Health in a learning city

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Some aspects of cities hurt us
Some aspects of cities keep us well.
Some neighbourhoods stay the same
Some neighbourhoods change
Neighbourhoods are not simply a crucible where life happens. They are an integral part of our social and health systems, shaping them and shaped by them.
Individuals, housing, neighbourhoods, economies, cultures etc. are, quite obviously, interlinked in a dynamic **city system**. There are no ‘independent’ variables in a city. We cannot separate health from learning.
Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991
Fig. 7.7
Relationship between level of education and (healthy) life expectancy


**Figure 5. Social patterning of diabetes by education, Buenos Aires, Argentina**

*P-trend men = 0.0032 / P-trend women = 0.0095

Source: [74]
Places are like fields which grow lives rather than crops; if we get the environment right, it can nurture healthy people, generation after generation. If we get it wrong, the adverse consequences are perpetuated.
A look at the past

• In 1896 Charles Booth surveyed large areas of London, house by house

• He classified houses by social class
Little change over time

• We derived a poverty index from Booth’s map of London in 1896 using GIS
• We derived a similar index from 1991 census data
• We explored how well the two indexes predicted mortality rates in London in 1991-1995

So – if we know that place affects health then, in theory, there should be levers we can pull to improve health and wellbeing in a learning city. What are they?
GPS data – Where do people go? What do they do?
• Peaks before (0600-0900) and after (1500-1700) school on weekdays
• Peak in early afternoon (1300-1600) at weekends
Agent-Based Model of Physical Activity

The model simulates the daily activities of children during week days in neighbourhoods across the city and estimates the level of physical activity
What is the impact of increasing activity in the neighbourhood, school, and active travel on daily MVPA?
The Place Standard

**What is it?**
The Place Standard is a tool to assess the quality of a place. It asks people to consider 14 questions about important aspects of a place. The questions cover a broad range of both physical and social characteristics.

https://www.placestandard.scot
Funding acknowledgements

• Places & Health Programme, MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow (Funding codes: MC_UU_12017/10; SPHSU10).

• SHLC is funded via UK Research and Innovation as part of the UK Government’s Global Challenges Research Fund.