



**Making life better,
together**

Belfast Strategic Partnership



Focusing on life inequalities

Programme: Defining inequalities and poverty: taking collective action

Date: Thursday 26 February 2015 **Time:** 12.15pm – 4.30pm

Venue: The Mount Business and Conference Centre, Belfast

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

The purpose of this workshop, jointly hosted by Belfast Healthy Cities & Belfast Strategic Partnership, is 1) to agree a definition of inequalities and 2) to initiate the development of a tool to support organisations in the city to assess the impact of their policies and practice on inequalities and poverty.

While there has been general improvement in health, not everyone has been able to avail fully of the benefits of this progress. Evidence shows that inequalities based on race, disability, age, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity can interact in complex ways with socioeconomic position in shaping people's health. Life expectancy of the population of Belfast varies across the city and is lower in more deprived areas.

Making Life Better: A Whole System Strategic Framework for Public Health (DHSSPS) suggests inequalities in health arise because of inequalities in society, "in the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age". The Strategy suggests that such inequalities must be addressed across the life course, and through interventions that support everyone while focusing on closing the gap in inequalities. It requires departments and agencies to effectively collaborate to address inequalities and work together to improve the health of society.

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.

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.



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- 12.15pm** **Registration & lunch**
- 1.00pm** **Welcome & purpose:**
Chair: Joan Devlin, Chief Executive, Belfast Healthy Cities
- 1.05pm** **Opening address: Tackling Health Inequalities Together**
Mary Black, Assistant Director Public Health (Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement), Public Health Agency
- 1.15pm** **Working Together for a Better Swansea**
Penny Gruffydd, Sustainable Development Unit, City & County of Swansea
- 1.35pm** **Defining poverty and inequalities**
Erica Ison, WHO Expert Adviser & Health Impact Assessment Specialist
- 1.55pm** **Question and answer**
- 2.10pm** **Tea / Coffee**
- 2.30pm** **Workshop: Developing a health equity tool in Belfast**
Facilitated small group discussion by Erica Ison
- 4.00pm** **Feedback & Next Steps**
- 4.30pm** **Close**