

## OVERVIEW OF HEARTY LIVES CARRICKFERGUS

Heart disease unfairly affects certain populations within the UK, particularly those living in areas of high socio-economic deprivation and certain geographical regions. The British Heart Foundation's (BHF) Hearty Lives programme aimed to reduce the high levels of cardiovascular disease in these communities, to improve the uptake of statutory and community health services, and to boost the heart health capacity of local organisations.

BHF Northern Ireland invested over £230,000 in Hearty Lives Carrickfergus, which in turn reached out to Carrickfergus, Whitehead and Greenisland communities over the last three years. This investment, with additional funding from the Public Health Agency (PHA), has supported the development of new and effective ways of working to highlight the impact of obesity for women and their families.

Working in partnership with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT), Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC) and the Public Health Agency, Hearty Lives Carrickfergus has:

- Developed programmes to tackle obesity in young women.
- Helped women to achieve and maintain a healthy weight before, during and after pregnancy.
- Coordinated and developed programmes and resources for families with young children to prevent obesity and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

To date over 6200 local people have benefitted directly and indirectly from the work of Hearty Lives Carrickfergus. The project has consulted with and listened to the needs of local families and aimed to 'fill in some of the gaps' in service provision. As a result, many innovative interventions have been developed by the project team consisting of a Project Co-Ordinator, two Hearty Lives Dietitians, a Hearty Lives Midwife and Project Support Officer.

Examples include;

- Tele-monitoring for pregnant women with a BMI between 30-39.9kg/m<sup>2</sup>
- Weaning and Portion Size booklets published for parents and carers of young children 0-4 years
- Buggy Workout developed and delivered with pregnant mothers and mothers with babies and toddlers
- Community Pharmacy and Family Planning pilots to engage with women prior to conception
- 12 week 'Small Steps' Healthy Choices programme

In addition an Early Years Healthy Start Toolkit has been developed and the first pilot has taken place with Parent and Toddler Groups. The Toolkit addresses issues to support future heart health; addressing the following topics:

- Feeding
- Physical activity and screen time
- Dental care
- Sleep hygiene
- Emotional wellbeing and building a relationship with your baby/child
- Minding mum
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Hearty Lives Carrickfergus has shown that a partnership approach based on community development principles and values delivers a social model of care that works. By co-locating health professionals within a local government setting Hearty Lives Carrickfergus has become embedded within front-line Council services, utilising the knowledge and skills of staff from across Parks, Leisure, and Environmental Health functions. This approach has enabled the project to meet the health and wellbeing needs of some of the most vulnerable communities.

The Hearty Lives Carrickfergus Project model resonates with the six main recommendations recently published by the World Health Organisation (WHO) by the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity<sup>1</sup>



The Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity (ECHO) final report was the culmination of a two-year process to address the alarming levels of childhood obesity and overweight globally. The ECHO report proposes a range of recommendations for governments aimed at reversing the rising trend of children aged under 5 years becoming overweight and obese.

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<sup>1</sup> WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity Report 2016, <http://www.who.int/end-childhood-obesity/final-report/en/>