

1506/06



voice of the public health movement

Sir Michael Lyons
Lyons Inquiry into Local Government
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

27th September 2006

Dear Sir Michael

LYONS ENQUIRY SEMINAR SERIES
Health and Well-Being – Thursday 21st September 2006

Both David Hunter and I found the above seminar both informative and stimulating and we were definitely most encouraged by the breadth and depth of the analysis of the role local authorities play in the promotion of the health and well being of communities.

Clearly, when taken in its widest interpretation¹ public health is intrinsically linked to the social, environmental and economic infrastructure provided by the neighbourhoods and regions in which people live their everyday lives. Therefore *ipso facto* local authorities have an intrinsic and major role to play in promoting and sustaining the public's health.

However, and unfortunately, 'public health' as a concept has become inextricably linked in both the public and professional mind with the NHS. Hence acute clinical needs and end of pipe solutions dominate budgets and focus attention towards sickness alleviation rather than sickness prevention.

The professional monopoly exerted by the NHS allied workforce not only distracts (or deters?) other professions engaged in promoting the wider public health, but can marginalise and confuse communities whose active involvement and participation is crucial to improved health and wellbeing.


The UKPHA has long been committed to developing and expanding public and governmental consciousness about the role that local government has in delivering public health and to urge a re-orientation of policies and resources in recognition of this fact. Our position on these matters is set out in the enclosed publications 'Releasing the potential for the public's health' (LGA, UKPHA & The NHS Confederation) and 'Choosing Health or Losing Health?', the UKPHA response to the 'Choosing Health' White Paper.

¹ Definition of Public Health – Sir Donald Acheson 1988

"The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society"

We have also listed below specific research relating to the preceding points and to those which both David and I made during the course of the seminar proceedings. We look forward to your final report with much interest

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Mawle', written in a cursive style.

Angela Mawle
Chief Executive

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Cohen, L. et al, (2005) 'The O Word: Why the focus on obesity is harmful to human health' *Californian Journal of Health Promotion*, Volume 3, Issue 3, 154 – 161.

Duggan M (2001) *Healthy Living: the Role of Modern Local Authorities in Creating Healthy Communities*. Birmingham: Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

Frey, B. S. & A, Stutzer (2002) *Happiness and Economics: How the Economy and Institutions Affect Human Well-Being*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press.

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