

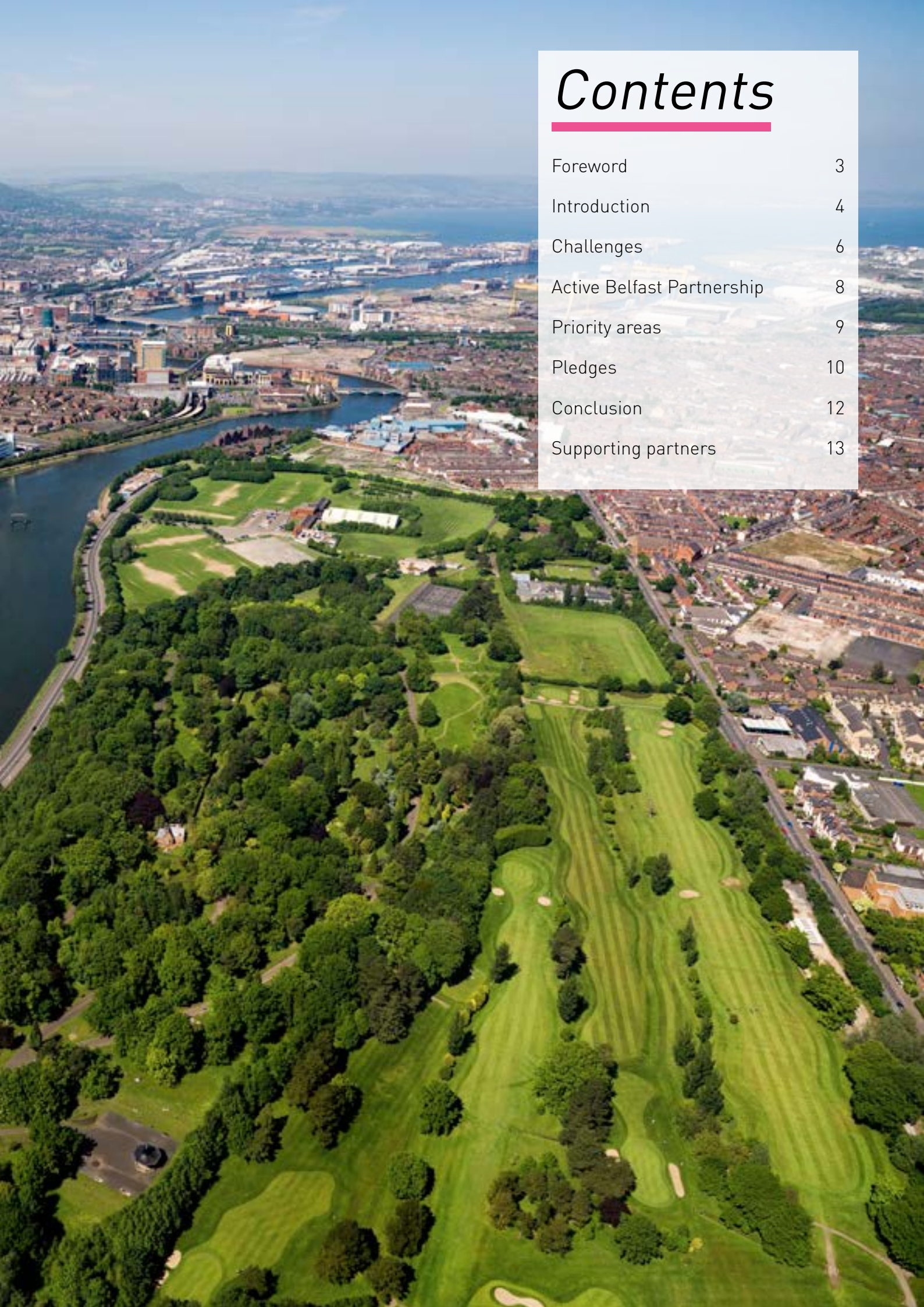


Get Active Belfast

A Framework for Physical Activity

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Foreword

The developing Belfast Agenda sets the vision for a city with a thriving, prosperous and growing economy; an inclusive and welcoming city; where people can reach their full potential; experience good health and wellbeing; in a vibrant, connected and environmentally friendly city.

To realise this ambitious vision for Belfast, it will be essential to take collaborative action to address the deep and persistent health inequalities within the city. Life is getting better for many people in Belfast, but not for everyone. Still there are too many people getting less time to enjoy their life. Focus must shift away from dealing with poor health when it has developed to preventing poor health and taking early intervention.

Physical inactivity is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability with 1 in 6 deaths linked to insufficient levels of physical activity. Globally, physical inactivity accounts for the same number of deaths, annually, as smoking. Those experiencing the greatest level of inequality tend to also be less physically active and experience increased barriers to being active.

Being more physically active can have benefits for all ages and it is never too late to start. Benefits of physical activity include improved growth and development of children and increased educational attainment. Increased work productivity and reduced sickness absence. Improved mental and emotional wellbeing and reduced risk of chronic diseases, such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

There is much good work underway across Belfast to increase people's participation in physical activity and improve their health. The time is now right to build on this and extend our relationships, using our collective resources to increase the scale and impact of physical activity as a way to address



health inequalities, by adding both quality of years to life and years of life, for the people of Belfast.

Get Active Belfast provides a platform to strengthen our partnership approach and challenge ourselves to do better together, supporting the people of our city, improving health and wellbeing and addressing health inequalities. With Get Active Belfast we are asking organisations to consider the added value which can be realised by integrating our collective efforts to create a more Active Belfast.





Introduction

Health inequalities are the preventable and unjust differences in health status experienced by certain population groups. People in lower socio-economic groups are more likely to experience chronic ill-health and die earlier than those who are more advantaged' (Institute of Public Health in Ireland).

If we are to be successful in breaking the generational cycle of inequalities, greater focus needs to be placed on the prevention and early intervention of the causes of inequalities. Action to address health inequalities needs to consider the broader determinants causing inequalities such as socio-economic status, the places we live, the accessibility of opportunities to enhance our health and the availability of networks which provide and promote social support.

Physical inactivity is on the increase, with advances in technology making the places we live, work and socialise much more sedentary environments. As the prevalence for sedentary behaviour continues to increase, the opportunities to be physical active as part of our everyday lives are decreasing. This change has had significant negative impacts on our health and wellbeing, our communities, our environment and our economy. Inactivity levels are the fourth leading cause of premature death, contributing to the prevalence of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke

and some forms of cancer. Physical inactivity is also a leading contributor to obesity.

Physical inactivity places significant demand on our public services. It is estimated that physical inactivity costs the health service £5.5 million each year in Belfast, through its direct contribution to coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, colorectal cancer and breast cancer. In addition to the health costs, physical inactivity has been estimated to have wider societal economic costs to Belfast of £28.5 million per year from sickness absence from work and £5 million per year from the premature death of people of working age.

Supporting people who experience the highest levels of health inequalities to become more physically active and to stay active throughout their life is fundamental to addressing the causes of inequalities; creating the conditions which enable people to live long, healthy, active lives. Interventions to develop the skills and capacity of those working in the physical activity sector, improving access to, and provision of physical activity opportunities, strengthening our partnership work and increasing knowledge of the reasons to be active, will significantly contribute to the economic, environmental and social outcomes for the city.

The time is now right to radically upgrade our approach to addressing health inequalities. The publication of the draft Programme for Government (2016-2020), the regional public health strategy 'Making Life Better' (2013-2023) and the developing Belfast Agenda, all focus on improving outcomes for people, including health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities. This strategic alignment and the transfer of powers for local spatial planning and community planning, represent a significant opportunity to develop wider collaborative

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approaches, which place prevention and early intervention at the centre of service delivery.

The Active Belfast partners are in agreement that Get Active Belfast and the subsequent priorities and actions undertaken in its implementation, should align with relevant regional and local strategic plans and be an exemplar project to the Belfast Strategic Partnership and its focus on addressing inequalities.

Get Active Belfast has been developed collaboratively by the Active Belfast Partnership, who will be responsible for developing subsequent priorities and actions, establishing links with relevant delivery structures and forging links across partner networks. Belfast Strategic Partnership will maintain an oversight role throughout. The approach adopted by the Active Belfast Partnership in developing Get Active Belfast, was built on an agreed set of guiding principles, which led to the development of a shared vision and five key priorities and indicators. The list of partners can be found on page 8.

The five key indicators for Get Active Belfast are to:

- 1** Increase the skills and capacity of those working and volunteering in the physical activity sector
- 2** Increase the quality and accessibility of places to be physically active
- 3** Increase levels of participation in physical activity
- 4** Increase partnership working across the physical activity sector
- 5** Increase awareness of physical activity and its benefits



Challenging inequalities and the role of physical activity

The impacts of inequalities are not only felt by those experiencing the greatest levels of deprivation in Belfast, but are felt by everyone across the city. The following information sets out the challenge to address inequalities and the role physical activity can play.

Fact:

In Belfast there is a significant gap in life expectancy between those living in the most disadvantaged areas of the city and those living in the least disadvantaged areas.



Fact:

The prevalence of chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, cancer and diabetes, is also much higher for people living in the most disadvantaged areas of Belfast.

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Fact:

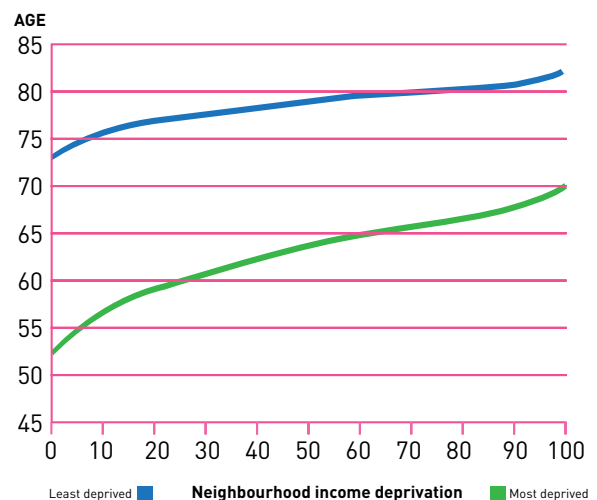
People living in areas of high disadvantage are

3-4

times more likely to suffer from a chronic disease.

Fact:

These inequalities are influenced by economic and social circumstances and have a graded relationship across society. The worse your economic and social circumstances, the worse your health and life expectancy.



Fact:

Addressing inequalities would save the health service 15% of its annual budget.

Inequalities cost Belfast approximately **£200 million a year**

Fact:

Physical activity levels for those living in the most disadvantaged areas are significant lower than for people in the least disadvantaged areas.



Fact:

Physical activity contributes to the prevention of more than 20 conditions and diseases.



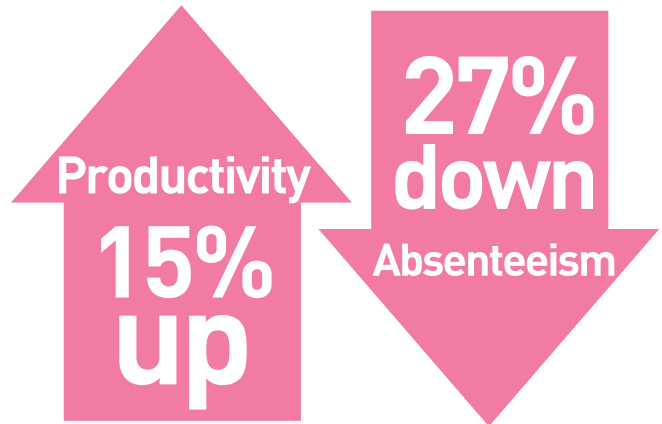
Fact:

Evidence shows that the benefits of physical activity go much further than health - including economy, environment, society and safety.



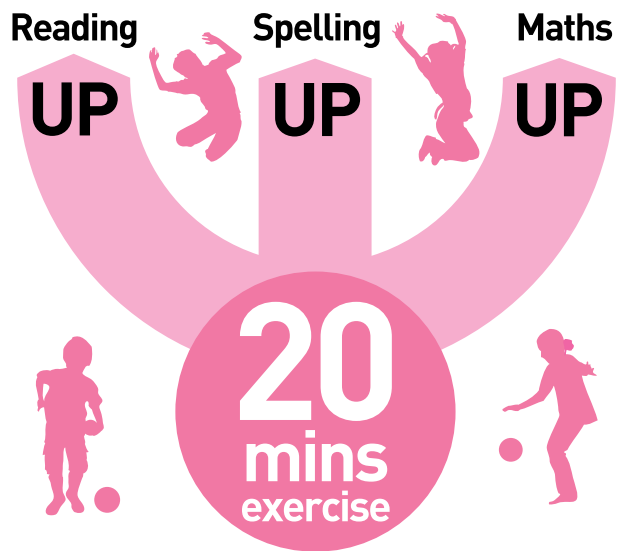
Fact:

Workplace health schemes can help get staff active. This can result in 15% higher levels of productivity and 27% lower levels of absenteeism.



Fact:

After 20 mins of physical activity children tested better in reading, spelling and maths and were more likely to perform above their grade level.

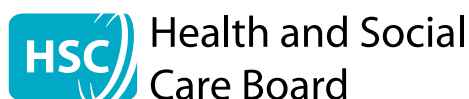


Inequalities caused by differing social and economic circumstances place an unsustainable burden on all of society, leading to increased pressures on public services. Creating a more Active Belfast will contribute to addressing inequalities in the city, leading to a reduced demand on public services.

The Active Belfast Partners



Belfast
City Council



The Active Belfast Partnership was established in 2013.

Its vision is:

People in Belfast will be more active and healthier

Our mission is:

Working together to inspire more people to be more active, more often



Strategic priority areas

The development and implementation of Get Active Belfast is part of a wider approach under Belfast Strategic Partnership, to address inequalities, improve health and wellbeing by adding both quality of years to life and years of life, for those experiencing the greatest levels of deprivation within Belfast.

Active Belfast Partnership recognises that to effectively deliver its vision, mission and guiding principles, commitment is required from all partners in implementing Get Active Belfast and the subsequent actions. Through the research and engagement work undertaken to develop the Active Belfast approach, five high level strategic priority areas and indicators have been identified.

Strategic priorities	Key indicators
Providing skills and supporting development opportunities for people	Increase the skills and capacity of those working and volunteering in the physical activity sector
Providing high quality places for all	Increase the quality and accessibility of places to be physically active
Increasing opportunities for participation and engagement	Increase levels of participation in physical activity
Improving partnership working	Increase partnership working across the physical activity sector
Promoting the benefits of being active	Increase awareness of physical activity and its benefits

The Active Belfast approach recognises the interconnected nature of the strategic priorities and indicators. In realising the ambition of Get Active Belfast, the Active Belfast Partnership have committed to strategically aligning its efforts across the themes of education, transport, planning, public health, communications, community development and sport.

Pledges

As part of Get Active Belfast, our aim is to promote and implement a series of seven pledges and actions in pursuit of five interlinked indicators.

Increasing participation in physical activity cannot be achieved through any single solution. To realise the ambition of Get Active Belfast, a comprehensive approach is required incorporating multiple connected strategies operating at the same time.

Get Active Belfast sets out seven shared pledges we will deliver in realising our ambition to increase physical activity levels, address inequalities and improve health and wellbeing across Belfast. Each pledge is supported by good evidence and relates to one of the seven 'best investments' for physical activity as identified by the Global Advocacy for Physical Activity.

A series of collaborative actions will be developed across each of the following pledges with a focus on addressing inequalities and improving health and wellbeing.

1

Support schools to offer physical activity throughout the day

Working with schools and other partners, we will support opportunities for both structured and unstructured play throughout the day. This will include the provision of high quality physical environments and resources to support active play, supporting walking and cycling to school programmes, developing and implementing school policies which prioritise physical activity for children, teachers and parents and supporting healthy eating and 'learning to grow' initiatives.

2

Create an integrated 'Active Travel' network

We will work with partners to develop a high quality network of dedicated walking and cycling routes, which connect people to services. This will include supporting behaviour change programmes in local schools, workplaces and communities and developing health related walking and cycling initiatives. We will also improve the integration between walking, cycling and public transport by working with partners responsible for planning and policy.



3

Create more active places through local spatial planning

We will work with partners across planning, to create active places which provide access to safe and accessible opportunities for physical activity, allowing people to incorporate activity into their everyday routine. This will include working with partners to create active places as part of new developments in the city and ensuring physical activity is a priority within local planning policy.

4

Strengthen connections to and within the health sector

We will work with the health sector and other partners, to develop new and enhance existing models of physical activity referral schemes, including implementing regional policy on physical activity referral and developing new condition specific pathways. We will ensure all programmes promote behaviour change through providing both practical brief advice and community based opportunities for participation in physical activity.

5

Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign on the benefits of being active

With partners, we will develop and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign aimed at informing people of the benefits to being active and inspiring people to get involved. This will include the use of both paid and unpaid forms of media such as print, electronic media, posters, social media and mass participation events. We will ensure this links with regional campaigns such as Choose to live better and Bike Week.



6

Deliver wide ranging and inclusive community based activity programmes

Working with partners, we will develop approaches that support everyone at any stage of life, to get active in their community. We will support schools, workplaces and community settings to develop policies which encourage people to be active and to implement physical activity programmes which provide opportunities for everyone to get involved and stay connected.



7

Support local sports clubs to deliver inclusive and adapted sports for all

We will support local sports clubs, governing bodies and partners, to develop and implement a wide ranging programme of adapted sports, which will provide physical activity opportunities for all. This will also include supporting the development of policies which promote inclusive sport, reducing barriers to participation including social and financial barriers and addressing negative perceptions of sports participation.

Conclusion

Get Active Belfast will form part of a wider approach to addressing inequalities and improving health and wellbeing in Belfast. The implementation of this multi-agency approach will form an exemplar project for the Belfast Strategic Partnership, providing local and regional partners with an opportunity to engage with and support our efforts to increase physical activity levels.

The seven pledges outlined within Get Active Belfast, demonstrate the collective commitment to strengthening and aligning our efforts and resources, to increase physical activity levels and contribute to addressing health inequalities, by adding both quality of years to life and years of life, for the people of Belfast.

Physical activity has the potential to address inequalities and improve health and wellbeing, in part, due to its health protective characteristics. Supporting those most at risk of developing chronic disease or experiencing poor mental health, to be more active throughout their lives, could help to offset the gradient in chronic ill health. Physical activity also provides wider benefits to society including reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, improving social connections and community cohesion and supporting a productive and healthy workforce.

Realising the ambition of Get Active Belfast will require the continued commitment of all partners. The challenges to increasing physical activity levels within the city are too significant for a single organisation to overcome. It will only be through taking collaborative action that we will achieve our ambition of addressing inequalities and making life better for everyone in Belfast.

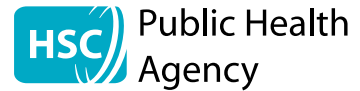


Supporting the seven pledges

We the undersigned agree to work together to support the seven pledges of Get Active Belfast



Belfast
City Council



I _____
support the seven pledges of
Get Active Belfast.

I _____
support the seven pledges of
Get Active Belfast.

I _____
support the seven pledges of
Get Active Belfast.



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

I _____
support the seven pledges of
Get Active Belfast.





Focusing on Life Inequalities



For further information on this document or any of the work of Active Belfast, please contact:

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Or visit: www.makinglifebettertogether.com



**Making life better,
together**

Belfast Strategic Partnership