Evaluating Walking

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Format

- Background: Walking & Public Health
- Intervention & Evaluation in Northern Ireland
- Best practise in presenting the economic case
- Consider approach for Northern Ireland
In the UK, physical inactivity is responsible for:

- 17% of premature deaths
- 10.5% of heart disease cases
- 13% of type 2 diabetes cases
- 18% of cases of colon and breast cancer
- Shortens lifespan by 3-5 years
“at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more”
Walking

“Walking is the most likely way all adults can achieve the recommended levels of physical activity”
National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE)

Walking is the most popular physical activity undertaken in Northern Ireland
Walking in Northern Ireland

- Development of walk trails
- Intervention - led walking
- Promotion & public health campaigns
Development of Trails

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Walking Trails
Tobar Mhuire in Crossgar

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Walking Trails
Bunkers Hill in Castlewellan
Trails Evaluation

Trail counters

- Tobar Mhuire: 22,000 walkers
- Bunker’s Hill: 31,000 walkers
Case study: Bunker’s Hill video
Bunkers Hill - Castlewellan.mp4
Intervention - Led Walking
PHA Intervention - Led Walking

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Walk Promotion

WalkNI.com Measurement
• User figures
• 400,000
Walk Promotion Campaign

PHA Physical Activity Campaign
  • Step Challenge
  • Commenced 6 June 2016
  • Measurement
    • Population Level Evaluation
      • assess physical activity levels in the population
      • campaign awareness
    • Challenge Evaluation
      • Walk Leaders & Participants
      • Levels of activity
Current Measurement in NI

- Shows that the intervention are having some impact
- Does not evaluate the economic value of these interventions on people’s health & wellbeing
Wales Coast Path

- Economic assessment of the health benefits of walking on the Wales Coast Path, 2014
- WHO’s Health Economic Assessment (HEAT) tool
- Data from counters on the path, and user surveys
- Estimated 23,688 people walked 4.38 miles on the path every week
- Prevented 7 deaths per year among the walking population
- Value of Statistical life
- Health benefits:

£18.3m per year
Led Walks - Glasgow

- Social Return on Investment Analysis
- Calculates the social, environmental and economic benefits
- Through a mixture of consultation and research, benefits included:
  - Fitter & more active
  - More comfortable and feel safer
  - Improved self-esteem
  - NHS Glasgow cost savings in medical care - reduction in prescribed drugs
  - Glasgow Council cost savings in care - reduced demand for home care
  - Improved relationships for vulnerable adults

- Monetary value to be placed on the change experienced

£1 invested generates around £8 of benefits
Our approach?

- Putting forward the case for walking
- Economic Evaluation
- Health in All policies
Question

In Northern Ireland, how should we evaluate the health and economic benefits of walking in order to demonstrate its worth?

Should the evaluation be carried out in it’s widest sense to encourage cross-department support as opposed to health in isolation?
Thank you

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