



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Healthier Families Progress Report
Date:	13 October 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Andrew Steenson, Health and Fitness Officer

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The link between leading a sedentary lifestyle and increased risk of ill health and disease has long been established. It is widely recognised that sedentary lifestyles increase all causes of mortality, double the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and obesity, and increase the risks of colon cancer, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, lipid disorders, depression and anxiety.</p> <p>According to World Health Organisation (WHO), 60 to 85% of the population lead sedentary lifestyles, making it one of the more serious public health problems of our time. It is estimated that nearly two-thirds of children are also insufficiently active, with serious implications for their future health.</p> <p>Parks and Leisure Department have been working with partners for a number of years to develop and deliver a range of activity programmes which promote an active lifestyle and bring about sustained behaviour change at an individual level. These programmes include Healthwise, Cardiac Rehab Phase 4 and FRESH.</p> <p>With support from the Health and Wellbeing Inter-departmental Group, the department developed a family based intervention programme, Healthier Families, designed to promote and sustain healthy lifestyle habits for both parents and children.</p> <p>Healthier Families was based on guidelines and recommendations of the UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) which concluded that programmes incorporating behavioural treatment alongside physical activity and diet were effective as a health intervention tool, particularly if parents were given the responsibility for behaviour change.</p>

	<p>This is supported by primary research which shows that 'family based behavioural treatment (FBBT) targeted at parents and child together is more effective in developing long term healthy lifestyles than targeting child or parents alone.</p> <p>Given the limited locally based academic research on the area of family interventions tackling sedentary lifestyles, the University of Ulster Jordanstown (UUJ) were contracted to carry out an independent evaluation on the Healthier Families programme. The full report is included in appendix 1.</p>
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2.	Key Issues
	<p>The Healthier Families programme has shown some success in developing and maintaining health related behaviour change over a prolonged period of time (12 months). As a result of the programme the physical activity levels for adults involved has increased and the dietary habits and self esteem for both adults and children has improved. There has also been an improvement in the general health of those participating in the programme, with a decrease in systolic blood pressure and weight in adults, and a continued healthy weight gain in children.</p> <p>Through the continued delivery of Healthier Families and learning from the independent evaluation and experiences of the participating families, the department is provided with the opportunity to share learning with partners while adding to the content of Healthier Families, to develop methods of delivering the programme to a wider audience. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of a healthy lifestyle through educational resources, including input from a range of internal partners within the Development and Health and Environmental Services Departments and external partners including the Public Health Agency (PHA) and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT). This would include providing information on the importance of a healthy lifestyle, how and where to be active, help with planning and food shopping and preparing meals. • Delivery of a yearly co-ordinated citywide family based activity programme, which provides opportunities for families to be active in a wide range of settings including leisure centres, parks and open spaces, community centres and partner owned facilities. Beyond increasing opportunities to participate and be active, this programme will assist in the development of social support and family networks. • Embed ownership and create sustainability for the programme through the development of volunteers to work as mentors and provide support, motivation and inspiration to other families. <p>Research from this programme has also highlighted the need for further work with families experiencing greater health related risk factors and reporting lower self esteem. We will continue to work with partners to develop similar research based programmes and explore potential funding sources for this work.</p>

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> Provision for the development of this programme will come from current revenue budgets.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> None.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None.</p>
4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None.
5.	Recommendations
	It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report.
6.	Decision Tracking
	N/A.
7.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>WHO: World Health Organisation FRESH: Food Relaxation Exercise Self-Esteem Health NICE: National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence FBBT: Family based behavioural treatment UUJ: University of Ulster Jordanstown PHA: Public Health Agency BHSCT: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust</p>
8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Monitoring and evaluation of Belfast City Council Healthier Families Programme