

HCW: Evidence for Policy Seminar Series



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

School health promotion - setting the scene

19th September 2008

Chris Roberts
Public Health Strategy Division



The changing face of school health promotion – a personal reflection



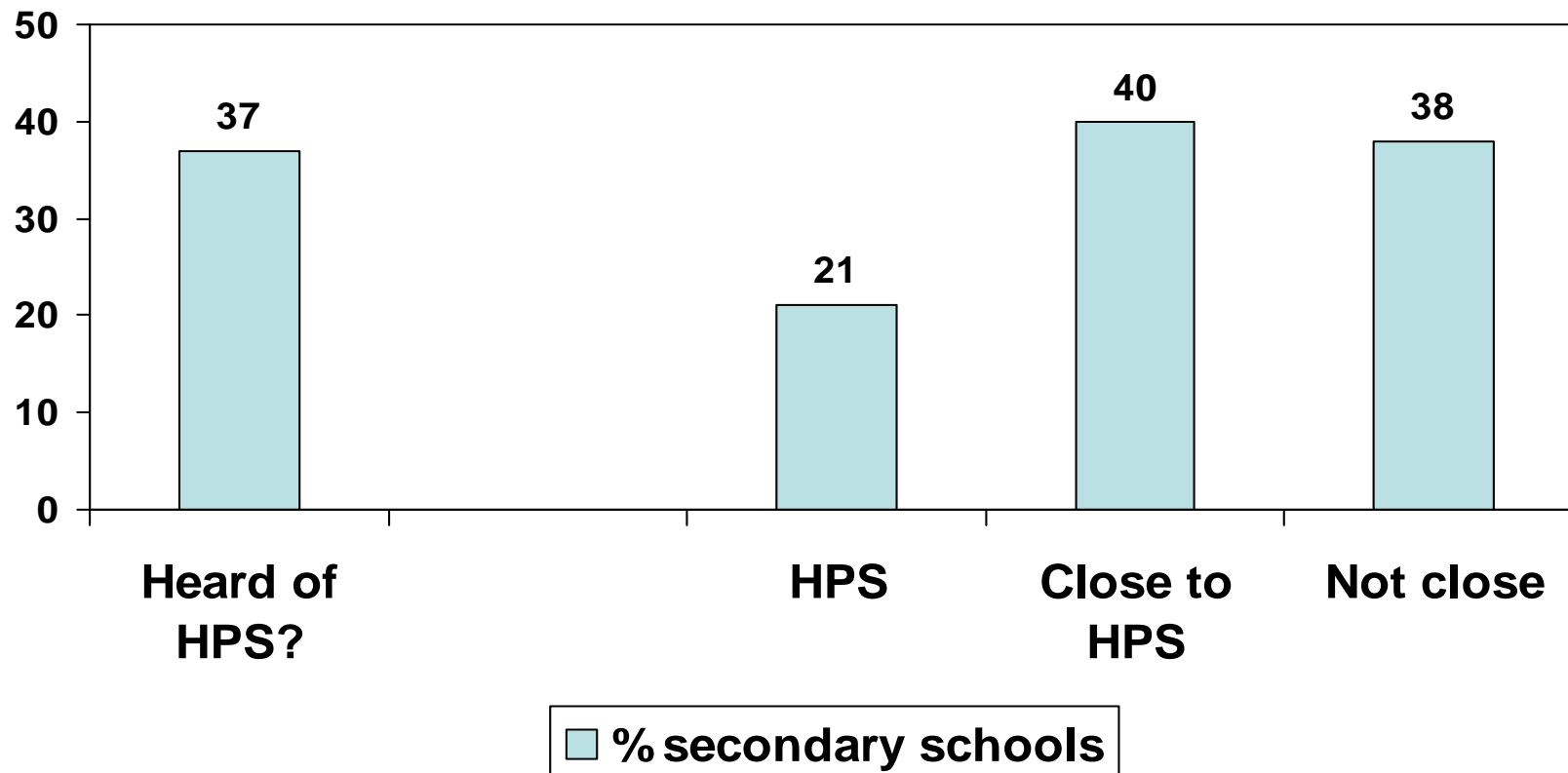
Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

- School health promotion circa 1990 – recognising the potential
- School health promotion during the 1990s – the role of the ENHPS
- School health promotion since 2000 - WNHSS and beyond
- Strengths and challenges

Secondary schools in Wales in 1990



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



How we summarised school health promotion in 1990



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

“Although the term ‘the health promoting school’ has been in use for some time, the vast majority...surveyed were unfamiliar with the term. Furthermore, many of those who thought their school was a HPS or close to being one were incorrect in their belief, judged by criteria concerning curriculum organisation, supportive policy development and community involvement. In particular, the key part played by the school environment in the HPS concept did not appear to be fully appreciated. These findings are disappointing and clearly illustrate a gap between the concept of health promoting schools and current practice”.

Smith C. et al. (1992) The Health promoting school: progress and challenges in Welsh secondary schools. [HPI](#), 7, 171-179.

Warning! Schools can damage your health



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

- Study using data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study.
- Associations between attitudes to school and health behaviours.
- Strong and progressive association between indicators of ‘alienation’ from school and health compromising behaviours in Wales and Australia (and other HBSC countries).

“Traditional school health education is seen as insufficient...and recommendations are made concerning change to the school environment and ethos, and the need to reach young people in their home and community settings”.

Nutbeam D. et al. (1993) Warning! Schools can damage your health: alienation from school and its impact on health behaviour. JPCH, 29, s25-s30.

The European Network of Health Promoting Schools (ENHPS)



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

- WHO/EC/CoE funded initiative to develop basic principles of school health promotion and build capacity throughout Europe.
- Wales joined ENHPS in 1993
- A small number of schools selected for a pilot programme during 1994 (secondary) and 1995 (primary) using (modified) ENHPS criteria.
 - General e.g. physical environ., home-school links
 - Specific e.g. school policies, community services, staff h&wb
- Case study findings published (*'In Perspective'*) to disseminate existing practice.

Bowker S. & Tudor-Smith C. (2000) The health-promoting school in Wales: an overview. [Health Education](#), 4, 154-160.

EVA2 project – lessons learned from the ENHPS



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

- Focus on strategic development of school health promotion within countries.
- Research with range of stakeholders across Europe
- Selected findings:
 - Shift in direction away from formal curriculum;
 - Links between education/health sectors need strengthening;
 - Raising awareness of what school health promotion can achieve with politicians and senior policy officials;
 - Importance of a skilled workforce and training implications;
 - More sophisticated thinking around evaluation methods.

[Piette D. et al. \(2000\) Tracking down ENHPS successes for sustainable development and dissemination. The EVA2 project. Report to the EC.](#)

Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) – few key facts



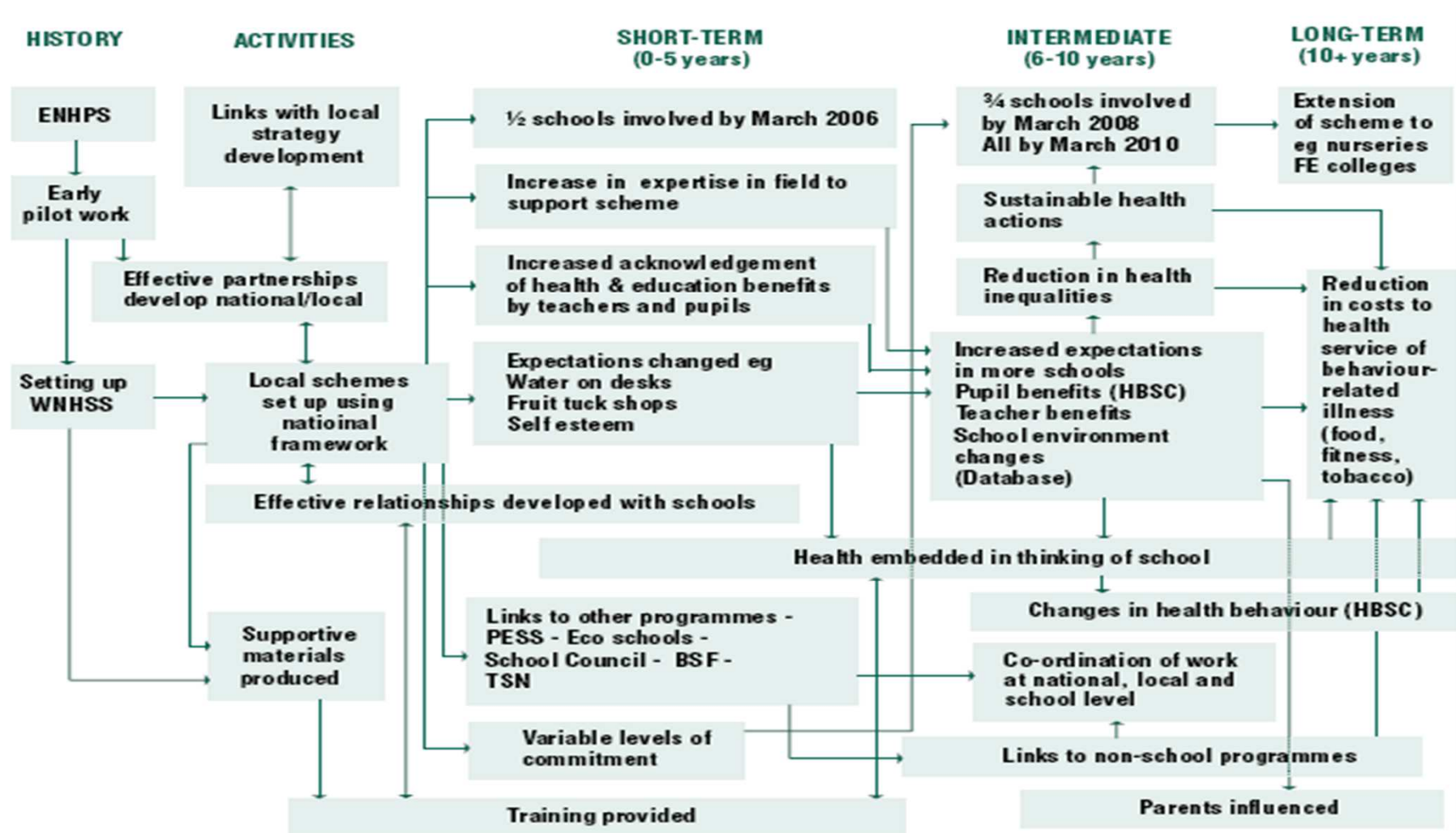
Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

- Launched in 1999.
- Strategic direction - *Better Health Better Wales* (1998).
- Encourage development of local healthy schools schemes through provision of a national framework and local support through health/education sectors.
- Informed by ENHPS experience and cognisant of available research evidence.
- Underpinned by 12 national aims.
- Accreditation introduced.
- Incremental progress i.e. schools work through series of phases.
- **SCHEME REVIEWED 2007-2008**

WNHSS logic model



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Building on strengths – policy and practice



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

- School health promotion embedded in political thinking in Wales.
- Links with Schools for Health in Europe (SHE) – successor to ENHPS
- WNHSS provides a mechanism and set of principles for the delivery of school-based public health improvement initiatives.
- Strong links nationally between health and education departments.
- Skilled workforce at local level within NPHS and LAs.

Building on strengths - research



- Strong track record of robust (but pragmatic) school-based research and evaluation in Wales e.g. application of cluster randomised trials.
- Good relationships between research community, policy and schools e.g. ASSIST.
- Research capacity building in Wales e.g. PHIRN.
- DECIPHer-children and young people theme and data linkage.
- Commitment to Welsh participation in the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study.

And finally, a few challenges...



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

- Recognising the burden on schools – e.g. schools have a right to expect
 - policies/programmes grounded in evidence
 - Highest quality/ethical standards when participating in developmental research
- Build on Wales' position as a world leader in the development and evaluation of school health promotion
- Further development of links between schools and research community, including pupils, teachers and parents
- Scope for greater use of economic techniques in the evaluation of school health promotion (as in public health generally) - stronger position in funding discussions



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Chris Roberts

**R&E, Public Health Strategy
Division**

Chris.Roberts@wales.gsi.gov.uk

