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Introduction:

Research confirms the impact of health improvement delivered for communities in professional Football Club Community Trusts (FCCT), yet no study has investigated the adoption and use Public Health (PH) guidance.

Method:

This study investigates the use of PH guidance in 72 FCCT. Data were collected using (i) an online survey completed by FCCT managers (n=34/47.2%) and (ii) semi-structured interviews with a sub-sample of these managers, (n=11/32.3%).

Results:

Most FCCT managers were male (n=23/67.7%) & white British (n=30/88.2%) and from Championship (n=12/35.2%), League 1 (n=13/38.2%) and League 2 clubs (n=9/26.5%). All FCCT (n=34/100%) provided physical activity and most provided diet (n=31/91.2%), smoking (n=20/58.8%) and alcohol (n=19/55.9%) interventions. Regarding awareness of PH guidance, 58.8% (n=20/34) were aware of Public Health England/Local PH guidance, 41.2% (n=14/34) were aware British Heart Foundation, 38.2% (n=13/34) NICE guidance and 29.4% (n=10/34) football-charity PH guidance. Most, 76.5% (n=26/34) of managers' reported using PH guidance. Regarding motives, 84.6% (n=22/26) said that it 'was good practice', 65.4% (n=17/26) said that 'it helped with planning', 34.6% (n=9/26) said it 'was a requirement of funding' and 23.1% (n=6/26) said it was because they 'had used it before'. 80.8% (n=21/26) used PH guidance for programme design, 69.2% (n=18/26) delivery, 57.7% (n=15/26) needs assessment and 50% (n=13/26) evaluation. Interviews with managers identified barriers to the adoption of PH guidance, including accessibility, awareness and relevance.

Conclusion:

This study provides novel insights into the use of PH guidance within FCCT.

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