

# Progress in Practice

## NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit

London's Regional Public Health Group, the London Development Agency and the five London Strategic Health Authorities have collaborated to establish a Healthy Urban Development Unit to facilitate effective engagement with development plans throughout London communities.

### Summary

The aim of the NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU), launched in February 2004, is to significantly improve the health of Londoners by helping to create sustainable and healthy communities across the capital. It provides a useful resource for Primary Care Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities and Boroughs in facilitating an effective response to development proposals to ensure the provision of health services for communities.

The Unit actively tries to ensure that health facilities are integrated into the planning of new developments across London, including Stratford City, Croydon Gateway, and the Thames Gateway through mechanisms such as negotiating S106 planning obligations for health. The role of the Unit is also to ensure that the NHS in London is engaged in the creation of regional and local planning policy documents to ensure they address the aim of enhancing healthier development and promoting more sustainable communities. The Unit's partners include the NHS, the London Boroughs, and other external partners including the private sector.

The NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit was developed in response to the *London Plan* and the renewed challenge to address public health and urban development and planning issues across the capital. In particular, HUDU assists the NHS in meeting unprecedented growth demands.

The *London Plan* projects the following demands for the period 2002 – 2016:

- London's population will grow by 800,000 to around 8.1 million people in 2016
- An increased policy target of 30,000 additional homes per year, in order to meet the growing housing demand

The challenge for the NHS is to respond to the demands of new development for health services and to support development that improves the health and functioning of London's diverse communities.

### Sue Atkinson, Director of Public Health for London, said:

*"The Healthy Urban Development Unit is designed to offer support to the health sector to facilitate us all playing our part in grasping the real opportunity to shape the urban development of London so that all our population has the chance to live healthy lives. In this way we will help create places where people want to live and that enhance their health and well-being."*



**Links and organisations involved:** Regional Public Health Group London ([www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)); London Development Agency ([www.lda.gov.uk](http://www.lda.gov.uk)); London Health Commission ([www.londonshealth.gov.uk](http://www.londonshealth.gov.uk)); North East London Strategic Health Authority ([www.nelondon.nhs.uk](http://www.nelondon.nhs.uk)); South East London Strategic Health Authority ([www.selondon.nhs.uk](http://www.selondon.nhs.uk)); North Central London Strategic Health Authority ([www.nclondon.nhs.uk](http://www.nclondon.nhs.uk)); North West London Strategic Health Authority ([www.nwlha.nhs.uk](http://www.nwlha.nhs.uk)); South West London Strategic Health Authority ([www.swlha.nhs.uk](http://www.swlha.nhs.uk)), NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit ([www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.co.uk](http://www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.co.uk))

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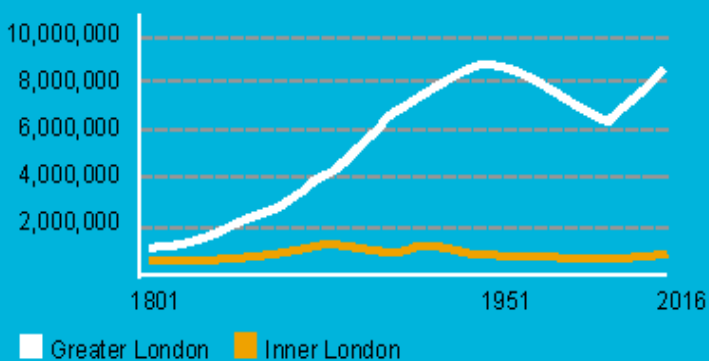
### Example of HUDU project: Lewisham PCT and development of Convoys Wharf, Deptford, London

An outline planning application has been submitted to London Borough of Lewisham seeking approval for a mixed-use development of Convoys Wharf, Deptford. The scheme is expected to house a population of around 8,000. Currently, the area is under-doctored and more resources are needed to address health inequalities. Despite the growth predictions for the future, and present health facility needs, the planning application did not propose primary care health facilities as part of the mixed-use development.

The NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU) reviewed the planning application, identified the impact of the development on primary care services and assisted the Lewisham Primary Care Trust (PCT) to actively engage in the town planning process. Based on HUDU's advice, the PCT submitted an evidence based S106 proposal, requesting that any legal agreement with the developers include the following elements: provision of a six-GP surgery building, costs of interim adjacent GP and health support if the main facility is delayed; and the costs of a Health Impact Assessment. The benefits of the S106 agreement for the PCT will include substantial savings on its local improvement finance trust budget, the timely delivery of primary care services and a health care facility that would be accessible to the existing community.

HUDU in partnership with Lewisham PCT and the London Borough of Lewisham, through S106 mechanisms, are seeking to ensure Convoys Wharf is truly a sustainable 'healthy' development.

Population in Greater London and Central London 1801 to 2016



*"Lewisham PCT has been impressed by the degree of expertise in HUDU and their welcome and effective collaboration in providing background material, advising on the content, and in preparing the final shape of the S106 submission to the Council. It has demonstrated in practice that it is a very valuable resource for PCTs in London."*

**Neil Brady, Projects Officer – Lewisham PCT**

**The NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit has three inter-connecting and mutually reinforcing objectives:**

1. To promote healthy, sustainable communities
2. To influence the London urban planning agenda
3. To influence urban development across London

**HUDU projects and action plans include:**

- The development of a standard NHS Planning Contribution Model to assist London's NHS to efficiently and effectively determine what the S106 'health element' should reasonably be for any given development proposal,
- Developing a checklist to help Primary Care Trusts in London identify the key elements of a healthy, sustainable community and measure the contribution of new residential and employment developments for improved health and reduction in health inequalities, and
- Facilitating development schemes to integrate the principles of healthy urban development, thereby providing models of best practice that can be replicated in both large and smaller scale developments.

### Key Learning Points:

1. Early engagement with the borough planning officer is the key to ensuring that the Primary Care Trust's (PCT) requirements are factored into S106 planning obligation negotiations.
2. Establish an internal working group, with input from all sections of the PCT, to ensure a timely and relevant response to major development proposals.
3. In any S106 submission for health - aim high but be reasonable, and be prepared to negotiate.
4. The PCT recognised that they did not have the internal expertise in negotiating, so they sought support from the NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit to assist.

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