Healthy places and data

Scotland has large amounts of spatially differentiated data relating to health-related environmental variables following the launch of an open data policy in 2015.

The Aarhus Convention gives everyone a legal right to environmental information that is held by public authorities.

Geographic Information System (GIS) data allows people to interrogate many different types of data sets and give them context. For example, they can be used to demonstrate support for environmental justice arguments, to help gain a better understanding of air pollution, areas at risk of flooding or to eliminate waste and support a circular economy.

It is important that people and organisations utilise Scotland's rich data seam to tackle issues around deprivation, health and place, including greenspace. However, more can be done to identify clusters of social problems and the root causes of deprivation.

Useful links

INHERIT
www.inherit.eu

The Place Standard Tool
https://www.placestandard.scot/

Local food growing strategy — Edinburgh case study:
https://edible-edinburgh.org/

Scotland's catalogue of spatial data and key holders of data
https://spatialdata.gov.scot/
https://www.environment.gov.scot/
http://www.scottishairquality.scot/
https://www.nature.scot/information-hub

Research
'Investigating environment justice in Scotland' (*links between measures of environmental quality and social deprivation.*) Project report published by SNIFFER
http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/1828/

Greenspace/bluespace tools
https://www.greenkeeperuk.co.uk/
https://bluehealth2020.eu/resources/toolbox/

Active travel
Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) for walking/cycling
www.heatwalkingcycling.org

About Environmental Protection Scotland

We bring together individuals and organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors to discuss and promote ideas, knowledge and solutions to achieve our aim of a **cleaner, quieter, healthier** and **sustainable Scotland.**

Our main policy areas are **air quality, land quality** and **noise.** We work to deliver those topics as a means to protect and improve public health, tackle climate change and deliver sustainable economic development.

This leaflet arose from three EPS Triple Win webinars. Watch the first in the series, 'Clean Air Day and the Triple Win' here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQCzT21PcJs

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SCOTLAND

Working for a cleaner, quieter, healthier, sustainable Scotland

PURSUING THE TRIPLE WIN IN A SCOTTISH CONTEXT

Saltcoats Harbour, North Ayrshire
Photograph: Andrew Stark

#TripleWin #ClimateChange #COP26

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Pursuing the Triple Win in a Scottish context

Introduction

"Public Health is wrapped around the reality of change and the actions of those seeking to improve public health and well-being will vary as circumstances and conditions dictate"

'Ecological public health: the 21st century's big idea' by Tim Lang and Geoff Rayner (2012)

A combination of human driven changes to the global environment and those arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic have re-established environmental health at the centre of the public health agenda in a way not witnessed since the 19th century.

It seems appropriate that local authorities and environmental health, in particular, should take a fresh look at their aspirations and priorities in this vastly changed situation.

Today's generation are the first to have incontrovertible proof of humanity's impact on global eco-systems and its implications for human health and the survival of our species due to climate change impacts.

It is easy for communities and people who work at local level to feel disempowered in the face of such challenges. Yet an important realisation is that just as they were in the 19th century, towns, cities and rural locations are key theatres for addressing the public health challenge as places where we live and work.

The task can be seen as one of generating the policies and actions which can deliver health and wellbeing, greater equity between different groups within society and, critically, sustainability.

Sustainability in this context involves reducing the impact of pollution on the Earth's biophysical systems. For example, climate, biodiversity and contributions to the pollutant load.

The EU-funded INHERIT (Inter-sectoral Health and Environment Research for Innovation) project encapsulates the shared task of local agencies as one of delivering the Triple Win of improving **health**, **wellbeing, equity** and the **environment.**

INHERIT focuses on the areas of living (greenspace and energy efficient housing), moving (active travel and other sustainable transport modes) and consuming (food consumption and production). It aims to encourage people to modify their current lifestyles that are characterised by a '*take, make, consume, dispose*' growth model.

Success is likely to be based on identifying and delivering actions which promote change. For example, in how we move, live and consume within our communities.

This implies unprecedented cooperation and a shared vision amongst local players whose activities shape the places we live.

A modern environmental health agenda

Scotland's Place Standard (pictured below) is internationally recognised as an ethos that creates and pursues a shared vision in order to make the most of the physical and social environment of a locality. It produces policies that can be created and delivered in communities. An implication of this is that a modern environmental health agenda can no longer be restricted to containing toxic, infectious and physical threats in different environmental 'compartments' such as air, water, soil and waste.
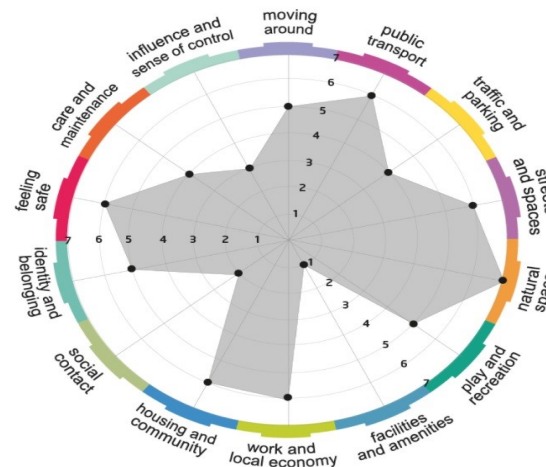
INHERIT identified and evaluated 15 projects across Europe and the United Kingdom based on their capacity to deliver the Triple Win.

It produced a report that offered systemic explanations of how these case studies were implemented. The aim was to inform efforts to put in place further such initiatives and create other opportunities for people to live and behave in a way that would boost uptake of sustainable healthy living, improve the environment and promote health equity.

For example, Greenspace has cross-benefits for the Triple Win. What determines whether people make use of greenspace is affected by a range of factors such as the characteristics of the physical and social environment. Other factors include the greenspace area's size, whether it can be reached on foot, by bike or has good transport links, is of good quality, is attractive and safe.

Community planning agenda

It is difficult to place a financial value on the benefits of people using greenspace, but it is likely that in many cases the benefits outweigh the costs of maintaining a good quality safe area of greenspace.

The concept of a Triple Win can be the basis of a local approach to a modern and integrated environmental health agenda.

Engaging communities in actions for social and environmental sustainability builds trust between public authorities and communities. Actions to plan, develop and maintain initiatives should be relevant to the local community and involve different age, gender, ethnic and socio-economic groups. This invests their interests in their success and fosters a sense of ownership by producing people and local need-based solutions.

The traditional environment and health agenda remains topical and current, but must be extended in the context of the new threats which now confront us. Local/proximal contexts remain key to success.

Dunbar's Close, Edinburgh
Photograph: Dr Sarah Payne, Project DeStress /Heriot-Watt University

Avoiding a narrow view of public health

Improving the places where we live and work can help breakdown some of the public health barriers and challenges that currently exist.

This can be achieved by reducing obesity, inequalities issues and improving mental health and wellbeing.

We are constantly trying to build health and wellbeing on shifting foundations and long-term, large-scale societal transitions.

Demographic change has led to an older, potentially more vulnerable population, nutritional and epidemiological changes and epidemics or pandemics such COVID-19.

A narrow, compartmentalised view of public health may miss these emerging trends.