

*new
news*

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The future development of The Health Action Zone

With all the changes that are upon every sector of public service in Northern Ireland with the implementation of the Review of Public Administration, it is important that the Health Action Zone considers its future and the role that it might play in ensuring that the issue of tackling inequalities in health remains high on the agenda. Since its establishment in 1999 the North and West Belfast Health Action Zone has focused on developing creative, innovative and sustainable ways of addressing need. From the outset it was recognised that health inequality cannot be separated from educational disadvantage and under achievement, income and employment problems and the broader community development and social regeneration agenda. As a result the Health Action Zone embraced all of these areas as essential components of an agenda and worked towards focusing its efforts on developmental pathways-that is concentrated intervention on key areas of need. This approach has been important in ensuring that the "added value" of the Health Action Zone is made absolutely clear. i.e. that it is more than the sum of the individual parts.

As we look to the future a small working group has been considering a number of options. What remains absolutely clear is the need for a common vision, a common means of developing integrated programmes on the ground, some mechanism of bringing together all of the partners, and in the view of the Health Action Zone some means to ensure that practice informs policy at government level. The working group has started to map out what the key components of any future approach should include and the particular alignment required for the new emerging structures. A range of options will be discussed by the Health Action Zone Council in June but what is already clear from work on the ground is that without such a mechanism as the Health Action Zone it is not possible to develop coherent, consistent and integrated approaches to tackling disadvantage.

Rediscovering North Belfast

On 24 March approximately 50 people took part in a day-long event to celebrate and demonstrate the positive work of Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist communities in North Belfast.

'Rediscovering North Belfast' was organised by Community Conventions, Lower North Belfast CEP and Upper North Belfast CEP on behalf of the North Belfast PUL Steering Group. The steering group was established two years ago by the Health Action Zone in order to help address the fragmented nature of communities in North Belfast by finding new and creative ways of hearing community voices; developing an increased capacity for dialogue; celebrating past and present achievement; and building a platform for future achievement.

The day's events included a tour of interfaces, sites of interest in local communities, an analysis from local people of current needs, and a showcase of good practice by local communities. Visits included Duncairn Community Centre, Thornbush Community House, Mt Vernon Community House, White City, Lower Oldpark, Tudor Housing, Woodvale, Good Morning Ballysillan, North Belfast Alternatives and Glenbryn.

Afterwards there was an opportunity for dialogue with local elected representatives Nigel Dodds, Fred Cobain and Hugh Smyth. There was agreement that communities had a central role to play and that there was a need for everyone to work together more effectively.

It is hoped that this is the first of a series of events bringing North Belfast Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist communities together.

For more information contact Community Convention on

Tel: 028 9033 1461 or HAZ on Tel: 028 9023 7026.

Integrated Services for Children and Young People – Update

The Health Action Zone partners have made a commitment to work together to improve the life chances of children and young people, demonstrated by increased achievement levels, a commitment to 'life long learning' and an increase in employability. This will lead to the taking up of new lifetime opportunities and the possibility that a long-standing cycle of disadvantage can be broken. A central goal of the initiative is that the aspirations of children and young people, and those of their parents, must be significantly raised. Meeting this goal requires a comprehensive and integrated focus on all aspects of the lives of children and young people, and those within and beyond their families who have influence on them. The focus for this activity will be on schools, communities

and in family and service settings.

In 2004 the Health Action Zone identified an opportunity to move this work forward through the submission of a funding application for £5million to the Integrated Development Fund. The Integrated Services for Children and Young People Project Board is the primary source for the establishment of the long-term vision and goals for Integrated Services for Children and Young People in North and West Belfast and is a subcommittee of Health Action Zone Council – the decision making body of the Health Action Zone. The Project Board welcomes the opportunities presented by the £14.6 million investment in voluntary children's projects announced by the Secretary of State on 6 March 2006

together with the establishment of the £61 million Children and Young People's package which will fund a wide range of services, including pre-school provision, therapy, support for children in care and child protection. It is also mindful of the opportunities to tackle the complexity of needs in disadvantaged communities and the £33 million package of measures announced by Minister of State David Hanson focusing on the needs of Protestant communities. The IDF funding will be used to complement and accelerate the impact of such investments and we hope to be able to report positive progress in the next edition of HAZnewz.

For further information contact Elaine McCarthy HAZ Programme Co-ordinator on Tel: 028 9023 7026

Neighbourhood Renewal

The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is a 7-10 year government strategy targeting areas of greatest disadvantage in Northern Ireland. The strategy aims to:

- develop confident communities that are able and committed to improving the quality of life in their areas;
- develop economic activity in the most deprived neighbourhoods and connect them to the wider economy;
- improve social conditions for the people who live in the most deprived neighbourhoods through better co-ordinated public services and the creation of safer environments; and
- help create attractive, safe, sustainable environments in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

There are 9 Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships in North and West Belfast, with a further 4 in South and East Belfast. Partnerships bring local community-based organisations together with statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and private businesses to devise action plans for their local area. Action Plans will then be submitted to BRO for approval.



The Health Action Zone is working with Area Partnerships in North Belfast, Greater Shankill and West Belfast to identify key themes emerging and draw out the collective value with a view to developing a framework which can be addressed with the Health Action Zone Council.

Neighbourhood Renewal areas in North and West Belfast

- Falls
- Lenadoon
- Greater Colin
- Upper Springfield
- Greater Shankill
- Crumlin/Ardoyne
- Inner North
- Upper Ardoyne/Ligoniel
- Rathcoole

Involving and Supporting Parents in Holy Family Primary School

Involving parents in their children's education is easier said than done, yet excellent practice is developing within the Health Action Zone and none more so than in Holy Family Primary School. March saw a seminar to consider the evaluation of the Parent Support Programme in Holy Family Primary School led by Maura Hughes, Parent Support Officer and Dympna McManus, Principal of Holy Family Primary School. An independent evaluation by Eamonn Keenan has highlighted the value of the work undertaken over the past three years. A wide range of activities have been undertaken and outcomes have included the development of strong partnership working, the development of programmes for children with particular needs, the

active participation of parents in the life of the school, the improved performance on hard educational targets, and the development of new approaches to address particular needs such as "raising boys". The work is supported by an advisory group bringing together partners from within education, health and social services, as well as the community and voluntary partners and of course parents. The programme has far exceeded the initial expectations and Will Haire (Permanent Secretary Department of Education) commented, as a parent, on the importance of parent's active involvement in their children's education. As one parent put it **" I used to dream about a life, now I live a dream"**.



Health and Social Care Needs of Travellers

The Travellers Action Group, a key developmental pathway within the Health Action Zone Programme, held a seminar to specifically examine the health and social care needs of Travellers with those who provide services. The seminar brought together representatives from Down & Lisburn, South & East Belfast, Royal Victoria Hospital, and North & West Belfast Health and Social Services Trusts, together with the Eastern Health and Social Services Board and representatives from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety alongside the Traveller support group An Munia Tober. Participants heard about the proposals at regional level as well as an overview of health and social care needs and practice at a local level within North and West Belfast. An important part of the seminar was the discussion to consider how information is gathered in a routine manner regarding the health and social care needs of Travellers, the obvious gaps in terms of practice and service provision, the ways in which services are provided which would take account (or not) of the nomadic lifestyle of Travellers, improving cross



boundary working between health and social services providers, the impact of prejudice and the need for education and support, and the potential impact of the Review of Public Administration. There was a strong commitment to continue to address the unacceptable level of inequalities in health within the Traveller community and to consider what further steps should be taken both within Health and Social Services and with other partners to tackle this area of need. A number of practical suggestions were made regarding the changes to existing services as well as the findings of the report by the Royal Hospitals Outreach Programme on perceptions of health commissioned as part of the Travellers Action Group.

Copies of this report are available from Dr Claire Armstrong, General Manager, Health and Social Inequalities, Royal Victoria Hospital, 1st Floor Bostock House, Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 6BA.



Healthy Living Centres – future development

The Health Action Zone has established a working group to consider the future development of Healthy Living Centres in North and West Belfast.

Nineteen Healthy Living Centres are in operation across Northern Ireland, with eight of them based in North and West Belfast.

Healthy Living Centres are community-driven partnerships, delivering services that respond to public health priorities and aiming to promote and improve the health and wellbeing of people in areas of multiple disadvantage. They are funded by the Big Lottery Fund on a five-year basis.

The Healthy Living Centres have been developing an innovative model of health intervention with a focus on preventative work, taking a bottom-up approach. They deliver a range of services

and activities including complimentary therapies, smoking cessation, dance classes, armchair aerobics, healthy eating, stress reduction, counselling, a range of exercise classes, weight management, substance misuse and so on.

Big Lottery Funding is coming to a close and Healthy Living Centres are now considering their future sustainability. The Health Action Zone, continuing on from its facilitation of the Healthy Living Centres Network, and more recent work on evaluation with the Health Promotion Agency and Institute

of Public Health, has now established a working group to consider the future development of the Healthy Living Centres. This working group brings together representatives of the Healthy Living Centres with the Eastern Health and Social Services Board, North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, Belfast City Council, Investing for Health and the Health Promotion Agency.

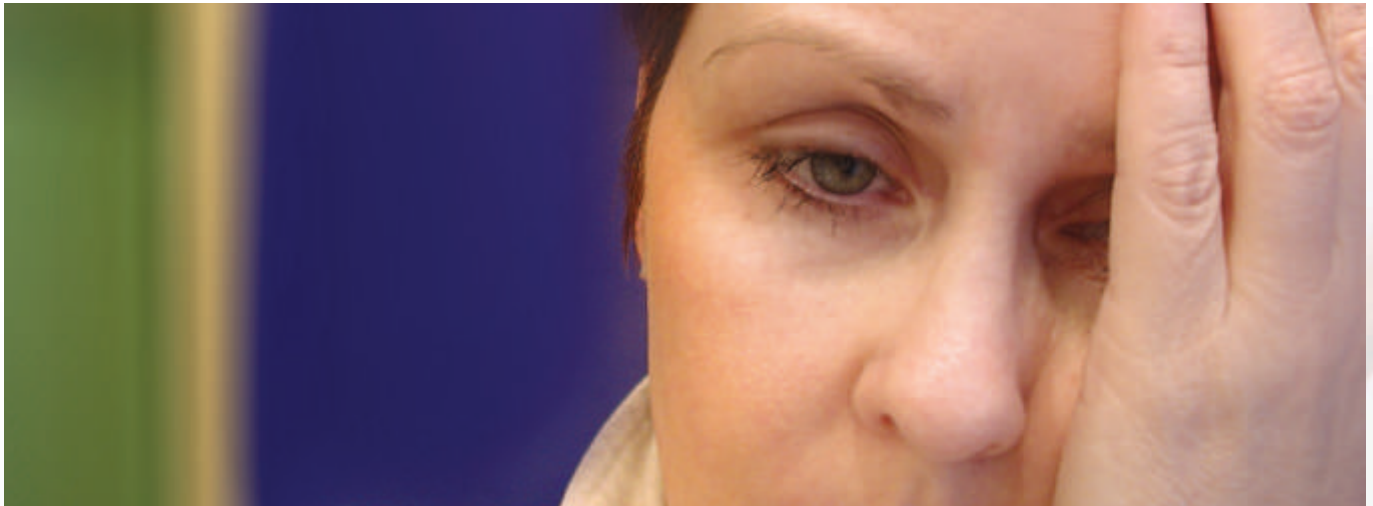
The working group will be considering the learning to emerge from Healthy Living Centres in North and West Belfast, as well as potential for their long-term development.

The Healthy Living Centres in North and West Belfast are:

- Actively Ageing Well (regional)
- Ardoyne Shankill Community Health Partnership
- HEART Project
- Ligoniel Improvement Association
- New Life Counselling
- New Lodge/Duncairn Community Health Partnership
- Top of the Rock Healthy Living Centre
- WISPA (Women in Sport and Physical Activity)

Regional and Local Suicide prevention strategy

On Tuesday 30th May the North and West Belfast HAZ Prevention of Suicide and Self Harm Task Group met to consider the final draft of the Task Group Report which is the culmination of twelve months concerted effort to address the issue of suicide and self harm in North and West Belfast.



A successful process has meant that those involved in the HAZ initiative are now well placed to respond to the Ministerial announcement on the Regional Strategy consultation at the end of March.

The North and West Belfast Report Task Group report will be publicly launched on Monday 26th June at the City Hall, Belfast.

HAZ Task Group Process

It was widely agreed that the approach of the HAZ Task Group should be:-

- based on the evidence of effective intervention;
- build on existing good practice in the field;
- inclusive;
- participative;
- integrated; and
- based on partnership between the various interest groups.

Terms of reference

The Task Group and its five working groups had clear terms of reference. HAZ partners were asked to nominate individuals to the proposed Task Group and a first seminar was planned to launch the initiative on 12th April 2005

Over 120 individuals attended the seminar and formed a broad Reference Group for the initiative. They gave overwhelming support for the process as outlined, and many opted to join one of the five working groups. These covered

Vulnerable Young People; Schools; Self Harm; Family Support; and Communications and Media.

Research

To inform the HAZ Task group on the needs of the families bereaved by suicide, a short term piece of research was carried out. This work documented the experiences, and identified the support needs, of families before, at the time of, and after bereavement.

Communication

A key factor which helped support learning was a clear commitment from all partners to engage in the process and to communicate within and between working groups as well as with the Regional Group. Pro-active communications planning supported this process.

Regional links

Representatives from the HAZ Task Group also joined the NI Regional Taskforce established by Minister for Health, Shaun Woodward MP. This promoted communication and congruence between both initiatives.



Strategies come together

The work of the HAZ Task Group on the Prevention of Suicide and Self harm spanned the period from April 2005 to March 2006.

There are over 20 recommendations in the report which are relevant at Regional, regional/local and local levels. They include

“A model of 24 hour crisis support and response should be piloted in North and West Belfast;

Schools should be supported and encouraged to include positive mental health promotion as part of the personal and social development of pupils; and

Training on suicide and self harm should be available for a range of different practitioners including teachers, youth workers, community workers, GP’s, community and hospital nurses, ancillary and reception staff of various facilities, church leaders and staff, and specialist groups such as funeral undertakers.”

Details of the launch are available at: www.haz-nwbelfast.org.uk and copies of the report will be available after the launch.

Minister makes announcement on Regional Suicide Strategy



On Wednesday 29th March, Minister Shaun Woodward made the long awaited announcement of the publication of the Regional Strategy for Suicide prevention entitled “Protect Life – A Shared Vision” – the Northern Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2011. The publication of the document begins a twelve week consultation period.

The aim of the Strategy is to reduce the NI suicide rate, particularly among young people and others in high risk groups. The Taskforce has adopted as an interim measure, the existing Priorities for Action target – a 10% reduction in the overall suicide rate by 2008. An additional 5% (ie 15% in total by 2011) has been set, subject to review of the outcome of further work on suicide recording arrangements.

In press releases accompanying the Strategy announcement the Minister announced the development of a “buddy scheme” for those who self harm, in the West of the Province; a pilot telephone helpline in the Eastern area, and the creation of a senior medical post – Northern Ireland Director for Mental Health

The consultation period of twelve weeks ends on the 21st June 2006

Readership survey



Civic Leadership in Belfast

Its good to be able to say that the Readership survey which we carried out in January has given us excellent feedback on HAZ news. One lucky reader has even won £25 worth of M&S vouchers.

Here's a sample of what your responses told us:-

Everybody who took part in the survey read over half of the magazine, with 50% reading all of it;
Two thirds of respondents spend half an hour reading HAZ news – the other third one hour;
Project information was by far the most popular topic followed by contact details and events; and
Most people felt that the length and format was just right.

In response to demand from many of you with internet and email access, we have plans to supplement HAZ news with an electronic bulletin and more website information in the near future.

The Health Action Zone has been part of the Belfast Civic Leadership Project hosted by Belfast City Council and Mediation Northern Ireland. The Belfast Civic Leadership Group has been taking time out to consider important issues for the city, and in particular consider Belfast as a diverse city. Belfast City Council officials together with the Good Relations steering panel of elected politicians have linked with a similar initiative in Newry and Mourne. The leadership of the two cities has been reflecting on the challenges of reconciliation and diversity in the context of a changing Europe. A key outcome of this dialogue has been the development of a convention promoting civic awareness of the challenges of diversity in Northern Ireland.

The convention was entitled 'The Challenge Of Change' and took place between Monday 5th and Wednesday 7th June 2006.



The North and West Belfast Health Action Zone produces HAZNews three times a year:

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If you are working with HAZ and want your story to be included in future editions, email hazadmin@nwb.n-i.nhs.uk