

2019: The year of the Self Care Community

The country needs Self Care Communities if we are to make real progress on improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities.

This was the recommendation of leading figures from the NHS, Royal Colleges, academia and patient groups at the first ever Self Care Summit last month. The event, jointly organised by the Self Care Forum and the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH), met to examine ways of accelerating self care in the population and help to secure the health of the nation in ten years. A report of which is now available.

Self Care Communities are based on Marmot Cities which are designed to tackle health inequalities with a focus on indicators for life expectancy, wellbeing, employment, environment, child development and prevention and are already being developed. Sir Michael Marmot, author of “fair society, healthy lives” and Professor of Epidemiology at University College London makes the point that improving people’s health should not just be the responsibility of the health system, “there is clear evidence when we look across countries that national policies make a difference and that much can be done in cities, towns and local areas. But policies and interventions must not be confined to the health care system; they need to address the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age.”

Like Marmot Cities, Self Care Communities will look at health equity, they will also consider a holistic, whole person approach to how people can achieve their optimal levels of health and wellbeing. Bringing together local agencies such as housing, local government, health, schools, pharmacy, emergency services, businesses and individuals to consider their role within the Self Care Community to support the local population.

In 2019, the Self Care Forum will be collaborating with stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels to create a blueprint for collaborative working on Self Care Communities with the aim of creating localities working together to improve health outcomes, reduce health equity and support people to become fully health literate, engaged and empowered to Self Care for Life. This work will be informed by the forthcoming NHS Long Term Plan.

“By creating Self Care Communities that work together to improve the physical health and mental wellbeing of inhabitants, we will ensure the local health economy prospers and people live healthier and happier lives” said Dr Selwyn Hodge of the Self Care Forum.

Chief Executive of the RSPH, Shirley Cramer CBE believes that “For everyone to achieve their optimal levels of health and wellbeing means considering the conditions in which people live, their education, working and social lives and doing more to equalize these structural differences as well as supporting the community to work together in supporting people to live well.”

Dr David Paynton from the Royal College of General Practitioners believes “We have to work with people in supporting them to look after their health and wellbeing as we can’t simply depend on the health system to do it all. Sometimes the biomedical model is insufficient.”

End

Notes to editors:

The Self Care Forum is the charity, the aim of which is to further the reach of self care and embed it into everyday life and make it everyone’s lifelong habit and culture.

The Self Care Summit report can be accessed [here](#).

Sir Michael Marmot’s Review – “fair society, healthy lives” can be accessed [here](#).

Royal Society for Public Health report on Health on the High Street can be accessed [here](#).

Creating Self Care Communities will be informed by the forthcoming NHS Long Term Plan. For more details about the Self Care Forum or its work programme contact selfcare@selfcareforum.org or go to the [website](#).