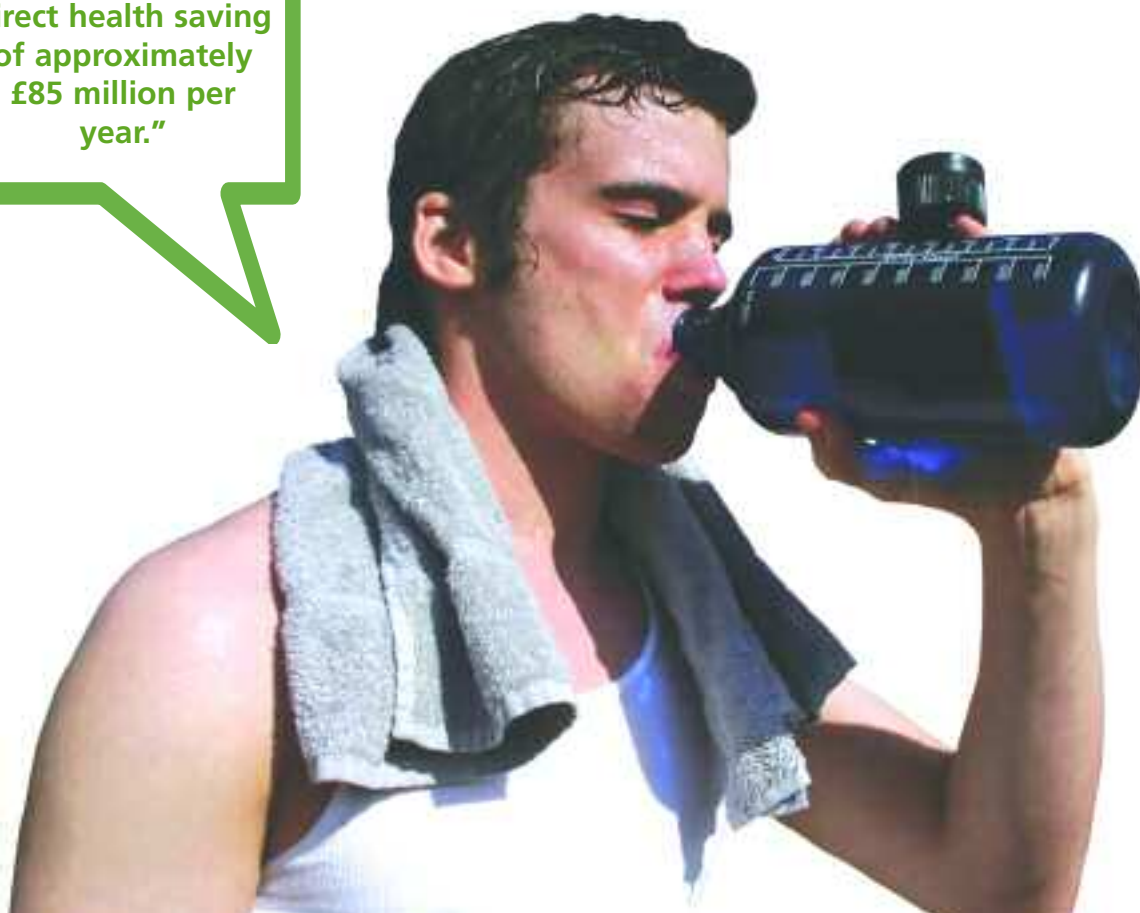
Brief advice from a health professional, supported by written materials, is likely to result in a modest, short-term effect on physical activity; onward referral to a community-based exercise specialist can lead to longer term changes.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Encourage all patients to be as mobile as possible.
- Identify patients with a need for counselling on physical activity.
- Provide brief interventions and/or counselling on exercise and physical activity.
- Establish programmes for particular patient groups.
- Ensure referral to follow-up support in the community.

“People who have a physically inactive lifestyle increase their risk of major diseases by up to 50%.”

“A 10% increase in physical activity would result in a direct health saving of approximately £85 million per year.”



Top tips for healthier hospitals

“There is strong evidence that workplace physical activity programmes have a positive effect. In one study, participants increased their reported participation in regular exercise by 11.9%.”

Staff

Workplace travel plans offer a range of benefits including encouraging physical activity, improving social inclusion and interaction, reducing staff turnover and reduced parking costs for trusts. The median annual running cost of a travel plan is £47 per full-time equivalent employee, compared to £300 - £500 per car parking space.

Training in health promotion for all staff would help them play an important role in promoting physical activity to patients and visitors.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Draw up and implement a healthy travel plan.
- Offer health checks to address physical activity and provide ongoing support.
- Actively promote physical activity through changes to the physical environment, incentive schemes and promotional programmes.
- Provide physical activity programmes.
- Provide showering facilities where possible.
- Pay reasonable cycle mileage rates.
- Train health professionals to discuss potential weight management options with interested patients.

Community

Hospitals should offer a good example of health promotion by encouraging physical activity among visitors as well as patients and staff.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Introduce a healthy travel plan that includes:
 - better access for pedestrians and cyclists, for example by creating signed routes and providing secure cycle parking
 - encouraging use of stairs by providing clear signposting and improving decor.
- Open up hospital fitness facilities to the wider community.



4. Encourage sensible drinking of alcohol

"Alcohol is 'public health enemy number three', behind only tobacco and high blood pressure - ahead of obesity, lack of exercise and illicit drugs."

Patients

Hospitals can play a significant role in encouraging the sensible drinking of alcohol. Heavy drinkers receiving brief interventions are twice as likely to moderate their drinking six to 12 months following intervention, compared with drinkers who received no intervention.

Of those A&E patients who require a subsequent outpatient visit, 6.2% may be avoided with effective brief advice in A&E.

Brief advice resulted in fewer A&E re-attendances at one London hospital – one fewer re-attendance for every two people who accepted advice.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Identify patients with harmful or dependent alcohol consumption.
- Provide oral and written information to patients on the damaging effects of alcohol and on the possibilities of assistance to stop or reduce consumption.
- Recommend to large-scale consumers of alcohol that they reduce or stop their intake.
- Offer brief interventions (for harmful intake) or referral to an alcohol unit (for dependent intake).
- Integrate alcohol rehabilitation programmes (including support to reduce or stop alcohol intake) into the clinical guidelines for certain patient groups.
- Ensure referral to community alcohol services upon discharge.



Top tips for healthier hospitals

Staff

A study showed that supervisors and employees who completed worksite training on alcohol problems became more willing to take effective action toward alcoholic employees.

A survey by the Alcohol Harm Reduction Group found that 90% of A&E staff said they or their colleagues had suffered physical or verbal abuse from drunken patients.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Implement a workplace alcohol policy covering drinking at the workplace, workplace discipline, alcohol education and recognition and help for those with alcohol-related problems.
- Provide access to a work-based counselling and advice service.
- Ensure that the full range of support available to patients with alcohol problems is also available to staff.

- Establish guidance and training to ensure all health professionals are able to identify alcohol problems early and offer support.
- Establish guidelines for staff on preventing and coping with alcohol-related aggression and assaults within the hospital, especially in A&E.

Community

Hospitals can play an important role in alcohol education and encouraging sensible drinking.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Encourage community access to support services; for example, through leaflets and posters in waiting areas.
- Display clear messages in public areas, especially A&E, that alcohol-related aggression and assaults will not be tolerated in the hospital.

"Alcohol related diseases account for one in eight NHS bed days (around two million)."

"35% of A&E attendances are alcohol-related."



5. Improve mental health and well-being

Patients

Going into hospital causes anxiety for most people, not only about their health and treatment but also about leaving their home and responsibilities. While mostly inevitable, it can be alleviated by treating everyone with dignity and respect and providing access to services and support, which help a patient's general mental health and well-being.

Addressing mental health difficulties will make a significant contribution to achieving *Choosing Health* targets in all areas.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Provide psychological therapies for the treatment of depression.
- Train antenatal and postnatal staff to spot the signs of depression.
- Implement and adhere to a domestic abuse policy.

- Provide materials targeting women who have suffered domestic violence and place them where perpetrators cannot see them (e.g. women's toilets).
- Provide clear information to patients and carers about their condition and self-management.
- Ensure emotional support is available to patients with life-limiting or long term conditions and their carers.
- Review charges for bedside entertainment and telephone services and consider permitting mobile phone use in designated areas.

"Mental well-being protects physical health and improves health outcomes and recovery rates, notably for coronary heart disease, stroke and diabetes."



Top tips for healthier hospitals



“Cognitive behaviour therapy is as effective as drugs for treating depression and anxiety in the short term and tends to have more durable effects.”

- Create attractive, sensitively designed hospital environments, including the use of art.
- Ensure that older people are treated with respect.
- Ensure staff respect diversity, cultural and religious needs.
- Address both the physical and mental health needs of patients and, where necessary, establish links across services.
- Ensure patients who have attempted suicide or who deliberately self injure are treated with dignity and respect and that their physical and mental health needs are met both in hospital and post-discharge.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are able to deal sensitively with bereavement when a patient dies in hospital.

Staff

According to the Health and Safety Executive, up to five million people in the UK feel ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ stressed by their work. A positive working environment and appropriate support at work has a significant impact on stress related sickness absence and long term outcomes for employees experiencing mental distress.

Organisational changes have greater impact on decreasing adverse psychosocial work factors than individually focused interventions and may have more lasting effects. Facilitating staff to identify and solve work-based psychosocial factors has beneficial results for staff well-being.

Top tips for effective interventions

- Increase social support by making available clear, consistent information and enhancing support from line managers.
- Offer assistance, advice and support to staff experiencing mental health problems at work and for those returning to work following a mental health problem.
- Improve two way communications and staff involvement.
- Develop a culture in which staff are valued; consult and listen to staff.
- Assess job demands, increase job control and decision making latitude.
- Develop an effective response to bullying and harassment.
- Enhance team working.
- Promote a positive approach to employing people with mental health problems.
- Develop a human resource policy to respond to domestic violence.

6. Promote sexual health

All groups

Interventions aimed at modifying risk-taking behaviour could play an important part in reducing STIs and teenage pregnancy, thereby improving public health.

The following interventions have been shown to promote or improve sexual health and well-being generally - among patients, staff, visitors and the wider community.

“Almost all STIs are becoming more common. The number of HIV infections newly diagnosed in 2000 was the highest since reporting began.”

Top tips for effective interventions

- Address the factors that give rise to sexual risk-taking, such as low self-esteem and lack of negotiating skills.
- Emphasise risk reduction – promoting condom use - rather than abstinence.
- Focus on improving contraceptive use and at least one other behaviour likely to prevent pregnancy and STI transmission.
- Provide:
 - interventions to encourage a personal appraisal of risk, including information, skills, exercises and activities
 - training in skills for sexual negotiation, such as how to refuse unsafe sex
 - access to resources such as condoms
 - access to appropriate health services.

“Poor sexual health can lead to a range of health problems including pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, ectopic pregnancy, cervical cancer, unintended pregnancies, abortions, neonatal disorders and neonatal death.”



Top tips for healthier hospitals

- Provide young people's services which:
 - are accessible in terms of opening hours, location and level of information provided
 - respect young people's confidentiality whenever possible
 - respect young people's views
 - foster an open and communicative atmosphere for talking about sex and sexuality.
- Where feasible, provide partner notification through referral by sexual help service providers rather than patient referral.
- Offer screening for hepatitis B, HIV and syphilis during pregnancy.
- Offer screening for chlamydia before termination of pregnancy.
- Provide outreach to vulnerable groups, for example by making STI information and, potentially, testing available through locations such as pharmacies, workplaces, youth and community settings.

"One to one interventions with teenagers have been found to improve contraception use in the long term."



Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following people for their contribution to the report:

Matthew Ashton, Public Health Development Specialist, Knowsley PCT

Janet Atherton, Director of Public Health, Sefton

Gill Bell, Consultant in Sexual Health Advising, Department of GUM, Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield

Kerry Broadhead, Assistant Director of Health Improvement, Warrington PCT

Nick Cavill, Cavill Associates, Stockport

Sarah Clein, Assistant Director of Public Health, Central Cheshire PCT

Dr Diana Forrest, Director of Public Health, Knowsley

Dympna Edwards, Director of Public Health, North Liverpool PCT

Grace Edwards, Consultant midwife in Public Health, Liverpool Women's Hospital

Susie Gardiner, Public Health Programme Manager, Sexual Health, Knowsley PCT

Robin Ireland, Chief Executive, Heart of Mersey

Mark Jackson, The Cardiothoracic Centre, Liverpool NHS Trust

Fiona Johnstone, Director of Public Health, Halton and St Helens

Helen Keegan, Health Adviser, Department of GUM, Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield

Jane Knight, Alcohol Harm Reduction Co-ordinator, Warrington PCT

Melanie Maxwell, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, Wirral NHS Trust

Jo McCullagh, Sefton PCT

John Moorcroft, Director of Community Fire Safety, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

Chris Murphy, Facilities and Hotel Services Manager, Walton Centre NHS Trust

Modi Mwatsama, Food and Health Programme Manager, Heart of Mersey

Paul Quigley, Divisional Senior Nurse Surgery, Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust

Emma Reed, Health, Work and Well-being National Leads Manager, Department of Health

Top tips for healthier hospitals

Alison Rylands, Director of the Wirral Emergency Care Network, Wirral NHS Trust

Pippa Sargent, Smoke Free Programme Manager, Heart of Mersey

Alex Scott-Samuel, Director, Liverpool Public Health Observatory

Jude Stansfield, Senior Consultant, Strategic Partnership and Programme Development, Public Mental Health

Rod Thomson, Public Health Specialist, Sefton and Liverpool Primary Care Trusts

Sue Thompson, Teenage Midwife, Liverpool Women's Hospital

Lina Toleikyte, Health Promoting Settings Network coordinator, Sefton PCT

Linda Turner, Public Health Specialist, Sefton PCT

Janet Ubido, Researcher, Liverpool Public Health Observatory

Sue West, Smoke Free Programme Manager, Heart of Mersey

Chantelle Winstanley, Young women's midwife, Sefton Area

Lyn Winters, Researcher, Liverpool Public Health Observatory

Lorna Wood, Special Midwife, Liverpool Women's Hospital





**Liverpool
Public Health
Observatory**

Cheshire and Merseyside Partnerships for Health (ChaMPs for Health) is a public health network for primary care trusts, local authorities, NHS trusts and wider organisations