



Refreshing the Public Health Outcome Framework

About Living Streets

We are Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking.

We want to create a walking nation, free from congested roads and pollution, reducing the risk of preventable illnesses and social isolation and making walking the natural choice. We believe that a walking nation means progress for everyone.

Our ambition is to get people of all generations to enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings and to ensure all our streets are fit for walking.

Living Streets welcome the opportunity to respond to Department of Health's review of the Public Health Outcome Framework (2015).

Recommendations

Since their introduction in 2012 the PHOF indicators have proved a useful measure of the public's health and wellbeing at a national and local level. We believe they play an important role in providing a means for benchmarking progress within each local authority and across authorities.

However, we believe the framework could be strengthened by the addition of two new indicators currently not covered by the PHOF.

Q.76. Adding a NEW healthcare public health indicator

In addition to the current Health Improvement Indicator 2.13 (Proportion of physically active and inactive adults) we recommend a new indicator focused on the proportion physically active children.

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Charities Evaluation Services

Public Health England (PHE) has committed to drive a step change in the public's health and identified tackling physical inactivity as critical to delivering many of those priorities (eg, dementia, obesity and giving every child the best start in life).

The Government recently reaffirmed their manifesto commitment to tackle childhood obesity. And yet, currently only 21% of boys and 16% of girls aged 5-15 in England take the amount of physical activity they need for good developmentⁱ.

By not having an indicator we are concerned that efforts to increase physical activity in children are being undermined as other 'measured' policy areas become the priority for Local Authority action.

It is essential therefore that a review of the PHOF addresses this gap so that we can measure progress nationally, benchmark improvement across regions and prompt Local Authorities to take action.

We recognise that currently this data is not collected and suggest that one solution could be to use walk (and cycle) to school data as a proxy for measuring child physical activity levels.

This data is already collected at a regional level as part of the National Travel Surveyⁱⁱ and there is a strong case for its extension to a local level in light of the Government's ambition to increase walk to school levels to 55% and double the number of cycling journeysⁱⁱⁱ.

Secondly, we recommend the addition of a new active travel indicator under the 'Improving the wider determinants of health' domain.

Active Travel is well recognised as playing a key role in increasing physical activity. Moreover, in places where more people walk and fewer people drive, there are improvements in air quality and reductions in social isolation – both of which bring additional health benefits.

As with the proposed walk to school indicator, this indicator would align with Government's ambitions to double the number of cycling journeys and increase walking to school. The forthcoming Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy will for the first time set out a long term plan for increasing walking and cycling and provides an opportunity to review how current active travel data is collected.

We would be happy to discuss the evidence on the benefits of walking for health with you and look forward to hearing from you.

For more details please contact:
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ⁱ Public Health England (2014) Everybody Active, Every day : An evidence-based approach to physical activity

ⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>

ⁱⁱⁱ Draft Cycling Delivery Plan (2014) and Ministerial Response (2015), DfT
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/cycling-delivery-plan-informal-consultation>