

Public Health Teams for working in Local Government:

Some reflections from Milton Keynes

Nicholas Hicks

Director of Public Health

Milton Keynes PCT and Milton Keynes Council

Health

“a state of complete physical mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”

World Health Organisation, 1967

Health

“Health is that state of moral, mental and physical well being which enables a person to face any crisis in life with the utmost facility and grace”

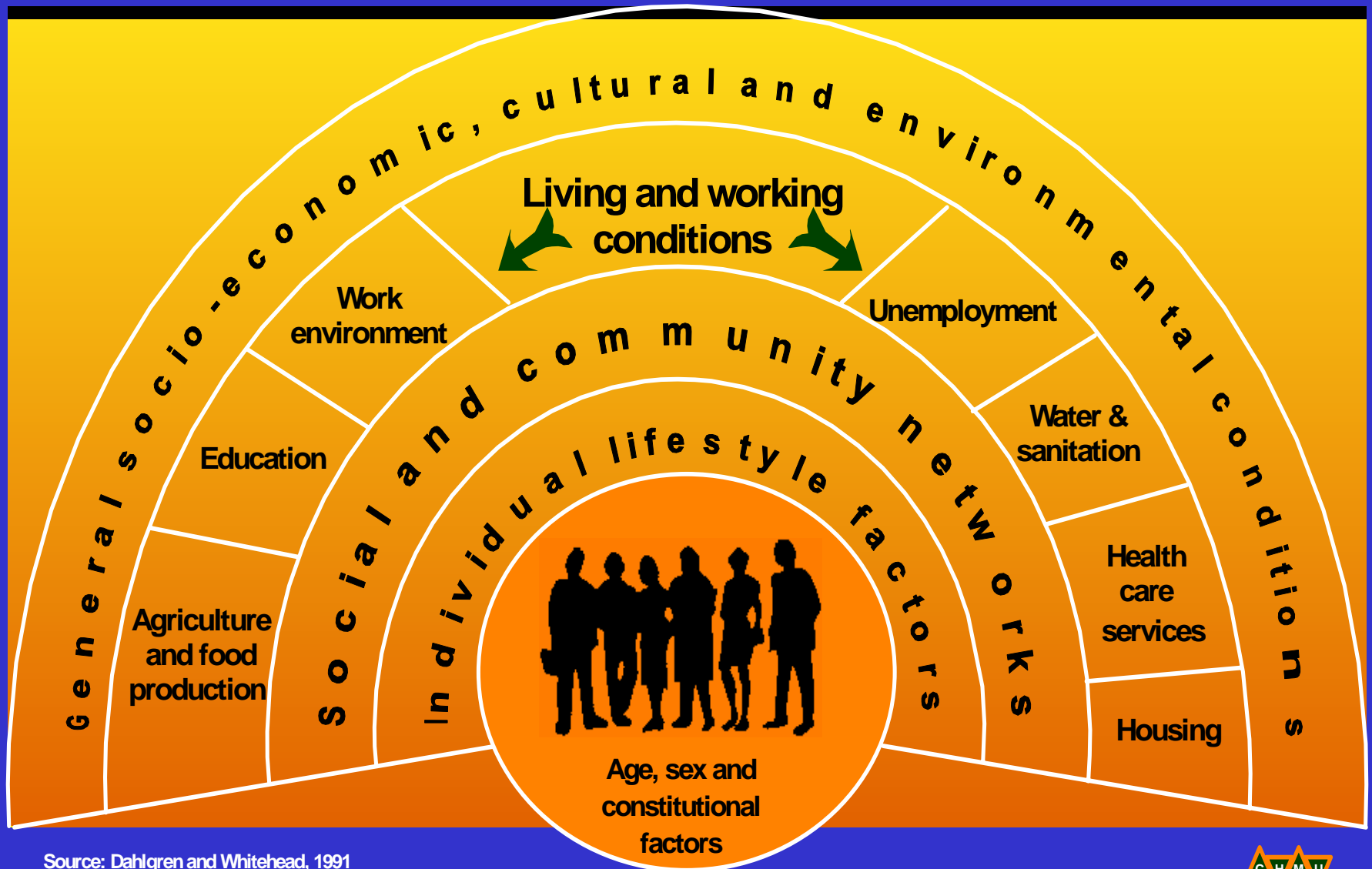
Pericles 495 - 429 BC

Public Health Practice: a definition

“...the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society.”

Acheson 1988

The Main Determinants of Health



Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991



Working with local government: adding value

- Adding value implies change
 - Values
 - Understanding
 - Organisational structures and processes
 - Action
 - Outcomes

Working with local government: adding value

- Influence essential
- Functional responsibilities & control
 - luxury or necessity?
 - power base or opportunity cost?

Working with local government: adding value – what do you and your team need?

- Understanding where, when & how decisions are really taken
- Structures
- Processes
- Team
 - Credibility & ability
 - Reach to top, middle and bottom
 - Leadership (internal and external)
 - Technical expertise (some)

Working with local government: some Milton Keynes example

- Structures
 - Joint DPH on management team of LA and PCT
 - Senior public health team on LA directorate management teams
- Processes
 - LPSA2, LAA
 - Medium term planning
- Functional responsibility
 - E.g. Social inclusion, health inequality, Choosing Health...with mixed teams

Integrated teams: Multiple approaches

- Partnership
 - Informal or formal
 - Topic specific or functional
- Joint appointments
- Integrated teams
- Integrated management structures
- Pooled budgets
- Section 31 agreements

Working with local government: the public health team

- Small(ish) – but capacity to get around
- Individual ability and credibility
- Personal as well as technical qualities

..and expand as functional responsibilities increase.

Working with local government: the future

- Growing demand for corporate roles
 - Corporate strategy – organisational structure and function
 - Programme management of named corporate priorities
 - Corporate processes – e.g. planning, public and professional engagement
- Commissioning
- Service Provision

Conclusions and summary

- Public health agenda is defined broadly
- Priority to develop effective wide ranging influence
- Optimal span of control = ?
- Corporate roles