

TRAVELLERS' HEALTH MATTERS

RETROSPECTIVE HIA

Anne Costello, GTM and Tanya Lalor, TSA Consultancy

HIA process – initial discussions with families

- No electricity – other than families' own makeshift generators
- Lack of plumbed and hot water
- No storage for food
- No space for play or exercise and no community facilities
- Barrier restricting access
- Gravel site surface
- No functioning service units
- Poor drainage – flooding
- Rats
- Poor sanitation - inadequate toilets
- Waste management facility and former landfill located next to site
- Dangerous main road – no safety provisions
- **Positives** – economic activity on site, close networks between families.

HIA process...oversight

- Steering Group established to provide oversight:
 - Travellers living in Carrowbrowne
 - GTM
 - Public health and environmental health experts
 - Local authority staff

The methodology – data collection

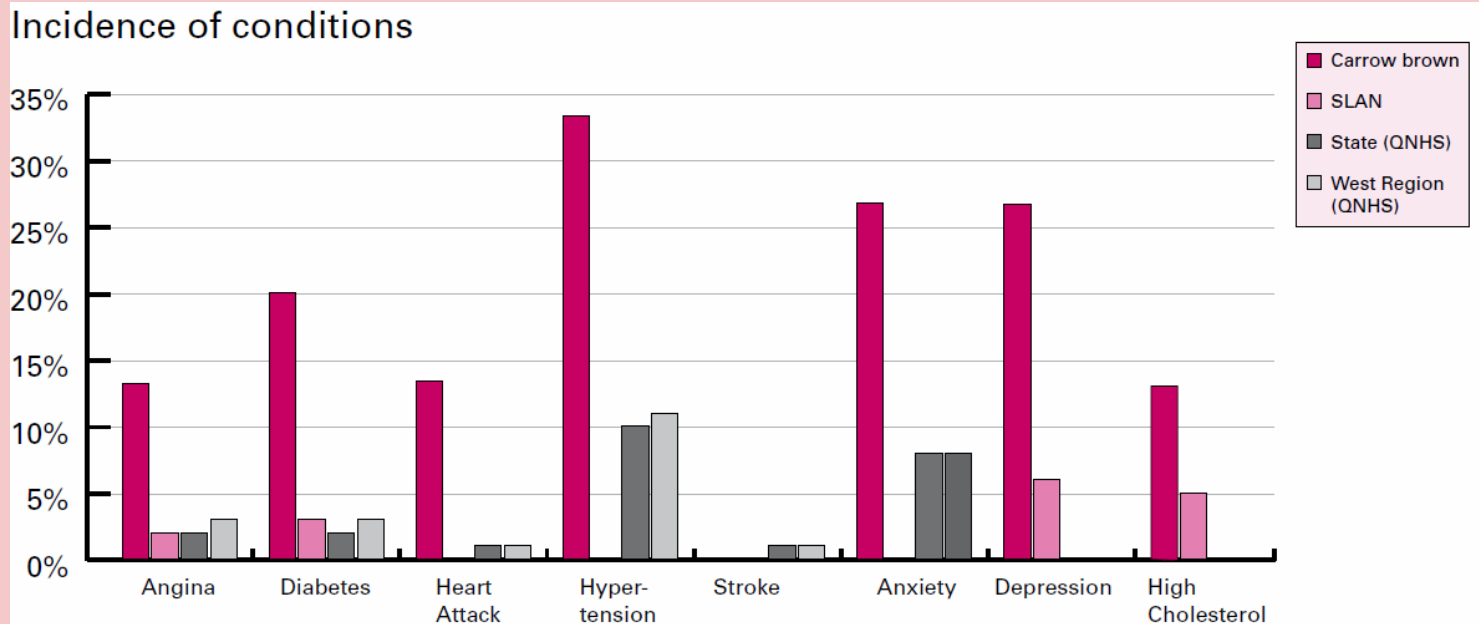
- **Description of the site:**
 - Site infrastructure (electricity, water supply, sanitation, surface, etc.)
 - Site location (waste mgt, amenities, rats)
 - Site facilities (play, recreation, enterprise space)
 - Site management and maintenance
 - Traffic and external road
- **Review of research** on the built environment / living conditions and effects on the determinants of health

..data collection

- **Community profile** – *qualitative and quantitative*
 - Survey of 11 families – comparison with SLÁN and QNHS
 - GP data from 9 adults and 31 children
 - Interviews with families about their lived experiences on the site

Some findings of consultations

- Higher incidence across a range of conditions amongst residents



...some findings

- 4 times the rate of diabetes when compared to the general population
- Diet problems – lack of food storage and refrigeration
- Lack of space and exercise opportunities
- GP visits – kidney, respiratory and E.N.T. complaints
- Accident risks – barrier, traffic/road, fire
- Stress, depression and anxiety



...some findings

- Combination of conditions, for example:
 - Poor sanitation, drainage problems, presence of rats
- Lead to other problems
 - Fear of using toilets at night-time for children, banging doors with sticks for fear of rats, wellies to use toilets
- Resulting in..
 - Bed-wetting, delayed toilet training for toddlers, kidney problems.



...some findings

“Most of the babies are in nappies long after they should be...because they can’t be properly toilet trained when you have to use the portaloos...how are you meant to use them at night, when it is dark and wet...when you have to walk over the gravel and chippings and you can’t see where you are going? Or when there are rats around, and the toilet is so far away from the trailer?”

“...you look outside sometimes and it gets you down - rubbish, muck and rats...that’s what we call home...”



...some findings

“...what happens us if, God forbid, if there’s a fire...or an accident...how are they going to get to us.”

“Even when... there is some food left over, it usually has to be thrown out as it cannot be kept fresh for the next day without use of a fridge at night time.”

Positives

“...here we won’t be evicted, we are close to family, we can keep animals and at least on the site we don’t face discrimination.”

“...I can work but I mightn’t be able to have my work and business on the new site.”

What are the potential health impacts?

- What does the literature say about the health issues associated with the conditions (e.g., overcrowding)?
- What is the status of the site in relation to these issues?
- What does the data and consultations say about the potential health impacts (positive and negative) on families?
- How can positive ones be maximised and negative ones minimised (mitigation)?

Mitigation – some examples

- Provision of high powered generators where there is a delay in providing mainstream electricity
- Plumbed service units as a minimum – while awaiting these, portable showers and high grade portable toilets
- All bays should have hard site surface

...mitigation examples

- Improved mobile acc. through application of rent supplement
- Communal space for residents and play space for children should be mandatory
- Sites should not be close to waste mgt/ former landfill
- Site mgt plan with consultation should be mandatory
- Positive elements of sites (e.g. cultural, economic activity) should be maintained

Recommendations for existing sites

- Assessment & Monitoring of conditions on all sites
- Development of a regulatory system to address the conditions on sites that pre-date the introduction of DEHLG guidelines

To improve the quality of accommodation

- Provision of mobile/chalet type accommodation by Local Authorities
- Allow use of rent allowance to rent mobile homes/caravans

Recommendations for development of sites

- Site location – site selection
- Establishment of a steering group

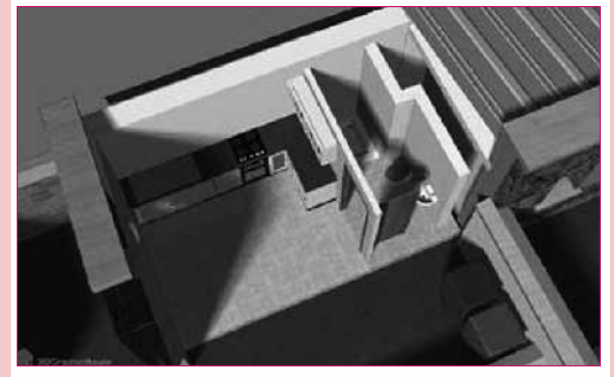
Recs for development of new sites

- Consultation with site residents from the earliest stages of the development
 - Design brief
 - Design sketch
 - Detailed design



Recs for the development of new sites

- User friendly information
- Provision for economic and cultural activities



Ongoing review of progress

- Monitor implementation of the recommendations