

LONG TERM PLANNING FOR RECOVERY AFTER DISASTERS: ENSURING HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES (HiAP)

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INFORMATION SHEET 12

Reflections on the literature for the Christchurch recovery

What is the aim of this series of documents?

This document aims to show what can be learnt from previous disasters about the impact of decisions and actions taken that have affected people's wellbeing during the recovery period.

The document is written from a public health perspective but draws from the **literature of many disciplines**.

The key challenge and aim is to gain a place in the recovery planning effort and ensure that health and wellbeing is recognised as a key factor to be considered in all decisions and actions, rather taking a narrow view of "health" as being limited to health protection and disease control functions, vital though they are.

It aims to show that recovery takes place in several phases, from immediate response to long term rebuilding, with transitional phases in between. These phases overlap and the stages of recovery may be of longer or shorter duration for particular groups of people within the affected area.

It highlights that there is always tension between acting speedily and taking time to plan well. Pre-disaster planning is the best means of avoiding short term decisions that create or exacerbate long term problems.

Why is the HiAP approach so relevant?

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is an approach which emphasises the fact that health and wellbeing are largely influenced by measures that are managed by government sectors other than health. HiAP seeks to highlight the connections and interactions between health and other sectors. The health sector's role is to support other sectors to achieve their goals in a way which also improves health and wellbeing.

Much of the evidence in the sections above, particularly that on the unequal impact of disasters on vulnerable populations, is well known to those who work with communities.

Influence decision makers - The key question is how this knowledge can be used to influence decisions made and actions taken during the recovery process so that Christchurch is a better and more equitable place to live.

Collaborative action - It would seem that collaborative action between like-minded organisations could provide a valuable means of translating this knowledge into practice in the recovery.

Organisations could, for example:

- **Seek membership** on recovery planning committee(s) either jointly or severally.
- **Advocate strongly** for health and wellbeing in all policies using any opportunity offered through committee membership, submissions, public hearings or any other means.
- **Convey the message** that health starts "where we live work and play" using the "new way to talk about the social determinants of health."
- **Strengthen existing partnerships** and pursue new ones with local authorities, primary care, mental health, and social service organisations to strengthen this voice at the policy level.
- Resist getting bogged down in long drawn-out planning, which delays action being taken.
- **Ensure that "community participation"** really is that, and not just information or consultation that is then disregarded.

- **Be watchful** for the type of policies and proposals that will **further disadvantage vulnerable groups** and advocate for those that improve rather than exacerbate inequalities.
- Lessons from the literature demonstrate that decisions about relocation, temporary housing, and letting of contracts appear to be some of those that have the greatest potential to have either a positive or negative impact depending on how they are handled.
- **Advocate at the interface** between official and community groups to ensure that all energy is directed at the recovery rather than being diverted into conflict and dissatisfaction. This might include supporting small, local, and sustainable efforts and groups to ensure they are not disadvantaged or by larger national or economic interests.

HIAP messages:

- “Health begins where we live, learn, work, and play”
- Health starts – “long before illness – in our homes, schools and jobs”
- Health in All Policies (HiAP) is an approach that acknowledges the causes of health and wellbeing lie outside the health sector and are socially and economically formed.
- HiAP highlights the connections and interactions between health and other sectors and how they contribute to better health outcomes.
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a tool to meet HiAP goals.

Other Information Sheets in this series

Information Sheet 1: Background and key areas of health

Information Sheet 2: Introduction, Recovery phase and Lessons from Napier Earthquake of 1931

Information Sheet 3: Immediate response phase

Information Sheet 4: Equity issues

Information Sheet 5: Housing issues

Information Sheet 6: Mental Health issues

Information Sheet 7: Social cohesion and resilience

Information Sheet 8: Community participation issues

Information Sheet 9: Economic recovery

Information Sheet 10: Sustainability: mitigating future disasters

Information Sheet 11: Heritage buildings

Information Sheet 12: Reflections on literature for Christchurch recovery

Information Sheet 13: Limitations to consider

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