

School for Public Health Research

Public Health Evidence Briefing

Building the evidence for cost-effective public health practice



*National Institute for
Health Research*

The impact of environmental change on health and behaviour

- Some features of the built environment, such as green space, land use mix, connectivity and access to public transport, are associated with health behaviours such as physical activity and active travel.
- NIHR SPHR researchers assessed the feasibility of studying new residential developments to assess the impact of environmental change on health and behaviour.
- Attitudes and potential health impacts varied by stage of life.

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There is limited evidence on the impacts of changes to the environment on health and health behaviours such as physical activity

Key issues

- Some features of the built environment, such as green space, land use mix, connectivity and access to public transport, are associated with health behaviours such as physical activity and active travel
- This suggests that new residential developments designed with these features in mind might help to promote health
- However, few studies have tested this in practice and we know little about the extent to which these issues influence people's housing choices.

What we did

The Relocation to New Environments (RENEW) study recruited home-movers, non-moving controls and a range of housing providers. They were interviewed to explore attitudes and experiences in relation to relocation, neighbourhood and health in general, and physical activity and the environment in particular.

In addition, the study explored different methods of recruiting study participants and assessing travel and physical activity behaviours and neighbourhood preferences.

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Findings and implications

- RENEW provided valuable insight into the priorities, aspirations and attitudes of both providers and potential residents of new developments
- Closer partnership working in formulating research questions and recruitment strategies could foster greater buy-in and engagement from housing providers.

What next?

The researchers are now building on the experience, findings and networks developed in RENEW in working with major residential developments in Cambridgeshire.

SPHR Contact/Find out more about this study at:

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<http://www.cedar.iph.cam.ac.uk/research/directory/renew/>

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