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Health Action Zone

North & West Belfast

**“Working in partnership
we can reduce inequalities
to create a healthier,
more prosperous and
socially inclusive
North & West Belfast”**

HAZ news



Early Intervention in Schools Provides Useful Lessons

The Early Intervention in Schools Project aimed to assist schools in their support of primary school children who have a high level of behavioural problems; associated mental and physical health problems; attendance problems; suffered trauma; and whose parents do not engage easily with their schools. The Project aimed to prevent exclusion from school and to improve co-ordination of services, and respond to the needs of children, identified by Education, and Health and Social Services.

The Project was a Partnership between:
North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust;
South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust;
Belfast Education and Library Board;
Catholic Council for Maintained Schools;
Communities in School;
Primary Schools in North and East Belfast;
The Greater East Belfast Partnership Board;
and the Health Action Zone.
 Schools in interface areas in inner city Belfast have had a high level of media attention over the past years. Many of these schools are in disadvantaged areas with high unemployment rates, poor housing, low educational attainment, poor health status of the population, religious segregation and sectarian violence. Schools had experienced the consequences of this and found that these factors impact negatively on their pupils' capacity to achieve. Many Primary Schools in these inner city areas report that they do not have the resources or expertise to address the increasing number of complex problems. Disruptive behaviour and/or serious developmental delay is

apparent in a growing number of young children. The risk is that the child in primary school struggling with a health or emotional disadvantage will accumulate disadvantage if the problem is not addressed and will, more than likely, be the excluded 14 year old in the future. The Project built on the work and services currently offered by the partner agencies. It made the best use of existing services and developed the project to take the most advantage of present provision in order to maximise the impact of the project and to build on existing resources. Historic differences occurred in the design of the models and intervention between the two Trust services. North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust focused on 6 schools and recruited 6 teachers on a part-time basis who undertook the work. South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust developed a School Liaison Group model in partnership with BELB's Parenting Support Initiative in 6 primary schools in East Belfast. A Project Co-ordinator coordinated the services as well as organising and supporting the specialist services required. The Objectives of the Project

were:

- To ascertain the extent of education problems facing identified primary schools at interface areas in North and East Belfast to access appropriate resources to best meet the needs of children and families;
- To support primary schools in North and East Belfast to access appropriate resources to best meet the needs of children and families;
- To identify at an early stage those children and families who have the greatest need in respect of school attendance and behavioural difficulties within the school setting;
- To provide a range of interventions to those children and families identified as having greatest need within the school setting in order to
 - Improve the educational outcomes and access to creative opportunities for disadvantaged and vulnerable children.
 - Support families to care better for their children.
 - Improve the long-term health and well being of our most vulnerable children; and
- To develop multi-agency links between public, voluntary

and the community sectors in interface areas of North and East Belfast ensuring that services are better targeted and co-ordinated.

The schools involved in the project were:-

North Belfast: Blackmountain, Edmund Rice, Glenwood, Grove, Holy Family and Sacred Heart
 East Belfast: Mersey Street, Euston Street, St Joseph's, Avoneil, Beechwood and Nettlefield

Conclusion

The project proved extremely successful and provided services for nearly 400 children. This was twice the target set. As well as freeing up teachers and parent support officers to help, it also provided specialist services eg art therapy, circus skills, monkeynastics, complementary therapy and training in counselling. Unfortunately after the current funding was exhausted additional funding was not forthcoming and the project had to end. However many useful lessons were learnt which hopefully will influence further work between education and Health and Social Services in the future. A full evaluation has been completed and should be available shortly.

Maria Maguire

HAZ Task Group for the Prevention of Suicide and Self-Harm

The Task Group on the Prevention of Suicide and Self-Harm in North & West Belfast has been making steady progress. A second meeting of the Task Group was held on the 30th September at which each of the working groups reported back on their work: Family Support Working Group; Schools Working Group; Vulnerable Young People Working Group; Self Harm Working Group and Communications Working Group. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety are leading the development of a Regional Task Force under the chairmanship of Colm Donaghy. Strong connections have been made between the work in North & West Belfast and that being taken forward on a regional basis, with three members of the Task Group in North & West also sitting on the Regional Task Force. It is hoped that the recommendations which will flow from North & West Belfast will also be used to inform and influence any regional approach. A second meeting of the broader Reference Group will be held on 8th December. At a previous meeting almost 150 people came to hear about the establishment of the Task Group and so it is an important means of accountability and reporting back the progress which is currently underway and to ensure a broad

input to the final recommendations.

New research has also been commissioned by North & West Belfast Health & Social Services Trust. Firstly, information and statistics on suicide in North & West Belfast are being analysed. At the same time a series of interviews will be held with families directly affected by suicide in order to gain more qualitative information. It is hoped that this information will assist the final recommendations of the HAZ Task Group. A larger research proposal is also likely to move ahead in conjunction with a university department. This research will specifically look at the experience of young men and their interaction with a range of services. Clearly there is much work underway and still more to do. At the same time community and voluntary sector partners took the lead in holding a Celebration of Life event on 9th September. Members attended the emotional event which was hosted by Frances Black, singer, and this made a positive contribution to families dealing with the impact of suicide on their lives. The Task Group agreed that a draft report would be prepared for a third meeting to be held in January, with a final report scheduled for March 2006.

Fresh Fruit in Primary Schools Pilot Programme



The Health Action Zone has been developing Fresh Fruit in Primary Schools over the past three years in 20 schools in North & West Belfast. The most recent aspect of the evaluation highlighted the positive impact on children, teachers, and parents and the practical operation of the scheme. In North & West Belfast a distinct and particularly successful element has been the support of local businesses in providing fruit to schools. The next phase of development

is to examine how the pilot programme can be extended to other schools and within schools already participating in the programme. North & West schools are testing how they can participate in the programme on a self financing basis, expanding the programme using the same level of funding throughout the school, and strengthening links with other programmes. A seminar for school principals was held on the 28th September and highlighted their commitment

to exploring what is possible beyond the pilot phase of the programme. It is also significant that the issue of nutrition within schools has been given a recent boost with the decision by the Department of Education to extend nutrition standards across all schools in Northern Ireland over the coming three year period. This will directly effect the quality of the food provided for children and young people attending schools in Northern Ireland,

in line with the decision made in other parts of the United Kingdom. An important legacy of the pilot will be the development of a Good Practice Guide. The guide for staff in schools will use examples of best practice in the fresh fruit and other programmes at work within Health Action Zones. This is a good example of how a pilot initiative has influenced mainstream development and delivery.

Community Health and Development Network Celebrates 10 Years



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH NETWORK

Community Development and Health Network (CDHN) is a regional voluntary organisation working to promote action with vulnerable groups and those affected by poverty and inequalities in health. Established 10 years ago, the organisation provides support to 400 member groups in the voluntary, community and public sectors, and 1000 additional contacts who work with, and for, people in disadvantaged groups and communities. The organisation's activities include: networking support, production of publications and training materials, research, advocacy and provision of project funding and support. One hundred people from across the geographical and political spectrum in Northern Ireland gathered in the Long Gallery at Stormont on Thursday 29

September to mark ten years of the Community Development and Health Network (CDHN). The reception, hosted by Iris Robinson MLA, DUP Spokesperson on Health, highlighted the positive advances which can be made when people are empowered to play an active role in tackling health issues. She said, "I want to congratulate the Community Development and Health Network on their 10th Anniversary. I commend all those individuals and organisations involved on their crucial contribution towards promoting health at local level here in the Province". Representatives from Larne Community Development Group and Ballymena Ethnic Community Forum, including 10 year old Eduard Kosch, described the personal and positive impact of

being involved in local projects supported by CDHN. CDHN Director, Barbary Cook, used the opportunity to highlight what the future holds - "Our health is affected by a myriad of influences including our access to good quality health services", she said, "but the bigger challenge for everyone with an interest in, or responsibility for, preventing as well as treating ill health, is to ensure that we tackle these

complex influences in a holistic way. This will require a continuing commitment to really 'join up' policy and practical initiatives designed to reduce poverty, improve our physical, social and working environments, and to develop the skills of people in local communities". She concluded by paying tribute to all who had contributed to the development of CDHN during its first decade.



Guests at the anniversary celebrations.



Eduard Kosch shows appreciation to Iris Robinson who hosted the event.

The Community Health Information Workers Programme Evaluation

The Community Health Information Workers Programme was set up in 1988 as part of the work of the Women's Information Group. The current programme consists of a city wide group of projects covering Upper Springfield, North Belfast, Shankill, East Belfast and South Belfast. Each project is led by volunteers - the local Community Health Information Workers. The Programme has undergone a recent evaluation which was the focus of a recent event in the Wellington Park Hotel. The volunteer Community Health Information Workers between them handle around 12,000 enquiries per annum on a range of issues from stopping smoking; the risks of alcohol and drug abuse; prevention and detection of cancer; coping with depression; and advice on social and financial problems such as child development, and debt management. Over eighty per cent of enquiries are face to face, proving the need for the provision of personalised information in the community - setting from a trusted source. Men make up one quarter of

contacts, and many community groups also make use of the service. The Programme also reaches those who are likely to be excluded from traditional health provision settings such as members of minority ethnic groups including the Travelling community. The development of the projects, and their related activities, has led to important benefits in the building of

The programme also meets the objectives of Investing for Health; new TSN; and Neighbourhood Renewal. Current funding comes from the DHSSPS, NI; North and West Belfast H&SS Trust; South and East Belfast H&SS Trust; The Investing for Health programme; and the Big Lottery. The funding for three projects has now expired and there is a shortfall in the remaining funding in respect of the programme management

developments should...
 • Include the development of a long term funding strategy with potential for programme expansion;
 • Work more strategically in forming alliances with other health and social care providers, building on existing collaboration and networking;
 • Further develop the profile of the Community Health Information Workers programme;
 • Positively promote the concept and role of the lay health worker;
 • Increase recognition of the value of community development approaches in the delivery of health information and support;
 • Recognise the strengths of the programme (the programme model) while managing the risks (for example recruiting volunteers); and
 Develop a campaigning role for the programme, involving local people in influencing the public health and service provision agenda.
For further information contact Kathleen Feenan on 028 9024 4119.

CHIW is based on a very wider definition of health. it really embeds the notion of the broader determinants of health contained in the Investing for Health Strategy

capacity in the local communities included in the programme. Through the investment in the Community Health Information Workers themselves, and a new approach to lay provision of health information, there has been an obvious impact at community level. The programme tackles inequality through positive effects on the determinants of health in local communities.

costs, including support of the volunteers. Like many community projects, this means that scarce management resources have to be directed at securing piecemeal funding from a variety of sources, instead of directing energy at the further development of this valuable programme. Recommendations from the evaluation were that future

Appointment of a Co-ordinator for the Strategy to Promote the Sexual Health and Wellbeing of Young People in North & West Belfast

Elizabeth Gilhooly (Beth) has been appointed as Co-ordinator for the Strategy to Promote Sexual Health and Wellbeing of Young People in North & West Belfast. Beth whose background is in health psychology, joins the Health Action

Zone team with experience in research in public health and health promotion, with a particular focus on young people's health and sexual health. Beth will be based with the Health for Youth through Peer

Education Project (HYPE team) in Lawther Buildings and will be focusing on the implementation of the HAZ Sexual Health Strategy over the coming two-year period. Beth can be contacted on 02890 320 840 Ext. 225.



HEALTH ACTION ZONE TRAVELLERS' ACTION GROUP REALISES IMPROVEMENTS IN SERVICES

The Health Action Zone Accommodation and Health Improvements for Travellers Action Group was established in 2000 and aims to improve the overall health and wellbeing of the Traveller community in North and West Belfast.

The Action Group is led by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, in partnership with North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, Belfast Education and Library Board, Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education, the Department for Employment and Learning, An Munia Tober, Clanmil Housing Association, Belfast City Council, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Barnardos, the Royal Group of Hospitals and North and West Belfast Health Action Zone.

The Group's action plan has 5 strategic aims incorporating activities relating to:

- Community Development
- Accommodation
- Health Improvements
- Employability
- Improved Communications and Prejudice Reduction

A significant development in

addressing the accommodation needs of Travellers in North and West Belfast has been the completion of Phase 1 of the Group Housing Scheme at Glen Road. Group Housing Schemes are designed to meet the specific needs of extended Traveller families. A second phase is planned for

Glen Road. Clanmil Housing Association are currently in consultation with the families concerned to finalise the details of the scheme. A Group Housing Scheme is also planned for Monagh and will be developed by North and West Housing Association. At present negotiations are ongoing between the landowners and North and West Housing Association regarding purchase of the land. Planning approval has been granted for road access and will go before Belfast City Council for ratification in mid-November. North and West Housing Association hope to gain approval from the Department of Social Development in February, which should allow the scheme to proceed as planned in March 2006. As we reported in the last HAZ news, in April of this

year, Belfast Traveller Support Group and Belfast Traveller Education and Development Group merged to form An Munia Tober. Their aim is to work towards a situation where Travellers in Belfast have access to all services that meet their social, economic and cultural needs. Their current projects now include:

- ◆ Health - The Traveller community have access to Health Awareness programmes, and the group aims to have health information at the centre.
- ◆ Education - An Alternative Education Project provides educational support for Traveller young people who are disengaged from mainstream education and without the necessary skills for employment or further education.
- ◆ Cultural Heritage – This project is designed for



Glen Road development.

delivery to all those who provide services so that on point of contact with Travellers there will be an understanding of their culture and tradition.

- ◆ Play Development – An after schools project developing and supporting 4-12 years old Travellers in education via play, homework support and educational trips.
- ◆ Youth Work – Designed around personal and social development where participants assist in the planning, design and implementation of their programmes.
- ◆ Arts – Works with all of the

above to assist participants to promote self identity using arts as the medium. There has been an ongoing emphasis on the need to work towards an improvement in overall Traveller health. North and West Belfast is in the unique position of having a dedicated Ethnic Minorities Health Visitor and Social Worker who work tirelessly to ensure that the Traveller community are able to access all healthcare services. In addition, the Royal Group of Hospitals provides a Health Outreach Programme for the Irish Traveller Community in the Greater Belfast area. They work in partnership

with An Munia Tober and other voluntary and statutory agencies. A primary focus of this Programme involved research into the perceptions of the Irish Traveller community's own health needs; their perception and experience of health services in general and the Royal Hospitals in particular. This involved a survey of 84 participants from the Traveller Community and the results reflect the most up to date information on Travellers Health Perceptions in the Greater Belfast Area. A multi-agency steering group was established to develop a Floating Support Service for

Travellers in the Colin area of Greater Belfast. The project is funded by Supporting People (NIHE). The service aims to assist Travellers in accessing services such as health, education and accommodation. So far there have been more than 30 referrals to the service and feedback has been positive. Barnardos has recently recruited a Traveller Sure Start Worker. This two year pilot post funded by Sure Start (until March 2007) has been activated with Colin Neighbourhood Sure Start and Barnardos. The post holder, Ms Erica Phillips, is managed directly by Barnardos and will work initially with Traveller Children and families who attend Barnardos Traveller Pre-School Service based in Lenadoon. Erica will also gradually make links with Colin Neighbourhood Sure Start. This is an exciting project which will help to identify specific needs and promote child development through individual and group programmes with Traveller children and parents. The Action Group believe this report represents progress but equally recognises that there is much more to be done.

**Julie Alexander,
Traveller Project Team**

Building a Community (Pharmacy) Partnership?

I would like to say a few short words about Healthy Living Centres and the value of genuine partnerships and what it means, in real terms, to our local communities



It means... health and well being programmes that genuinely meet the needs of local people. In our case it means... a revamped and rejuvenated health centre (and staff) and a brand new community health facility, a working partnership that displays the best of efforts and practice from both community and health professionals.

Despite overwhelming community and statutory support, we are still fighting (3 years on) to secure a pharmaceutical service at our centre for the local community. We're still battling...

- Why should we have to battle?
- Who determines what the community needs?
- What clout has the community in influencing these decisions which shape services and affects their lives? or should we just be told what's good for us?

Government policy through a range of measures has pointed

to involving the local community in decisions which affect their lives, a raft of initiatives including 'People and Places, Partners for Change, New Targeting Social Need, Investing Together, Investing for Health' and Neighbourhood Renewal are but a few. The community have heard them all, some stay some go...

There is a document detailing the role of community pharmacies 'Making it Better' published last February.

There is a line in that document which reads "Implicit in the term 'Community Pharmacy', is a close identity with, and a commitment to, the local community" We have found that commitment in our local pharmacist.

The glossy reports have to be actioned by real decisions and with people in real communities not pretend scenarios!!

Danny Power,
HEART Healthy Living Centre



GET IN TOUCH!

The North and West Belfast Health Action Zone produces HAZNewz three times a year.

Our core HAZ team is:

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