

Belfast Healthy Cities 2019 Political Briefing *for A Healthier, Happier Belfast*



City leaders have the power and means to make a significant difference in the health and well-being of their people. Health inequalities still highlight the disparities felt across Belfast with the gap in life expectancy between those living in the most deprived and least deprived areas a particularly stark reminder. Belfast City Council has a lead role to play in reducing inequalities and you, as a candidate and a leader in the local community, can help to bring this change to our city. We are asking political leaders to set out long term plans to address underlying health inequalities throughout Belfast.

For 30 years Belfast Healthy Cities partnership and the wider World Health Organization (WHO) European Healthy Cities Network have been working to reduce health inequalities, and to promote healthy places. Belfast City Council has been a partner in this work, and Councillors have always recognised the need to improve health and well-being within our local communities, schools and workplaces.

In 2018 the WHO European Healthy Cities Network celebrated 30 years and brought their International Healthy Cities Conference to Belfast. As a city we too celebrated 30 years as a member of the network. Almost 600 delegates from 200 cities across 60 countries attended to discuss key aspects of promoting health and well-being in our cities. The Belfast Charter* was adopted by attending mayors and political leaders, and outlines the action needed to be taken by city politicians during the next phase.

* <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/urban-health/publications/2018/belfast-charter-for-healthy-cities-2018>



2019 sees the Network move into Phase VII (2019-2024) with three overarching goals of:

- fostering health and well-being for all and reducing health inequalities;
- leading by example nationally, regionally and globally;
- supporting implementation of WHO strategic priorities.

and a focus on 6 themes:

1. investing in the **people** who make up our cities;
2. designing urban **places** that improve health and well-being;
3. greater **participation** and partnerships for health and well-being;
4. improved community **prosperity** and access to common goods and services;
5. promoting **peace** and security through inclusive societies;
6. protecting the **planet** from degradation, leading by example, including through sustainable consumption and production.

We want to ensure that Belfast shows leadership in successfully implementing the Charter which was born in this city.

So now, as we prepare to elect new members to Belfast City Council, who will guide the city and wider region over the coming years, we ask all candidates to commit to the Belfast Charter, by signing our very own Belfast Healthy Cities Charter.



What do we mean by a healthy Belfast?

Health Inequalities

People in Northern Ireland are living longer and healthier lives. While there has been general improvement in health, not everyone has been able to benefit fully from this progress. Life expectancy of the population varies and is lower in more deprived areas.

Health inequalities arise from the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age: the social determinants of health. This includes differences in access to good quality housing, education, health services, access to good food, employment opportunities and transport.

Inequalities based on race, disability, age, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity can interact with people's social and economic position in complex ways to shape their health and well-being.



Healthy Life Expectancy

Life expectancy is a key illustration of health inequality. Five of the 10 most deprived areas in Northern Ireland are in Belfast and people living in these areas can expect lower life expectancy and fewer years of illness free life. There should be no differences in healthy life expectancy between people born in any part of Northern Ireland.

Life Expectancy*

	Average life expectancy Northern Ireland	Gap between those living in most deprived & least deprived
Male	78.5 years	7.1 years lower
Female	82.3 years	4.5 years lower

Years of Healthy Life*

	Gap between those living in most deprived & least deprived
Male	14.3 years
Female	14.5 years

Source: Department of Health 2019
*People born 2015-2017

The Belfast Healthy Cities Charter 2019

We, candidates for election to Belfast City Council, confirm our commitment to the values and principles of the Healthy Cities movement.

In an increasingly urban and globalised world, we will lead by example, both individually and collectively, to make our cities healthy, safe, fair, inclusive, resilient and sustainable.

Healthy Cities foster health and well-being through governance, empowerment and participation, creating urban places for equity and community prosperity, and investing in people for a peaceful, sustainable and more resilient planet.

We recognize that:

- the well-being, health, and happiness of our citizens depends on our willingness to give priority to the political choices that shape and address the determinants of health and well-being across the life course, including pregnancy and birth, and that combat the main causes of death and disability, including non-communicable diseases;
- the quality of urban life requires our urgent action to address social, political, commercial and environmental determinants and how they affect health and well-being; and
- the social diversity and trust essential for vibrant, peaceful, multicultural, and cohesive communities can only be fostered if we counteract the policies that lead to increasing social divides and health and well-being inequities.

We therefore advocate forcefully for investing in our city and our human capital - the people - and natural capital, and will significantly increase our engagement in city diplomacy for health.

We declare our commitment to:

- participate in the WHO network for sharing examples of good practice, learning, collaboration and innovation globally and regionally, and to act as a key partner in developing and implementing evidence- and practice-based actions;
- build capacity and coherence for better health, well-being and equity outcomes;
- be a partner for local-level implementation of global and regional priorities, including those outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- work alongside WHO to keep the world safe, improve health and serve the vulnerable.

We will work collectively and individually to ensure that Phase VII (2019-2024) of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network will act as a convener and an enabler for all relevant stakeholders in the city to come together and ensure facilitation of improved health and wellbeing for all, reduce inequalities, and act as a central element of the healthier, happier, and more sustainable future for all the people of Belfast.

Together, we can succeed.

Signed by



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Healthy City





ORGANIZATION
INTERNATIONAL
HEALTHY CITIES
CONFERENCE
DUBLIN
OCTOBER 2018



Belfast Healthy Cities' Health Inequalities programme aims to:

Training

Provide training to build capacity in and across organizations to make health, well-being and inequalities a key consideration in the planning and development of policies and actions - this training programme has extended regionally and has been delivered in Belfast, Antrim and Derry & Strabane.

Care Zone

Led by Lighthouse, Belfast Healthy Cities is working with the Care Zone in North Belfast. The aim of the Care Zone is to improve access to services for people living within the area, in order to support residents to improve their health and (social) well-being, with the longer term aim of reducing suicide.

Inequality Screening Tool

The Belfast Healthy Cities Inequality Screening Tool is designed to help explore the potential effects of policy and other types of proposals on the health and socio-economic inequalities in local communities and neighbourhoods of the city of Belfast.

As such, it helps to “proof” policies, strategies, plans and commissioning frameworks against the potential effects of the inequalities and inequities to which individuals in communities may be exposed, affecting not only their lives but also the sustainability of the city and its services.



Child Friendly Places

By 2050 the majority of the world's children will live in cities. We are pioneering child friendly places in Belfast. Child friendly places is a key concept that both aims to give children a stronger voice in decision making and contributes to healthy places. Since 2011 we have engaged over 5,000 children and families in shaping a vision for a child friendly Belfast.

A child friendly environment creates a healthy urban environment for people of all ages.

The Belfast Healthy Cities Key Stage 2 online resource - Healthy Places, Healthy Children, which compliments the Northern Ireland National Curriculum, introduces children to the links between the built environment and health and well-being. It provides an opportunity for: children to research their local area; develop proposals for how to make their local environment more child friendly; and, provides a mechanism to share their proposals with local decision makers.

Health Literacy

The World Health Organization defines health literacy as 'linked to literacy and entails people's knowledge, motivation and competences to access, understand, appraise and apply health information in order to make judgements and take decisions in everyday life concerning health care, disease prevention and health promotion to maintain or improve quality of life during the life course'. (WHO, 2013)

Belfast Healthy Cities Health Literacy Programme is informed and supported by a cross sectoral working group with representation from the community, voluntary, academia and statutory sectors.

A Health Literacy Communication Training for Health Professionals continues to be delivered in partnership with Community Health Development Network across Northern Ireland and enhances professional's health literacy competences and patient autonomy.

Healthy Ageing

Learning on healthy ageing through Belfast's membership of the WHO Healthy Ageing Task Force, has been evidenced in many of the practices that are now delivered through the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership in the city, including programmes on transport; walkability; physical activity; isolation and loneliness.

WHO Networks

Through membership of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, Belfast has introduced many new concepts and tools to the city: healthy urban planning; healthy ageing; health impact assessment; and health profiling. The WHO Networks create opportunities for stakeholders in Belfast to participate in sub networks on core issues and learn from other cities as well as promote health related programmes from Belfast to a European and international audience.



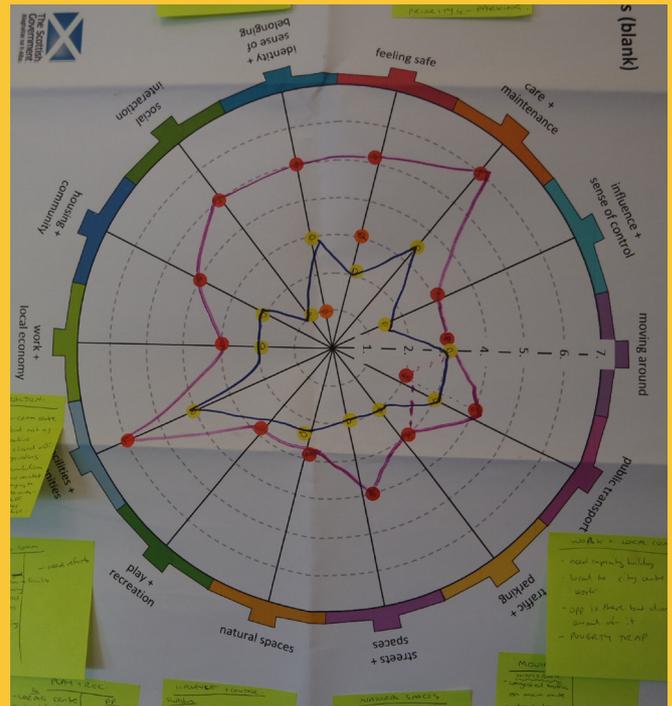
Walkability

Belfast Healthy Cities contributes to the Community Active Travel initiative - funded by Public Health Agency - through walkability assessments developed by Belfast Healthy Cities and designed to provide a baseline insight into the community's perceptions regarding walking and walkability in the local neighbourhood.

The aim of the assessments is to provide evidence on priorities for action that can be addressed with stakeholders throughout the life of the project. The approach is also intended to give local residents an opportunity to share their views and ideas on their neighbourhood environment.

Place Standard

Belfast Healthy Cities has been promoting the Place Standard Tool to policymakers and community representatives as a potential vehicle for developing capacity within communities. The Place Standard Tool is developed jointly by the Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and Architecture & Design Scotland to support inclusive decision making and community engagement on place, by identifying key challenges related to local built environment and sharing with relevant policy makers.



Healthy Places

What is Place? Place comprises of the environment in which we live, shop, work, learn and play; the people that inhabit these spaces and the quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their surroundings.

Belfast Healthy Cities aims to support healthy decision making by:

- Sharing evidence on how places shape and support healthy everyday life
- Building capacity on how built environment policy can create healthy places
- Developing tools and models that can help integrate health into policy and practice.



Belfast

A World Health Organization

Healthy City

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