



# Healthy Places through policy research and evidence based modelling and information

---

UK Health Forum Research Strategy

2017 - 2020

*Our vision is of a society where public policy and effective regulation supports the social, economic and environmental conditions in which everyone has equal access to good health and the opportunity to enjoy a life free from disability or preventable death caused by non-communicable diseases.*

*UK Health Forum Vision Statement*

Date published: 09 June 2017

Contact us

**UK Health Forum**

Fleetbank House  
2-6 Salisbury Square  
London  
EC4Y 8JX

**Phone: 020 7832 6920**

[www.ukhealthforum.org.uk](http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk)

## **Contents**

<b>Page 4</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>Page 5</b>	<b>Overview</b>
<b>Page 6</b>	<b>An alliance</b>
<b>Page 7</b>	<b>NCD Prevention groups</b>
<b>Page 7</b>	<b>International links</b>
<b>Page 7</b>	<b>Public health links</b>
<b>Page 7</b>	<b>Academic collaborations</b>
<b>Page 8 - 9</b>	<b>Priorities</b>

## **Introduction**

This document outlines the research strategy for the UK Health Forum (UKHF) for the years 2017 – 2020.

The vision for the research strategy is to generate knowledge that creates substantial and enduring impact. We are committed to being innovative in producing and sharing information and knowledge, that supports advocacy for changes in policy, investment and practice.

This document is aimed at our membership, research commissioners and funders, researchers and policy-makers, public health practitioners and providers across the National Health Service (NHS) and voluntary community sector (VCS), local government organisations, higher education institutions and the public.

## Overview

*The work we undertake addresses the prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and reduction of NCD related ill health, tackling the full range of proximal and distal determinants of NCDs from behavioural risk factors to the wider social, economic and environmental determinants of NCDs, ill health, and related health inequalities.*

NCDs- including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, respiratory disease, liver disease and dementia, account for the greatest burden of death and ill health in the UK and globally.

Comprehensively tackling the avoidable and iniquitous toll of NCDs, which create over 80% of the burden on the health and care system, will substantially reduce avoidable demand on services, reduce health inequalities, increase healthy life expectancy and produce a health-creating economy. Tobacco, alcohol use, and high rates of obesity - due to poor diets - these are three of the top five risk factors for disease in the UK.

The UKHF has been working in the area of the prevention of NCDs since 1987. We are an independent charitable organisation that only accepts public interest funds and we have strict ethical and scientific policies that govern our work.

Our expertise is in the public health sciences and working on policy research and development and evidence: expert based advocacy. Examples of this work can be found in the annual UKHF impact reports on our website.

Our expertise is multi-disciplinary and includes public health, social policy, international relations, anthropology, information sciences, epidemiology, economics, statistics, mathematics, psychology, environmental sciences, educational theory, organisational development and alliance and partnership working. Our core staff at the UKHF are qualified to postgraduate and PhD levels and undertake regular professional validation.

The UKHF works to achieve co-benefits wherever possible, working through core themes such as sustainable development, climate stabilisation, human rights and health inequalities.

## An alliance

*We are a trusted evidence-based alliance and an expert resource to members, partners, networks and other alliances. The UKHF has high level nationally and internationally recognised “on tap” expertise in NCD prevention policy and partnership development, information and research.*

The membership of the UKHF consists of 94 national public interest organisations and 124 individual members who are leading experts in public health and NCD prevention.

The UKHF enacts its alliance role in the following ways:

- Forming unique partnerships between charities, professional groups, academic/research think tanks, and the policy world.
- Developing advocacy campaigns and initiatives, in achieving social change, through strategically and tactically co-ordinating the sector’s work.
- Convening expert development forums and regular meetings with members, other alliances and networks to develop and agree policy positions and joint actions.
- Delivering a wide range of high quality real-time customer-tailored NCD prevention information services, used by the VCS, health services, academia, national and local, and policy worlds.
- Through formal and informal mechanisms advocating the sector’s views, including within statutory, third sector and academic advisory and scientific groups.
- Providing innovation and thought leadership through horizon scanning, innovation and connecting to communities of interest.
- Developing the capability and capacity of the third and statutory sector on the prevention of NCDs and public health through all of the above.

## **NCD Prevention groups**

The UKHF works closely with all the major public interest development and advocacy networks and alliances in NCD prevention. These include the Obesity Health Alliance (OHA), Alcohol Health Alliance (AHA), Smoke Free Action Coalition, Sustain – The Alliance for Better Food and Farming, Eating Better, Children’s Food Commission, Healthy Air Alliances and campaigns. In most instances the UKHF is on the steering and working groups and we are involved in joint projects.

## **International links**

The UKHF has established working links at the highest levels with intergovernmental organisations and NGOs (non governmental organisations) which include the NCD Alliance, World Cancer Research Fund International, World Obesity Federation, European Public Health Alliance, European chronic disease charities, EuroHealthNet, World Health Organisation (WHO), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Commission, World Bank and Commonwealth Secretariat.

## **Public health links**

The UKHF works closely with the main generic public health organisations such as the UK Public Health Network, Royal Society of Public Health (RSPH), Faculty of Public Health (FPH), Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) and the Local Government Association and the statutory organisations such as the UK Public Health Agencies, National Health Service Executive (NHSE), National Institutes of Health (NIHR), National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Research Councils and the Department of Health and other government departments.

## **Academic collaborations**

As an evidence-based alliance the UKHF works in many national and international academic collaborations, providing insights from the perspective of users of prevention evidence to the process, as well as a research and development provider.

## Priorities

*Our mission is to operate as a centre of expertise, working with and through our members and partners to contribute to the prevention of the avoidable NCDs - coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity, cancer, respiratory diseases and vascular dementia.*

The geographical coverage of the UKHF's work is both nationwide and international. The UKHF has managed large complex programmes of public health development and implementation work for over 27 years.

The UKHF receives project grants and contracts from research bodies, governments and the European Commission. All financial arrangements are ultimately overseen by the governing Board of Trustees. An audit and risk committee reviews financial governance arrangements.

One of the key UKHF goals is to increase investment in high impact public health research and the UKHF is an expert member of key research reviews which have included the National Research Initiative (NRI) and the UK Public Health Research Partnership (UKPHRP) and the impact assessment of the Research Excellence Framework (2014). The UKHF also advises via expert committees other research reviews – recently the Academy of Medical Sciences and Academy of Social Sciences and Public Health England (PHE) public health research reviews

Our work is focused on policy goals to tackle the major, modifiable risk factors for avoidable NCDs: poor diet, obesity, tobacco use, alcohol harm and physical inactivity, and an over-arching aim to address the wider determinants of health and to reduce health inequalities.

The UKHF's scope, strategy and ways of working are summarised in the advocacy model shown in Figure 1. Achieving change in public policy is challenging and often takes decades to show results, in terms of improved public health. We assess long-term impact within the context of changing health trends, and monitor and report how well we achieve outcomes and create the necessary conditions for better, more effective policy making in the short- and medium-term.



Figure 1: Advocacy model

### Our priorities are:

1. To undertake policy research on the social, economic, fiscal, commercial, environmental, civic determinants of NCDs;
2. To undertake policy research on effective interventions to prevent NCDs, especially on upstream, whole system high impact measures;
3. To undertake research on reducing the inequalities in NCDs that arise throughout the lifecourse;
4. To undertake high fidelity modelling of NCDs and their risk factors and undertake future scenario projections and intervention impact analysis;
5. To develop epidemiological and intervention analytical tools;
6. To undertake research on knowledge translation tools, information needs and to develop informatics innovations for public health.

Date published: 09 June 2017

Contact us

**UK Health Forum**

Fleetbank House  
2-6 Salisbury Square  
London  
EC4Y 8JX

**Phone: 020 7832 6920**

[www.ukhealthforum.org.uk](http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk)