

Health inequalities project locations announced

Health Minister Mike Nesbitt today announced the first locations for Live Better, a new initiative on addressing health inequalities.

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The initial phase of the programme will involve neighbourhoods in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, with the intention of expanding the approach, should it prove effective, across multiple urban and rural communities.

Describing this new approach, the Minister stated: **“I have been clear from the outset that I want to make a real and lasting difference to the health and**

wellbeing of the people of Northern Ireland, and in particular to reduce the unfair differences in health outcomes that are experienced by some of our most vulnerable individuals and communities.

“If we consider two babies born today in the same hospital in Northern Ireland, how can it be fair that one can expect to live some ten fewer years in good health, just because of the area in which they grow up? I think we can all agree this has to change.

“That is why health inequalities are one of my key areas of focus and, to further deliver on this commitment, my Department and the Public Health Agency have been developing the Live Better approach. Following a process led by the Public Health Agency to identify the areas in which to initially evaluate this approach, I am pleased to announce that Live Better will be delivered in the Fountain, Bogside, Brandywell and Creggan areas in Derry/Londonderry and the Lower Shankill, Lower Falls and Grosvenor Road areas in Belfast. Local delivery plans are now being developed and I hope that work will begin on the ground in the near future.”

Live Better will build on the good work developed by the Public Health Agency and the Health and Social Care system over the years and will seek to pull existing initiatives and programmes together so that they can be delivered intensively in communities to make a real and lasting difference. It will also provide targeted information and initiatives directly to specific communities, as well as signposting to existing areas of support.

Aidan Dawson, Chief Executive of the Public Health Agency (PHA), said: “The Live Better initiative complements and contributes to the ongoing work by the PHA to improve health and wellbeing and tackle health inequalities.”

“It will provide an opportunity for organisations to come together to collaborate, share information and generate ideas through a community-centred approach to support people who are impacted the most by health inequalities.”

In the initial demonstration areas, activities will focus on three core outcomes – Starting Well, Living Well, and Ageing Well. Primary Care and other data will be used to choose the outcomes we are seeking to improve within these core themes – for example, if levels of immunisation among children are low in the area, then this will be a key focus under Starting Well or if a condition such as diabetes has key disparities, then under Living Well there would be a focus on diabetes prevention, supporting people to be active, improve their diet and manage their weight. Active local engagement is now

underway with local communities, GPs, multi-disciplinary teams, and Health and Social Care Trusts to decide on the priorities and more detail will be provided in the very near future.

Live Better is also being considered in terms of its alignment with other developments, such as the Integrated Care System NI and the roll out of multi-disciplinary teams, and with other Departments in the longer term to embed and mainstream this approach.

The Minister added: **“Addressing health inequalities will take a long term, cross-sectoral approach, however I hope that Live Better will be a crucial step on that journey and will begin to improve health outcomes in these areas. I would also like to stress that, although the two initial sites are urban areas, Live Better may apply to both rural and urban areas in the future. From a practical perspective, however, it makes sense to begin with smaller, defined urban areas.**

“My Department will also be working up plans on a wider approach to addressing health inequalities and I plan to further engage with my Executive colleagues on this issue, given its prominence in the Draft Programme for Government.”

[Access Live Better brand guidelines and logos if you are involved in the initiative.](#)

Further information

Photo captions:

1. L-R Aidan Dawson, Chief Executive of the Public Health Agency, Mike Nesbitt, Health Minister

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