

# Planning A Health Day

Planning • Planning • Planning • Planning • Planning

Aims/objectives • Aims/objectives • Aims/objectives

Venue • Venue • Venue • Venue • Venue • Venue

Theme • Theme • Theme • Theme • Theme • Theme

Health and Safety • Health and Safety • Health and

Budget • Budget • Budget • Budget • Budget

Marketing • Marketing • Marketing • Marketing

Evaluation • Evaluation • Evaluation • Evaluation

# Introduction

The Health Fair has traditionally been used as a means to promote health messages to the public; they are often still the first choice for locally based organisations when they consider the subject of health. Such events, if they are well planned can attract large numbers of people. However, they are 'resource heavy' events that require hours of staff time and as many leaflets and promotional materials as possible to give away.

The NHS can no longer afford to provide unlimited resources for such events because it is notoriously difficult to measure their impact. Health Promotion theory points to the fact that giving away a table full of leaflets is no indication as to how much health information has been passed on or how many people it has influenced.

Given this dilemma the NHS is now embracing the methodologies of Social Marketing ([www.nsms.org.uk](http://www.nsms.org.uk)) that seek to define target audiences and develop appropriate materials and delivery routes for them. Liverpool PCT's current Social Marketing Campaigns are  
Liverpool Active City  
Pssst! – Be alcohol Aware  
Taste for Health  
SmokeFree Liverpool

We simply do not have the manpower to participate in every health fair request we receive. Instead, we offer this downloadable resource.

# Contents

- Planning ..... 3
  
- Exhibitors ..... 5
  
- Marketing ..... 7
  
- Evaluation ..... 9

# Planning a health day

Before you plan your health day, we advise that you make sure that it is the best way to communicate with your target audience. Would it be best to communicate your message through workshops, visiting local organisations or community groups to give a talk, etc?

If, after you have looked at the pros and cons of each appropriate form of communication, you believe a Health Day to be the best then the following information will help you in being as organised as possible.

The following sections are not meant to be exhaustive, but to give you as much help/guidance as possible when planning.

Each section is written to try and be as thorough as possible. However, each event is unique so there may be additional tasks to get the best from your health day than those specified.

We suggest that you read each section before you start anything. This will then give you an overall idea of the time you will need to put into your event.

Some of the information may seem obvious but it is easy to lose track of where you are up to when planning your event.

Good Luck!  
Liverpool Health Promotion Service

# Plan, plan, plan and plan some more!

## Make sure you allow enough time for planning

Ideally you should allocate between 4-10 months to organise everything for your event. You should try to allow at least two months for your planning.

## Form a planning group

Forming a small group will allow you to identify areas that need to be covered e.g. exhibitors, marketing, venues, - logistics. Also consider inviting someone from, or who works with, your target audience, they will know your audience best and may have some good ideas on how to attract people in.

## Is there a theme for your event?

What are you promoting; general good health or a specific area such as healthy eating? Generic-themed Health Days are all the more difficult for everyone.

## What are your aims/objectives for the day

What do you want to achieve by hosting your event?

## Don't plan a day that coincides with another big event

Research round your area what other things are going on at the time you are planning to host your event. If an event is already going on is there an opportunity for joint working?

## Choose a place, time and venue that is appropriate for your target audience.

There is no use in hosting an event for children if they are all at school! Or having a venue that people will find it hard to get to, make sure public transport will be easy to access to and from your event.

## Marketing

How are you going to market your event – leaflets, posters, etc? How many people are you hoping to attract?

## Health and Safety

Do you envisage any health and safety issues? How can they be resolved?

## Evaluation

How will you evaluate your day? How will the evaluation be carried out?

## Prepare your budget (if you have one!)

If you have a budget look at where will be best to allocate your money. How could your budget best be used to get the best possible outcomes for your day? Will you be providing free lunch, drinks, etc? Is the venue you have chosen free to use?

# Planning checklist

- Set-up planning group
- Identified aims/objectives
- Decided upon on theme
- Chosen target audience
- Arranged suitable date/time
- Accessible venue
- Marketing ideas collated
- Health and safety Issues addressed
- Budget arranged

Your next step is to now think about who you need to invite to your Health Day to meet with what you want to achieve.

# Exhibitors

**It is not a good idea to invite everyone and anyone to your event to exhibit just to make up numbers. You and the exhibitor will gain nothing from this, and only serve to make exhibitors think twice about attending an event organised by your organisation in the future. Their time, and yours, is very precious and it should be used to achieve the best outcomes for your target audience.**

## Invite

A letter/email invite to an organisation is a good idea to introduce yourself and your event. You can then follow this up with phone call. Include aims of the day and specify your target audience in your invite.

## Try not to duplicate

Make a list of possible organisations to invite. Try not to duplicate; people don't want the same information available at all the stalls. Invite one stall to cover issues you want to address e.g. one to look at smoking, one to cover healthy eating, etc.

## Acceptances

Make sure you get confirmation that an exhibitor will be attending.

## Interaction is the key

Ask exhibitors, if possible, for them to have something interactive on their stall – this will be an incentive for people to visit stalls. People don't want to turn up to an event just to collect leaflets. Think about music, games, etc.

## Is lunch/drinks provided?

Let exhibitors know if they need to bring lunch and drinks or where they can buy them on the day.

## Parking

Is suitable parking available for exhibitors? Is there a drop off point for their materials if they need to park far from the venue? Is parking free or do they need to pay? What are the car park costs?

## Map

Provide exhibitors with a map and directions to the venue.

## Numbers

Let exhibitors know how many people you are hoping to attract to your event, this will make it easier for materials to be ordered.

## Exhibitors needs

What will be needed on the day - tables, chairs etc. If these are not available, inform the exhibitors so they can make arrangements to bring their own if necessary.

## Order resources in plenty of time

If you are organising and hiring display boards or leaflet resources put your order in as soon as you know numbers. The earlier the better. This will ensure that enough resources can be ordered for you and enough display boards kept on hold for your event. The later the order is put in the more likely you are to be disappointed.

## Exhibitors stall

You can ask exhibitors to give you a brief description of what they will be doing. This will help you when you come to marketing your event.

## Floor plan of exhibitors

Produce a floor plan of where exhibitors stands will be. On the event day label tables/area of where the exhibitors will be displaying their information. This will help when exhibitors start arriving and limit confusion to where people should be.

## Budget

Make sure you are clear as to whether an exhibitor expects to be paid for attending your event.

# Exhibitors checklist

- Appropriate organisations chosen and invited
- Acceptances from exhibitors
- Lunch/drinks information clarified
- Parking facilities clarified
- Map/directions to venue collated
- Invites sent to organisations. Aims, target audience and number of people you are hoping to attract included
- Exhibitors needs collated
- Resources ordered/display boards booked
- Overview of exhibitors stalls collated
- Floor plan designed
- Budget reviewed

OK – you have planed; your exhibitors have been invited; their acceptances have been confirmed; now you need people to attend. This undoubtedly is the hardest part!

# Marketing your event

## Promote, Promote, Promote!

Getting people to attend a day about health is a difficult task! Therefore, publicising your health day is extremely important. You need to make your day fun, appropriate, interesting and interactive.

You need to consider the most likely way your target audience is going to hear about your event and what will attract them to it. Also remember different people respond to different types of media therefore don't use just one source of promotion.

## Marketing Techniques

- Radio
- Flyers
- Table Cards
- Word of mouth
- Pay Slips
- Banners
- Posters
- Newspaper Articles
- Emails
- TV
- Newsletters
- Web site advertising

## Radio

Make contact with local radio stations (many areas have community radio stations). Inform them of your event and ask would it be possible for them to mention it. If possible personally talk on the radio about your event and why people shouldn't miss it!

## Press Release

Write a press release. Send this to your local newspapers and relevant stakeholders. Keep it short but make sure you include the main points – date, time, venue, that it is free admission, mention give-a-ways and who/what are going to be the star attraction!

## Make promotional material bright/fun

Make people want to attend your event because it looks unmissable.

## Who is attending?

Try having a special guest attend e.g. local footballer, radio presenter, Mayor, etc.

## Send specific invitations

Send invitations to individuals/groups/organisations who you would like to see attend the day. You can follow up with these organisations to see if they will be attending and how many. If they are not attending ask why, there may have been something accidentally overlooked in the planning.

## Location, Location, Location

If you are using leaflets, banners, etc. to advertise your day make sure you leave them at locations that your target audience will be at/or visit.

## Demonstrations

Advertise free demonstrations and give-a-ways.

## Free admissions

Make sure people know it is free to attend.

# Marketing checklist

- Marketing techniques decided
- Demonstration and give-aways confirmed
- Marketing material produced
- Specific invitations sent
- Budget Review

# Evaluation

Evaluation is the most important aspect that can be easily overlooked because of the mammoth effort required to get everything else done. But, nonetheless, it is hugely important.

Evaluating the day will be beneficial for yourself and exhibitors alike. It will allow you to look at numbers for attendance and gain invaluable feedback from the public about the event. This will allow you to build on the positives of your day and learn from the negatives, as well as providing evidence for the possible effectiveness of your day on your target audience.

On the day you may have questionnaires/ feedback forms for the public to fill in. It can be difficult to get people to fill these out and hand you them back. You may wish to think about free prize draw for completed forms.

Whilst people have an incentive you could always add a few questions to the form that relate to the stalls, so they will have to look out for key messages when going around e.g. What are a women's recommended daily units for alcohol? How many fruit/vegetables should you have each day? How many minutes exercise per day are children recommended to have?

Another alternative is having people around on the day gathering public opinions of the event. If you have volunteers in your organisation you may want to ask if they would like to be involved.

When designing your evaluation questions you may wish to ask exhibitors if there is a particular question they would like asking in the evaluations around their subject?

When your event is over produce a short written overview about how the day went. Produce numbers attended, public thoughts, aspects of the day that went very well. Feed this back to your exhibitors and thank them for their time. Exhibitors will be grateful for feedback from the event.

# Evaluation checklist

- Evaluation designed
- Evaluation co-ordinators confirmed
- Prize confirmed – Free Prize Draw
- Brief overview of the day written
- Feedback and thank you sent to exhibitors