Healthy Places, Healthy Children

Children's Participation

Joan Devlin

Chief Executive, Belfast Healthy Cities

Belfast Healthy Cities

- WHO Healthy City since 1988;

- Independent organisation

- Board of Directors:

  Public Health Agency; Ulster University; Housing Executive; Department of Health; Queen's University Belfast; Institute of Public Health in Ireland; Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; Department of Infrastructure; and Health and Social Services Board.
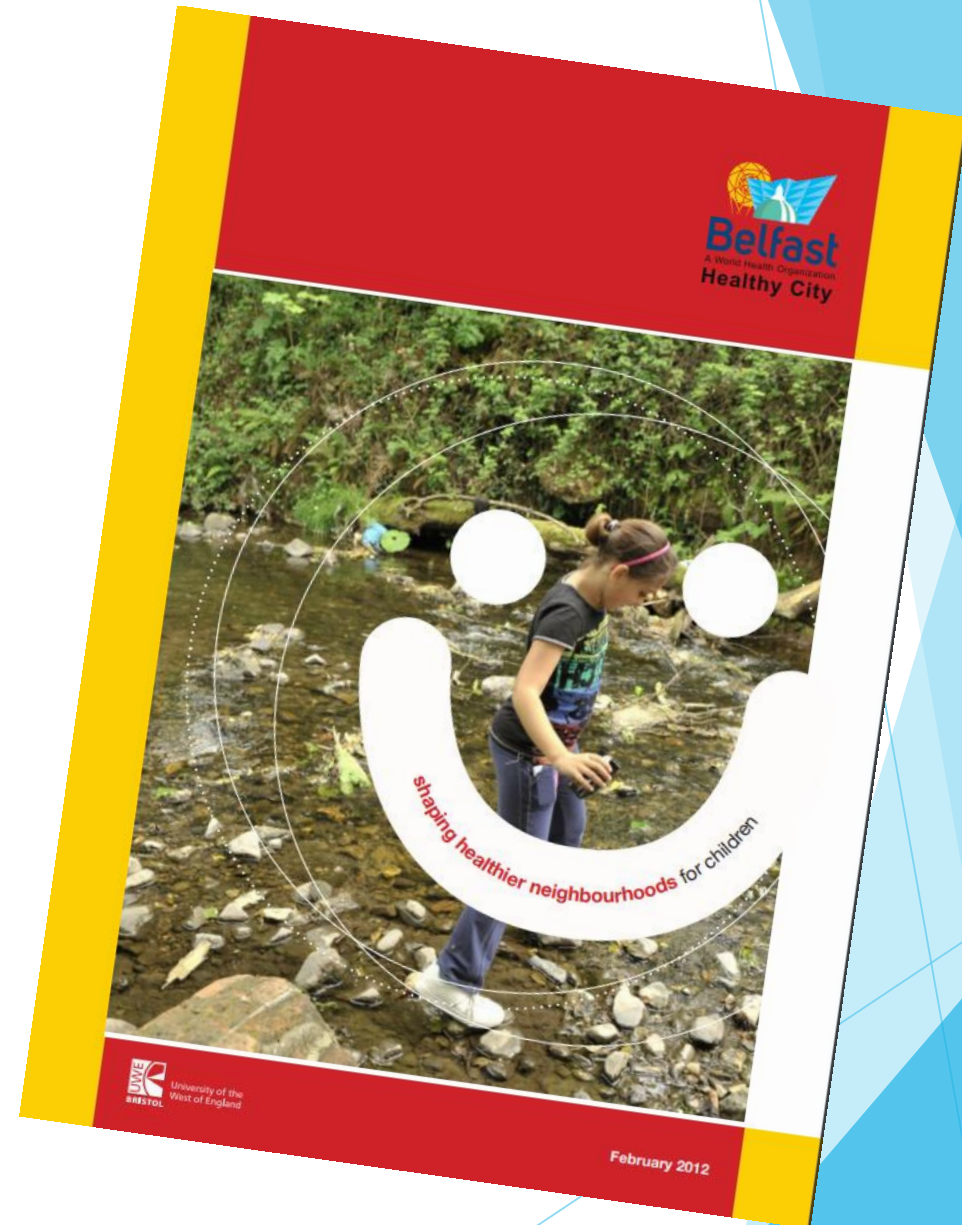
Context

- Belfast, as a Healthy City, developed the concept of healthy urban environments during Phase III (1998-2002) of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network;

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) established a right for children to both have access to a supportive environment, and be heard in decisions that affect them (Articles 12 and 13);

- A gap in policy in relation to children, and child friendly places in the Northern Irish context;

- Raising awareness of health impacts of environment on children including physical inactivity and obesity; asthma and air pollution, mental health and unintentional injuries > *Good Places Better Health for Scotland's Children*

Context

- Belfast has a comparatively young population, particularly when viewed within the context of ageing populations in most of Europe;

- 56,000 of the city's 340,000 residents are aged under 13, equating to 16. 5% of the population, while residents aged under 18 account for 22% of the total city population (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency);

- The population of children is distributed relatively evenly across the city, although the proportion is higher in some neighbourhoods in the west and north of the city. These neighbourhoods are also are most affected by disadvantage and long term deprivation (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2017b).

Shaping Healthier Neighbourhoods for Children (2011-14):

► class-based sessions exploring the topic of healthy environments;

► 400 children aged 8-11 ;

► walk in the local neighbourhood, Photovoice method, and a final imagining session to share ideas, prioritise and visualise an agreed proposal;

► Events where children present their ideas directly to senior policy and local government decision makers.

KidsSpace (2011-2017):

KIDS SPACE events in Belfast 2011-2017

2011
1. 23th Sept: St Anne's Square (as part of Culture Night Festival)
2. 24th Sept: St Anne's Square (as part of Culture Night Festival)
3. 25th Sept: St Anne's Square (as part of Culture Night Festival)

2012
4. 20th Sept: Cathedral Gardens (as part of Culture Night Fest...)
5. 1st Oct: City Hall

2013
6. 20th Sept: Writer's Square (as part of Culture Night Festiv...)

2014
7. 29th March: Castle Court shopping centre
8. 19th Sept: Buoy's Park (as part of Culture Night Festival)

2015
9. 20th Feb: Castle Court shopping centre
10. 20th Feb: Victoria Square shopping centre
11. 21st Feb: Castle Court shopping centre
12. 21st Feb: Victoria Square shopping centre
13. 21st March: Castle Court shopping centre
14. 24th July: City Hall
15. 31st July: Ulster Museum
16. 7th Aug: Candahar Street
17. 18th Sept: Cathedral Gardens (as part of Culture Night Festival)
18. 4th Oct: Botanic Gardens (Ciclovia)

2016
19. 25th June: Stormont (not on map)
20. 16th Sept: Buoy's Park (as part of Culture Night Festival)

2017
21. 3rd Aug: St Anne's Square
22. 8th Aug: St Anne's Square
23. 15th Aug: St Gemma's school (not on map)
24. 22nd Sept: City Hall

Planning my City (2014):

Taking Action for Child Friendly Places:

▶ inter-sectoral action plan;

▶ Engaging and Empowering Children;
Creating Healthier Places and
Supportive Environments;
Tools for Child Centred Spatial
Planning and Design;

▶ 7000 children and families were
directly engaged with.

Why engage children?

- Encourage **personal development** and **skills** among children, including knowledge and awareness of their rights and responsibilities;

- Changes in **perception** of children and young people and their abilities, aspirations and needs;

- Empowers children and young people as **members of civil society** to hold organizations, institutions and governments to account;

- Encourage a **sense of ownership** of place and personal achievement amongst children;

- Different perspective offered by children and young people can lead to **creative solutions**;

- More **effective service delivery**;

- Enhances **organisational credibility**, reputation and governance;

- To make work **more fun**, energising and multidimensional!

Belfast school survey (2014):

▶ working group including: Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB), Belfast City Council, Belfast City Centre Management, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, DOE, DSD, NIHE, National Children's Bureau, PSNI, PlayBoard and PLACE;

▶ pupils surveyed included Primary 4, Primary 7, and Years 8 and 10 in the Secondary Schools;

What do you think about your environment and outside world?

Age of pupil: ....|.........

School: ....

Pupils home postcode: ....

	Very good	Good	OK	Not very good	Not good at all/not enough
The street					
What are the road crossings like?					
How is the pavement?					
The green spaces					
How much green space do you feel there is?					
What are the green spaces like?					
The play places					
If there are play places what are they like?					
How good are the routes going there, from home or school?					
The light					
How good is the lighting in the evening?					
How do you feel walking in your area in the evening?					

Findings:

▶ access to **green and open space** that enables children to play and socialise with a degree of independence;

▶ a strong concern for **cleanliness**;

▶ better provision for **walking and cycling** and better **traffic management**, including traffic calming and reduced traffic;

Healthy Places, Healthy Children (2015-):

▶ Stage 2 (children aged 8-11) teaching resource;

▶ integrated into the *World Around Us* curriculum – a thematic area of learning comprising the subjects of geography, history and science and technology;

▶ supports delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum on cross curricular skills (critical thinking, teamwork and problem solving);

▶ piloted with over 30 schools in Northern Ireland and beyond.

Healthy Places, Healthy Children (2015-):

► seven Units;

► Unit booklets set out the learning intentions and contains teachers notes and learning exercises;

► The booklets are supported by a range of guidance and practical resources;

► Delivering Change booklet – telling the stories of six schools who have successfully completed the programme is also available for peer learning.

Belfast
A World Health Organization
Healthy City

Nettlefield Primary School

Our Lady's Primary School

Belfast
A World Health Organization
Healthy City

St Kevin's Primary School

"Our girls are so excited to see their plans come to life. It has allowed them to open their minds to career they may not have considered before. The Healthy Cities programme was enjoyed thoroughly by both staff and pupils and we would really recommend this resource!"

"Healthy cities was a fantastic opportunity for our students to engage in their local area and share their opinions on how to improve it. Keeping them involved in every step of the process gives them a sense of ownership to the proposal we put forward and presenting it makes them feel like their voices are being heard"

Achievements (2)

▶ Partnership Working: Primary Schools, education sector and local Authorities, private business, members of the community, local training providers

▶ Giving children / child friendly places greater visibility with local authorities and in emerging policy;

▶ Pushing forward of common agenda on improving the built environment for better health & wellbeing;

▶ Commendation in Excellence in Planning for Health and Wellbeing at the prestigious Royal Town Planning Institute's (RTPI) Awards for Planning Excellence in 2018.

Launch of online teaching resource:

Andrew Hailey, Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Group:

"This is a wonderful opportunity to encourage young people to articulate their thoughts about their environment and how it can be shaped to make it better. If we can keep developing those skills, these young people will grow up with the confidence to make a positive impact on the wide range of places in which they will find themselves."

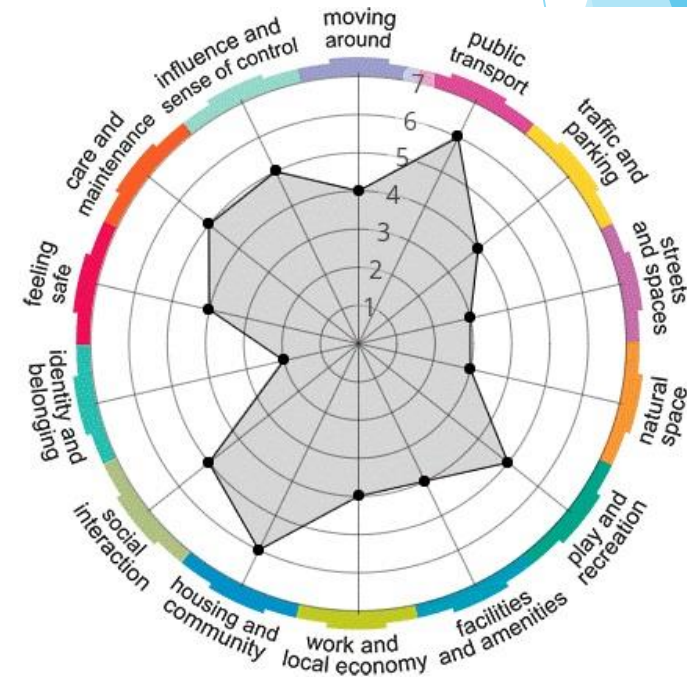▶ Available online at **www.belfasthealthycities.com/hphc**

Next steps:

▶ Support for schools implementing the resource;

▶ Financial support towards 2018/2019 proposals through the Joanne Mathers award (RTPI);

▶ Exploring ways to encourage Housing Associations / developers to develop proposals in early stages of site planning;

Next steps:

▶ Development of Children's engagement guidelines

▶ Child Friendly design guidelines with MAG

▶ Resilient Commissioner

    ▶ Children one of three priorities

    ▶ Pop Up park

▶ Exploring mechanisms to promote child friendly spaces within the planning system;

- Developer's contribution / community benefit

- Supplementary Planning Guidance

▶ Children's Place Standard Tool

'Kids choose our cars and our clothes – why not their own space?'

https://www.eani.org.uk/services/eatv/teacher-videos/healthy-places-healthy-children-key-stage-2-teaching-resource-videos

www.belfasthealthycities.com