

A Programme
for *Change* -
seeking your views

Health
Action
Zone

Clear goals
Measurable targets
Improved outcomes
Social exclusion
Neighbourhood action
Community planning
Health and wellbeing
Tackling inequality
Provoke debate
Partnership working
Engaging communities
Reduced fear of crime
Community aspiration
Knowledge and learning

HAZ *newz*

A Programme for *Change* - seeking your views

An invitation from the HAZ Chairman

The purpose of this Programme for Change is to set out what the Health Action Zone (HAZ) Council believes to be the profound challenges facing Belfast. We aim to provoke debate about what needs to happen in order to improve health and wellbeing and tackle social exclusion. We are doing this at a time of enormous change, in particular, structural changes to member organisations as a result of the Review of Public Administration. However, we believe the debate about what needs to be done is even more important precisely because we want to maintain focus on the challenges of change, irrespective of these new structures and functions.

For almost a decade HAZ has been developing new ways of working – engaging communities and statutory, private and voluntary sector organisations in creating integrated approaches to a range of problems. HAZ has built on the efforts of previous and existing partnership arrangements. It has sought to use this collective experience and learning to inform and influence government policy, with evaluation and critical reflection being important features of this work. It is this modest contribution that HAZ Council offers to the current debate.

The Programme for Change is not meant to be definitive. Rather, it aims to set out a clear direction for the future based on experience, knowledge of need and a commitment to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Belfast. This consultation will be informed and changed as a result of widespread debate and discussion. The HAZ Council will continue to work towards collectively identifying clear, agreed and measurable targets and goals which, we believe, will help drive the next stage of partnership working in the city.

I believe we have an important opportunity to move our learning and ambition forward. I am reminded of Professor David Gordon's comments at the Equity and Health Conference held by HAZ in January 2007 in which he told participants that we need to **believe** that the current situation can be different. This is our contention – that the ongoing level of inequality in Belfast is not acceptable and that together we can work harder, better and smarter to change that situation.

I look forward to hearing your views.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Black'.

Richard Black OBE
Chairman
Health Action Zone Council

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Background

The Belfast Health Action Zone (HAZ) is a partnership of public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations working together to tackle inequalities in health and broader social exclusion. The partnership has been working formally since 1999 in North and West Belfast and latterly agreed that a wider geographical focus across the city should be considered. The expanded partnership would aim to build on experience from different parts of the city and provide an opportunity for enhanced strategic collaboration toward agreed goals. The HAZ functions by:

- Developing effective practice
- Influencing and changing 'mainstream practice'
- Creating links and using practice to influence government policy

The focus of effort has been driven by local priorities and has created coherence and synergy of action amongst partners. HAZ has sought to demonstrate the benefits of collaborative advantage – that more can be achieved by everyone working together than as individual organisations. HAZ has created a space for debate at the highest level together with improved practice on the ground. The opportunity of bringing common interests together has grown over the years with literally hundreds of organisations actively involved in work programmes.

The HAZ experience

The HAZ focuses on a broad social model of health based on the twin pillars of partnership and participation. Whilst the title is 'Health' Action Zone, the practice has been to take an inclusive approach to addressing areas of need. Evidence suggests that tackling inequalities demands systematic interventions, often working at different levels, which will influence key determinants of health, such as education and employment opportunities, as well as actively engaging people in decisions which impact on their health. HAZ has sought to focus efforts on issues or settings of greatest need where collaboration can bring greatest benefit. Each of these work programmes or 'development pathways' is led by a different partner within the HAZ Partnership but engages a wide range of other organisations in the process. Examples include:

- Developing an integrated approach to tackling the accommodation needs, prejudice and inequality experienced by the Irish Traveller community (led by the NI Housing Executive)
- Changing how services can work together to improve health and education outcomes e.g. Communities in Schools/Extended Schools (led by Belfast Education and Library Board and school principals)
- Integrated services for children and young people (led by Area Partnership Boards, communities and schools)
- Neighbourhood action including developing a coordinated approach post-feud in the Greater Shankill and working to develop local neighbourhood area plans (led by local community organisations)
- Thematic issues such as: developing a coordinated approach to the prevention of suicide and self-harm (led by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust); developing an integrated approach to the promotion of sexual health and wellbeing of young people (led by HAZ Team); and developing a coordinated approach to drug and alcohol misuse (led by HAZ Team)
- Supporting communities' active engagement in HAZ programmes including the employment of Health and Wellbeing Development Officers (led by Area Partnership Boards)
- Developing and supporting networks for mutual support and learning such as Healthy Living Centres, Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Misuse, Young People's Engagement and School Nutrition (led by HAZ Team)
- Contributing new knowledge and learning e.g. labour market analysis, evaluation, needs analysis (led by different partners)
- Creating new approaches to addressing the needs of long term unemployed people and their families e.g. Futures (led by the former North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust), and the Employability Access Project (led by North Belfast Partnership Board)

The Programme for Change

HAZ Council has embarked on discussions about a Programme for Change in Belfast, that is, the set of key issues that need to be addressed to transform existing patterns of inequality and disadvantage. The purpose is to provoke a debate, which will be supported by developing targets for action which will be agreed by partners. The process to date has involved a second analysis of need, a review of existing HAZ programmes, a review of evaluations (including the HAZ partnership itself), discussion amongst the members of the HAZ Council and preliminary work on targets. In addition, there have been ongoing discussions with Belfast Healthy Cities and Investing for Health about how all parties in the wider health community can contribute to this agenda collectively and separately. Similarly, the Achieving Belfast Initiative, which will focus on improving literacy and numeracy attainment levels in Belfast, will make a major contribution to this agenda. It is also important to note the vastly changing environment as a result of the Review of Public Administration and the Programme for Government, which will have a major influence on the shape and content of any future HAZ programme. There will now be an intense period of debate and discussion with member organisations and multiple stakeholders – current and potentially future partners – about the way forward.

Five Major Challenges

HAZ experience suggests that there is still much work to be done to effectively tackle inequalities in health and that the health and wellbeing of those who are most disadvantaged in Belfast is characterised by five common features:

- A lack of **aspiration**
- High levels of relative **poverty**
- Significant under**achievement**
- Continuing fear for local **safety**
- Ongoing lack of **good relations** between communities

Accordingly, it is suggested that concerted action is required with commonly agreed goals for the next ten years so we might work toward:

1. **Aspiration:** Children in disadvantaged areas of Belfast can be shown to exceed their expectations of educational achievement in spite of disadvantage; and communities' aspirations can be shown to be more positive.
2. **Poverty:** A measure of relative poverty is adopted and used to set targets to ensure that people in disadvantaged areas of Belfast can be shown to suffer no greater disadvantage than across Northern Ireland as a whole.
3. **Achievement:** An increase in the number of school leavers with qualifications in all disadvantaged areas of Belfast can be demonstrated, to equal the average for Northern Ireland as a whole.
4. **Safety:** Fear of crime can be shown to be significantly reduced.
5. **Good Relations:** Greater respect and tolerance can be demonstrated within and between communities taking account of the changing nature of the population and including ethnic minority groupings.

As part of the debate on the Programme for Change, each of these goals will need clear targets. It is recognised that targets can be somewhat narrow and that these measures need to be supplemented by other broader indicators. Shorter-term milestones and indicators for each of these challenges will be developed and agreed over the coming period.

HAZ suggests that if progress is made in each of these areas there will be considerable improvement in health and wellbeing and a reduction in the wider inequalities gap.

How will this be achieved?

The experience of HAZ has pointed to the centrality of employment, educational achievement, health and wellbeing and community engagement. It is proposed that work should continue to:

- Seek to align individual partners' plans and contribution to this approach.
- Expand focused interventions (development pathways) on themes or particular geographic areas of specific need.
- Make better use of collective resources and share plans of individual partners at an early stage e.g. in development of facilities and individual agency priorities.
- Use the opportunity of community planning to build a more comprehensive approach to informing health and wellbeing and tackling wider inequalities.
- Ask all agencies to align their policies, procedures, practice, investments and plans to help to achieve the agreed targets and goals.
- Redesign the way services are delivered.
- Expand and develop contracts between the public sector, private sector and voluntary and community organisations which make a commitment to enhancing employability and employment opportunities.
- Enhance the political interface.

A Programme for Change - seeking your views

Possible Priorities for Next Phase HAZ Work

In addition to consideration of the broad agenda of the Programme for Change, we also want to invite discussion about a number of specific priorities that are likely to be included in any HAZ future work programme. Many of these will build on existing work and will include:

Children and Young People

1. Use schools and communities as settings for development of new services and approaches together with the community and other partners.
2. Strengthen the development of integrated services for children and young people with the lessons examined for relevance to other issues.

Communities and Neighbourhoods

1. Develop an integrated approach to meeting the needs of minority ethnic groups including Travellers.
2. Expand and develop Neighbourhood approaches to local planning and development, working closely with local communities.
3. Develop new approaches to families or communities at particular risk, building on the integrated services for children and young people initiative.
4. Seek to build community relations by working with communities and partner organisations to advance joint understanding and practice at local level.

Thematic Approaches

1. Adopt a coordinated approach to thematic areas of work such as mental health (including suicide prevention), sexual health and wellbeing, and drugs and alcohol.
2. Support efforts to develop a coordinated approach to community safety and fear of crime.

Employment & Employability

1. Enhance opportunities for public service providers to address employability through increased access to employment schemes.

Potential New Work Programmes

1. Examine any added value that HAZ could bring to the coordinated work to address the needs of older people.
2. Explore what added value HAZ could bring to the issue of disability.
3. Explore what added value HAZ could bring to the development of physical space and planning decisions which promote health and wellbeing.

A way forward

We believe that there has never been a more appropriate time to address the challenge of inequality in Belfast. Reform of the public sector and local government, together with new local political governance, presents an unparalleled opportunity when all of the key players, embarking on a change process, can embrace a radical new approach. Leadership will be central at such an exciting time.

Belfast is a great city - it can be an even better place to live. It has marvellous natural resources of which the greatest is its people. This draft programme sets out ideas which can help improve the lives of those who are most vulnerable or in greatest need. It does not provide the answers or set the actual targets that will be established, (this will continue in parallel) but contributes to the beginning of a critical path for real change. HAZ has had nine years of experience of practice in this endeavour. Some of this has been successful, but a great deal is still to be done. Our aim is to help to stimulate radical new ways of working together towards a new positive future in which we can all share.

The debate needs to begin. As part of this process HAZ will give consideration to a title and membership which will reflect its purpose. Public sector agencies in Belfast, working with Government, the private sector and local people and organisations can form new alliances. The new Assembly offers the vehicle for real local leadership that can drive a future radical agenda.

A new strategic partnership

It has been suggested that there should be a new strategic partnership for the city to develop a collectively agreed programme of action across the five higher order goals relating to aspiration, poverty, underachievement, safety and good relations. The HAZ has not set out to become the strategic partnership of the future. However, HAZ wishes to play a role in supporting such a development and in ensuring that its learning and experience is used to best effect in any future partnership arrangement for Belfast.

What would improvement look like?

Clearly much work is already underway, however, it is also true that we could accelerate effective practice. Improving the impact of resources, money and people could be further demonstrated in a number of areas.

- **Enhanced Emphasis on Community Engagement**

One of the major problems in addressing inequalities is engaging those people who are hardest to reach, often also those in greatest need. Strategies for community empowerment have helped give a voice to local communities that feel threatened, vulnerable or disadvantaged and this capacity building should continue to be supported.

Neighbourhood Renewal and Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme (SNAP) offer a key approach not just to listen to local people but to engage and build up detailed profiles of local needs and aspirations, as well as the assets of local communities. These initiatives could be drawn together to become more effective.

- **Development of New Types of Facilities**

The idea of One Stop Shops can be expanded. Models such as the new Health and Wellbeing Centres which link health and

social services with library and leisure services could be enhanced to embrace housing, educational support, welfare rights advice, access to specialist services and so forth. In the future, planning any new public facility could consider multiple users rather than sectoral interests e.g. schools could also incorporate community access to leisure services and health services.

- **Development of Integrated Services**

A radical shift in how services are developed and delivered as part of a truly integrated process could be expanded so that:

- there is real engagement of the community and service users in the design and delivery of services to ensure their relevance
- there is no duplication of assessment procedures
- services are delivered by multi agency, multi disciplinary teams
- integrated planning happens on both a strategic and local basis
- agencies agree, share and work toward common goals
- there is common (but still protected) information sharing and database

Achieving these aspirations will also require a re-think on how Government departments operate and coordinate with each other as well as a requirement on all agencies to link their working practices and processes with each other.

- **A new approach to delivering a more appropriate economic infrastructure**

Although confidence in Belfast is growing and there is an increase in small and medium sized businesses, the economic underpinning that is required to tackle disadvantage is still a long way from being in place.

There may be an improving economic climate in the city but it is not impacting on those who are suffering the greatest disadvantage. The key to tackling economic change may be a combination of aspiration and education so that citizens can take advantage of the opportunities available in the future.

- **A requirement to adopt holistic approaches**

There is a need to develop coordinated approaches for communities and, in particular, families experiencing difficulty. For example, some people face multiple problems such as lack of education and life skills, low self esteem, disjointed personal relationships, lack of opportunity and lack of information and have been affected by the long-term impact of the 'troubles'. Comprehensive, locally based holistic strategies taking all of these issues into account offer a more effective means of support.

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The consultation process

We want to hear your views. The process of debate will take a number of forms.

- The HAZ Newz will be widely distributed and you can email or write using the reply sheet. **All responses should be returned no later than 18 February 2008.**
- All existing HAZ Programmes and networks will be asked to contribute their views and participate in discussions.
- A series of events are being hosted by the Area Partnership Boards to include community and voluntary sector partners. The details are set out alongside:
- HAZ Council partners will hold discussions within their own organisations in order to ensure any future work programmes link to their internal planning processes. A key element will focus on targets and agreed outcomes.
- Three separate events in November have been used to gather the views from school principals and staff in the Belfast Education and Library Board area.

- A number of additional meetings will be organised in January and February 2008 in response to specific requests.
- In the New Year all this information will be collated to inform HAZ Council debate and proposed draft targets during January to March 2008.
- A separate seminar for policy makers in Government Departments will be held in February 2008.
- A conference for all stakeholders will be held by mid-April 2008 at which it is expected to consider the final draft of proposed action.

We do want to hear your views. The enclosed questionnaire is designed to guide your feedback but you do not need to feel constrained to address only these issues.

Copies of this document and questionnaire may be downloaded from the HAZ website, www.haz-nwbelfast.org.uk

Event 1

Tuesday 27 November 2007

9.30am – 12.00pm
St Mary's University College
191 Falls Road
Belfast BT12 6FE

Event 2

Wednesday 28 November 2007

9.30am – 12.00pm
The Arches Centre
1 Westminster Avenue North
Belfast BT4 1NS

Event 3

Thursday 29 November 2007

9.30am – 12.00pm
Spectrum Centre
331-333 Shankill Road
Belfast BT13 2AA

Event 4

Friday 30 November 2007

9.30am – 12.00pm
NICVA
61 Duncairn Gardens
Belfast BT15 2GB

Event 5

Thursday 6 December 2007

9.30am – 12.00pm
Holiday Inn Express
106A University Street
Belfast BT7 1HE

Health Action Zone Council Members

Belfast City Council	Mr Richard Black OBE	Independent Chairperson
Belfast City Council	Ms Marie Therese McGivern	Director of Development
Belfast Education & Library Board	Ms Suzanne Wylie	Head of Environmental Health
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	Mr David Cargo	Chief Executive
Belfast Metropolitan College	Mr William McKee CBE	Chief Executive
Belfast Metropolitan College	Ms Joanne Jones	Principal Lecturer
Belfast Regeneration Office	Mr Brian Turtle	Director
Business in the Community	Ms Elaine Wilkinson	Director
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Mr John McGregor	Director
Department for Employment and Learning	Mr Jim Clarke	Deputy Chief Executive
Department for Social Development	Ms Harriet Ferguson	Regional Manager, Belfast Area
East Belfast Partnership	Mr Declan McGeown	Director, NBCAU
EHSSB/ Health & Social Care Authority	Ms Maggie Andrews	Partnership Manager
Greater Shankill Partnership	Ms Anne Lynch	Director of Planning
North Belfast Partnership Board	Mr Jackie Redpath	Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	Mr Murdo Murray	Chief Executive
Probation Board for Northern Ireland	Ms Mary McDonnell	Housing & Health Coordinator
Queen's University, Belfast	Mr Andrew Rooke	Assistant Chief Officer
Social Security Agency	Dr Mike Morrissey	Researcher
South Belfast Partnership Board	Mr Mervyn Adair	Director of Operations
University of Ulster	Ms Anne McAleese	Chief Executive
West Belfast Partnership Board	Vacant	Vacant
	Mr Noel Rooney	Chief Executive



Get in Touch!

The Health Action Zone produces HAZNewz three times a year.

Our core HAZ team is:

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Beth Gilhooly - Sexual Health Co-ordinator

Donna Holland - Office Manager

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