

Written evidence submitted by Lord Nigel Crisp (PHS0228)

There are many important issues that could be covered. I wish to propose two – please ignore the second if you only want one.

Promote the causes of health as well as tackling the causes of disease.

The Committee's focus is *prevention of disease and injury*. I hope that it will also recognise the importance of *creating health* and the overlap and differences between the two activities.

The key points are:

- Health creation is about the causes of health and creating the conditions for people to be healthy and helping them to be so. It's what good parents do, good teachers and schools, good communities, good employers ...
- The causes of health are increasingly well-known and well researched. They include having positive relationships at home, in work and education; exercise and movement; diet; having meaning and purpose in life; a healthy physical environment with access to sunlight and nature; and much more.
- There are obvious parallels here with the prevention agenda. The causes of disease, for example, include social isolation, stress, sedentary lifestyles and air pollution. And both, of course, link with the social determinants of health – which may cause disease or create health depending on the circumstances
- The big differences are, firstly, that creating health is a wider concept – about strengthening physical, mental, social and environmental health - and it also strengthens prevention; while prevention tends to be focused on individual diseases or causes of disease. As the World Health Organization pointed out in 1948, *Health is not just the absence of disease*. Secondly, different groups need to take the lead in prevention and health creation. In prevention, regulation and government action probably have the biggest part to play; in health creation it is civil society, schools, employers, families, communities and more.
- Health creation also overlaps with some approaches to health promotion – and may in some instances be considered the same. However, health promotion has generally been treated as being about lifestyles rather than about the conditions which enable people to be healthy. Both aspects are contained in health creation.
- There are increasing numbers of people all over the country working in health creation who could give evidence to the Committee – health workers, teachers, police, businesses, housing bodies, community leaders and others. My own very informal research of health creation activities is published in *Health is Made at Home, Hospitals are for Repairs* (Salus Global 2020) and I would be happy to share information with the Committee and its researchers.

Relevance for the Committee

Why consider this issue – there is obvious synergy and overlap between prevention and health creation

Why now – there is growing interest and activity in health creation, but it has not yet been considered by any parliamentary committee. Now would be a very good time to do so.

What benefit – This consideration will help raise awareness of the importance of health creation and thereby accelerate the excellent developments underway.

Why Government action is needed – an understanding of health creation will contribute to Government policy in many areas from education to housing, environmental matters to levelling up as well as in health and care.

Healthy homes and workplaces

Homes are vitally important to health whether it is preventing disease and injury – from cold, fire, damp, mould or falls or creating health by providing a foundation for individuals and families to live healthy, prosperous and fulfilled lives – with, for example, space for children’s homework, privacy, protection from noise and crime and access to daylight and green spaces. It is no accident that early Ministers of health were also Ministers of Housing.

My Healthy Homes Bill which addresses this area is currently awaiting third reading in the Lords.

Similar arguments apply to workplaces with some employers such as the members of the City Mental Health Alliance actively working to prevent mental illness, create mental health and tackle mental illness. Work related stress has major consequences for individuals, society and the economy.

Relevance for the Committee

Why consider this issue – these are major areas which impact positively or negatively on health and wellbeing

Why now – Covid and recovery have brought these into focus and it clear that new policy is needed.

What benefit – these areas have been neglected in recent years and there is considerable scope for improvement in policy and action

Why Government action is needed – this could influence Government policy over a wide range of areas.

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