

SCPHRP

Scottish Collaboration for
Public Health Research and Policy

SPRING MAGAZINE 2016



COLLABORATING WITH ACADEMICS:
An Evidence for Success supplementary guide
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EVERYDAY LIFE AND OLDER PEOPLE'S WELL-BEING in local town centres in
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*In January 2015, SCPHRP's Jane Hartley & John
McAteer were funded by the Robertson Trust to
develop an intervention for parents with teenage
children.*

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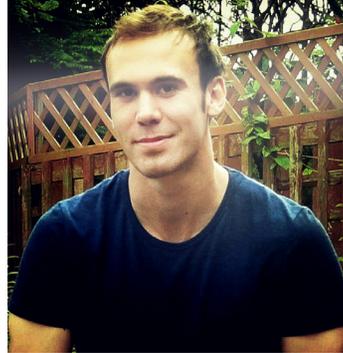
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*SCPHRP was delighted to host the 3rd annual
Young STAND (Scots Tackling Alcohol and Drugs)
award ceremony at the UKCRC Centres of Excellence
for Public Health conference here in Edinburgh last
November.*



A note from the Editor



Stephen Malden joined SCPHRP in 2015 to assist with a review of Scotland's obesity research that will contribute to planned ORM revisions, and to assist on other projects.

Read more about Stephen at www.scpgrp.ac.uk/people

Welcome to this year's spring edition of the SCPHRP magazine, even if the weather still appears to think that its winter.

Our last magazine issue saw us bid farewell to the former Working age/Adult lives working group lead Tony Robertson as he left us to take a post at the University of Stirling just before Christmas. Early 2016 saw us also say goodbye to another two members of the SCPHRP team, as Farr research fellow Andrew Williams secured a position at the University of Exeter, while Catherine Bromley completed her PhD and was subsequently offered a position at NHS Health Scotland. While we here at SCPHRP were sad to see them leave, we wish them all the very best in their new roles, and look forward to working with them again in the future!

As usual, there has been plenty of interesting work going on at SCPHRP within the last few months, and there is sure to be something to interest all our readers in this latest Magazine issue. We highlight the exciting work that is currently taking place within the three active working groups (Early Years, Adolescence/Young Adulthood, and Later Years) such as the development of the CARE intervention and our work on the Daily Mile initiative, in addition to projects from some of our collaborators.

We hope you find this issue interesting, informative and most importantly enjoyable!

Stephen



Everyday Life and Older People's Well-being in Local Town Centres in Edinburgh.



Meeting the challenges of an ageing population has generated debate on the types of supportive environments needed to enable older adults to retain a sense of independence and well-being in their everyday life. **Luca Brunelli** from Heriot-Watt University *tells us more..*



Cont..

Meeting the challenges of an ageing population has generated debate on the types of supportive environments needed to enable older adults to retain a sense of independence and well-being in their everyday life. Ageing-successfully-in-place goes beyond achieving a person-environment fit between housing characteristics and personal needs. For many older people it means the chance to be connected to the community, the ability to access services and facilities and to participate in local civic and social life.

In Edinburgh local Town Centres have traditionally been at the core of everyday life, contributing to a vibrant public realm and supporting sustainable patterns of local mobility and consumption. According to research carried out by Edinburgh City Council in 2013 more than 40% of the population of Edinburgh live within 800 meters of a local Town Centre where many retail, leisure, commercial and community services are clustered. The proposed *Local Development Plan (LDP)* defines local Town Centres as “a focal point for their local communities providing a diverse mix of shopping facilities and other commercial and community services”¹ which are also locations easily accessed by walking, cycling or public transport. The popularity of local Town Centres is under pressure by changing shopping habits, vacancy rates and empty homes, anti-social behaviour, increasing volumes of traffic, and poor maintenance of the streetscape. Following the *National Review of Town Centres in 2013* the Scottish Government acknowledged the need for a revitalisation strategy which could realign policies and resources to ensure these locales become more vibrant places². However despite the demographic imperative there has been little attempt to understand the importance of local town centres in the everyday lives of older adults and how they can be designed and managed to offer material and social opportunities for improving the well-being of older people ageing in place.

Our research adopted an ethnographic approach involving more than 80 retired people, between 61 and 97 years old, exploring how everyday practices in local town centres support older adults’ well-being. Several dimensions of well-being emerged from the findings. Going ‘out and about’ in the local town centre can be an enjoyable everyday activity tapping into positive emotions and happiness,

and leading to feelings of attachment and belonging. From fleeting to more intimate social interactions, these settings may provide places and opportunities for reducing isolation and provide a restorative experience away from the home. As “community-hubs”, local town centres provide opportunities that support participation and role fulfilment in old age. Finally, they can support personal autonomy and independence, fostering a sense of control and allowing for completion of activities of everyday living.

The research revealed aspects of local town centres that can be improved to enhance well-being in later life. A new agenda for age-friendly streets should include at least three main areas of intervention which broaden those proposed by the *Scottish Government Town Centres Action Plan*. Affordable retirement housing provision, in close proximity and co-located next to high streets may support personal autonomy and independence, drawing on local existing infrastructure, facilities and services, whilst increasing footfall on the high street. A new culture of pedestrian friendly and walkable environments should be encouraged, considering how sensory and cognitive changes can be integrated into transport infrastructure, streetscapes, and premises. Land uses and business improvements should consider business rate discretionary relief and other incentives in order to achieve adequate clustering of mixed uses, including public services, community spaces and a variety of informal settings e.g. cafes and other spaces for social interaction.

Finally, all the above cannot be achieved without providing spaces for civic engagement to take advantage of older people’s capabilities and experience, establishing a positive loop between positive experiences of well-being and their engagement with the design of the community. Investment in our town centres is needed to ensure they remain vibrant places a supportive environment for older adults, and as such an inclusive and enjoyable place for all.

Luca Brunelli, Ryan Woolrych and Harry Smith
Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society School
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh
Luca Brunelli: lb156@hw.ac.uk

¹ Edinburgh Council, 2014, *Second Proposed Local Development Plan*, p. 29. Available at: <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan>. ² Scottish Government, 2013, *Town Centre Action Plan*. Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/11/6415>

Back issues of SCPHRP magazines can be found at www.scphrp.ac.uk/publications.
If you would like to contribute to our next SCPHRP magazine please get in touch with Sam Bain at samantha.bain@ed.ac.uk.

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The Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research (SCPHRP)
20 West Richmond Street,
Edinburgh,
EH8 9DX



tel: +44 (0) 131 6511594
[website: www.scphrp.ac.uk](http://www.scphrp.ac.uk)



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