

Healthy Communities Research Forum

- linking health and sustainable development -

*Wednesday 28th February, starting 2.00pm (for 2.15). Finish about 5.00pm
Room 2Q56 UWE Frenchay Campus - opposite FBE reception. Refreshments.*

Mental well-being and design of the urban environment

Evidence is mounting that some of the determinants of mental health reside in our living environments. The built environment, including road networks and where we locate housing, creates the human habitat and modifies the natural habitat and our relationship to it. Are designers and planners building-in triggers for mental illness? Can we develop planning processes that will lead to neighbourhoods that support well-being? What do we already know and what further evidence do we need?

Notes on the speakers:

Professor Gabriel Scally. The Regional Director of Health.

Mental well-being: the need for a dialogue between designers and planners and those involved in public health.

Dr Gabriel Scally has been Regional Director of Public Health for the South West region of England since 1994. He was born, brought up and educated in Belfast and having studied medicine went on to train in general practice and in public health. He was Chief Administrative Medical Officer and Director of Public Health in the Eastern Health and Social Services Board from 1986 to 1993. Gabriel works for the South West Strategic Health Authority and for the Department of Health. He is based in Bristol in the Government Office for the South West. Gabriel leads the Regional Public Health Group which has responsibilities across the broad field of public health including health intelligence, health protection and health improvement programmes.

Gabriel is a non-executive director of the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse and holds a visiting chair at the University of the West of England. He has edited one book on public health, contributed chapters to several and authored a substantial number of papers in professional journals. Apart from public health, major interests are cycling and London Irish Rugby Football Club.

Presentation: Gabriel will be re-launching this seminar series with observations from his unique perspective. As Director of Public Health for NHS South West, formed last year, and Regional Director of Public Health for the South West Regional Public Health Group (RPHG), a post he has held since 1994. His twin roles enable him to provide joint working across these bodies and give unique insight in to the challenges facing the sustainability and public health agenda.

Cancellation: Places are limited. Please let Gill Weadon if you are now unable to attend so the place can be offered to someone on the waiting list. Gill.Weadon@uwe.ac.uk

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Sarah Parry-Jones. ARUPS.

Neighbourhood accessibility, social networks and mental well-being.

Sarah is a chartered civil engineer. Her varied career path has taken her from designing community-based water and sanitation programmes in Africa to promoting walking and cycling in London as the Regional Director of the sustainable transport charity Sustrans.

The common strand that runs through her diverse professional experience is a passionate belief that infrastructure is not a means to an end in itself but is central to improving people's health and well-being. This belief led to her to researching the links between sustainable transport and its cross-cutting relationship with mental health, social inclusion and the built environment. She currently works for Arup on a range of sustainable transport and international development projects including the London 2012 Olympics.

Presentation: Sarah will present an analysis of the literature on neighbourhood accessibility, social networks and mental well-being. From over 30 relevant international research studies she will give an overview of research methodologies, identify themes and conclusions in this relatively new area of work. The seminar will explore the complex relationship between accessibility, social networks and well-being. Emerging themes will be explored and policy implications and recommendations for further research will be presented.

Andy McGeeney. Thames Chase Community Forest.

Eco therapy and well-being. improving our relationship to Nature to create a healthier society.

Andy trained as a psychologist and counsellor many years ago, lectured in psychology, worked as an organisational consultant and trained people in sustainability in the workplace. He has also been a wildlife photographer and author, lead wildlife tours and run ecotherapy workshops. His current work as Therapi Project Officer at Thames Chase Community Forest to the East of London actively explores the relationship between health, well-being and the green environment

Presentation: Andy is interested in exploring the psychological and spiritual relationship we have with Nature and the consequences of our current understanding in relation to mental well being. What changes are required to improve our relationship to Nature and in turn create a healthier society?

He will introduce some of the current concepts, thinking and research evidence in this area and open up the discussion to consider the implications for education, health care and the design of the urban environment.

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