



**Making life better,
together**
Belfast Strategic Partnership

Focusing on life inequalities

City Agencies Tackling Health Inequalities Together



Jackie McBrinn, Belfast Health Development Unit; Cllr Stephen Corr, Chair, Health and Environmental Services Com, Belfast City Council; Seamus Mullen, Public Health Agency; Erica Ison, World Health Organization Expert Adviser; Penny Gruffydd, Sustainable Development Unit, Swansea and Joan Devlin, Belfast Healthy Cities

Inequalities are interpreted and understood in different ways by sectors and agencies in Belfast. A wide range of work is currently being undertaken across the city to tackle poverty, life and health inequalities.

On Thursday 26 February a workshop, jointly hosted by Belfast Healthy Cities and Belfast Strategic Partnership, focused on the tasks of agreeing a definition of inequalities and initiating the development of a tool to support organisations to assess the impact of their policies and practice on inequalities and poverty.

The workshop which was facilitated by World Health Organization Expert Adviser and Health Impact Assessment Specialist, Erica Ison, featured contributions from Mary Black, Assistant Director Public Health (Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement), Public Health Agency and Penny Gruffydd, Sustainable Development Unit, City & County of Swansea.

The WHO European Healthy City of Swansea has successfully implemented an Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Tool, which supports multidisciplinary groups with responsibility for addressing health inequalities to align their activities at a local level and promotes joint working.

Jacqui Frazer, Project Development Officer at Belfast Strategic Partnership said: “We welcome this first step in the development of a tool that will assist Belfast Strategic Partnership to assess the impact of its work on poverty and life inequalities across Belfast”.

Chief Executive of Belfast Healthy Cities Joan Devlin added

“While many agencies have worked hard over the years to address inequalities in the city, we perhaps have not seen improvements for everyone to the extent we had hoped. The development of a tool specifically for Belfast is an opportunity for organisations from all sectors to invest in a strategic process, informed by experiences from WHO Europe, which will draw together their individual strengths to make Belfast a fairer and healthier city for its citizens.”

Presentations from the event are available at www.belfasthealthycities.com

Notes

Belfast Healthy Cities has delivered Health Equity in All Policies (HEiAP) with a range of organisations during Phase V (2009-2013) of the WHO Healthy Cities Network of which Belfast is a member. HEiAP is one of two overall goals in Phase VI (2014-2018) requirements.

Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) was established to address life inequalities across the city through five priority areas: mental health and emotional wellbeing, lifelong learning, alcohol and drugs, early years and early interventions and healthy urban environments. Poverty is one of BSP’s cross-cutting themes and is central to all of these priorities.



Anne McCusker, Belfast Healthy Cities; Erica Ison: Penny Gruffydd and Jacqui Frazer, Belfast Health Development Unit