



Lisburn & Castlereagh  
**Strategic Community  
Planning Partnership**



# STATEMENT OF PROGRESS

FULL REPORT 2023

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# Foreword by Jim O'Hagan,

Chief Executive of Libraries NI, Chair of the Strategic Community Planning Partnership

Welcome to the third Lisburn & Castlereagh Community Planning Partnership Statement of Progress.

There have been many changes over the past two years since the last Statement of Progress was published (in November 2021). While we have returned to some sense of normality after COVID-19, global events including the war in Ukraine, a cost of living crisis and constrained public finances have all presented new and real challenges. Different organisations working more closely together across many spheres within the partnership have created real synergies and co-operation.

It is the successes of partnership working, relationship building, increased collaboration and the kindness I have witnessed that I would like to focus on. This Statement of Progress documents some of the challenges we have faced but most importantly it highlights how we have worked together to ensure we continue to improve the wellbeing of our citizens through challenging times.

Over the last two years our Partnership has worked closely on successful projects such as the Annahilt Village Plan while the PEACEPLUS funding will create future opportunities.

I would like to acknowledge and pass on my thanks to Aidan Jennings, the past Chair for all the work he had previously carried out leading the Partnership. Aidan's support has been invaluable to me in ensuring a smooth transition and the continuity of the delivery of the Community Plan since I took over as Chair in June 2022.

I would also like to thank all of our partners for their whole-hearted commitment and contribution to the Lisburn and Castlereagh community planning process over the last two years.

This Statement of Progress will provide you with an insight into much of the good work that is ongoing and I hope you enjoy reading about the progress that is being made through the Community Planning Partnership.

# Introduction

This is the third Statement of Progress which reviews the impact of the actions delivered by the Lisburn Castlereagh Community Planning Partnership over the previous two years. In addition the Statement of Progress will celebrate the difference that has been made to the lives of our citizens through the collective action of our partners.

### Joining the Council our partners are:

- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
- Education Authority NI
- Invest NI
- Libraries NI
- NI Fire and Rescue Service
- NI Housing Executive
- Tourism NI
- Police Service of NI
- Public Health Agency
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
- Sport Northern Ireland

### In Lisburn and Castlereagh they are joined by a number of support partners including:

- Department for Communities
- Department of Education
- Department for Infrastructure
- South Eastern Regional College
- Translink
- Volunteer Now

Over the last two years the Partnership has adapted the delivery of its services against the backdrop of lockdown, post-pandemic recovery and the cost of living crisis. It is recognised there is still a great deal to achieve and is aware of the challenges that lie ahead.







## The Action Plan

The current Action Plan 2019 – 2024, which details some of the ways the outcomes in the Community Plan will be achieved, is being reviewed and will take account of the growing societal and personal challenges affecting mental health and wellbeing, poverty and climate change amongst others. The link to the current Action Plan can be found here.  
[www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/files/Community\\_Action\\_Plan\\_-\\_OPT.pdf](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/files/Community_Action_Plan_-_OPT.pdf)

This Statement of Progress recognises that there are many other projects being delivered in partnership that will help to achieve the outcomes in the Community Plan but are not the focus of the current Action Plan. Some of these will be reflected in this report.





# Overview of the Lisburn & Castlereagh Community Plan

Lisburn & Castlereagh community planning partners listen to what is important to local people, consider evidence and data, and bring their own expertise to deliver actions which help to achieve our outcomes. The Partnership has agreed a vision and mission for Lisburn and Castlereagh that can be shared by everyone who lives, works and visits the area.

*The vision is:*

***An empowered, prosperous, healthy, safe and inclusive community.***

*The partners have also agreed that the mission for the Partnership is:*

***Working together to deliver better lives for all***

The following section focusses on some of the projects and programmes which have been delivered over the last two years, laid out under our five themes.

## The 5 Themes are:



**Theme 1:  
Children  
and Young  
People**

Our children and young people have the best start in life



**Theme 2:  
The  
Economy**

Everyone benefits from a vibrant economy



**Theme 3:  
Health and  
Wellbeing**

We live healthy, fulfilling and long lives



**Theme 4:  
Where  
We Live**

We live and work in attractive, resilient and environmentally-friendly places



**Theme 5:  
Our  
Community**

We live in empowered, harmonious, safe and welcoming communities

# Theme 1: Children and Young People

**Outcome: Our children and young people have the best start in life**



## Supporting the Outcome:

A hallmark of a good society is the priority it attaches to giving everyone the best start in life. This outcome is about ensuring that all of our children and young people grow up safely and happily; that they receive the support they need to achieve their full potential and where they can express their views and have a say in decisions that affect them.

The Lisburn & Castlereagh Community Planning Partnership takes a whole-community approach in which schools, families, communities and statutory services work together. This plan is for all children and young people in Lisburn and Castlereagh and with a particular focus on those who currently have the most challenging start in life – children growing up in poverty, children with disabilities and children in care.

We know that there is a strong relationship between what happens in the earliest years of life and future experience of health and wellbeing and other life outcomes. Foetal and neonatal health, the quality of parenting, family and community support, early years provision, education and, critically, poverty, are all key factors in determining life chances

## Theme 1 Actions

The actions under Theme 1 are:

### 1a Looked After Children

The outcome for Theme 1 is that our children and young people have the best start in life and the actions were generated to find innovative ways to achieve this outcome. All of the actions involve partnership working and new collaborations keeping children and young people at the heart of everything being done.

Some of the achievements to date are outlined opposite.

### 1a Children Looked After

Action Lead: 

HOPE Education's Transition Academy has developed a collaborative partnership working model that focuses on creating conditions for children who are looked after to achieve their full cognitive potential. H.O.P.E stands for Holistic Outcomes through Positive Experiences for children and young people in care.

The Reading Together and Maths Together programmes delivered for the South Eastern Trust by Queen's University (QUB) student mentors has enriched the lives of so many children. The mentors focus not only on their academic ability but provide social and emotional well-being strategies for our most vulnerable children. 13 children completed the Reading Together Programme in 2022 and another 13 in 2023 while 6 children completed the pilot Maths Together Programme in 2023. QUB held a graduation ceremony for the children in June 2023 to celebrate their success.



Photographs: Queen's University, Belfast graduation ceremony for children who are looked after.





The Tutoring Programme delivered for South Eastern Trust by Kip McGrath Tutoring has given 13 children Maths and English tutoring in 2022 and to 14 children in 2023. This programme is extended over the summer for some children who requested it. All of the children have moved up one or two year groups in English and/or Maths through this programme.

HOPE Education Personal Education Plan Programme has worked in partnership with our colleagues in the Education Authority, social work staff and schools to ensure that children looked after in primary school have a personal education plan in place. To date we have over 80 children in KS1 who now have a Personal Education Plan (PEP).

Staff have supported schools and social workers with the new PEP process ensuring all children looked after, transitioning from P7 to Year 8 in 2022 and 2023, have a robust and meaningful, trauma informed personal education plan. HOPE Education ran a summer scheme for 8 children in July/August 2022. This consisted of a Forest School, Outdoor activities from Connected Adventure, Arts and Crafts, park visits and bowling.

HOPE Works, the post 16 Employment Service developed a supported employment

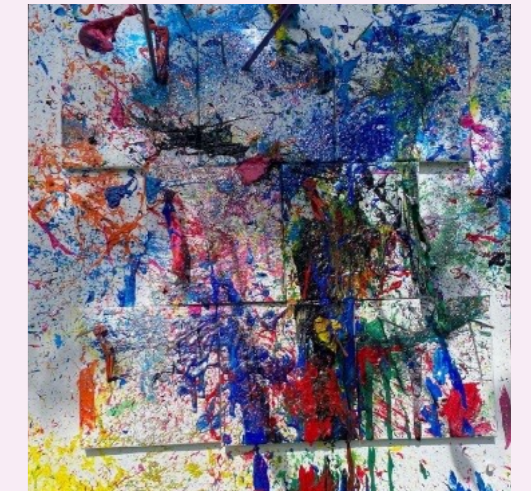
programme funded through the Department for Communities, JobStart, which started in January 2022. We supported nine young people with nine months' paid employment opportunities in various Trust settings. Eight of the young people are still engaged in some form of employment. Two gained permanent employment with South Eastern Trust. The mentor support on the programme from HOPE and the placement department was invaluable.

“Thank you so much Cathal, I don't know if I've ever articulated to you how much your help has meant and how far it's helped me come as a person, setting up interviews by myself while in my 9-5 office job. I would never have thought I'd of seen the day - very much appreciated, would put you up for an award if I could as you've gone over and beyond for me like no one has before thank you so so so much!” (JobStart participant)

HOPE Works developed an intensive pre-employment support for care leavers to increase independence, developing their self-esteem and confidence.

This one-to-one support model focuses on the development of key skills to progress into and sustain positive education, training and employment outcomes. Some of the key developments over the last two years include:

- there has been an overall increase in the annual average of care leavers in education, training and employment in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust from 80% in 2019/20 to 82% in 2022/23
- over 100 Personal Education Plans completed for Primary School Children who are in care
- 26 Children completed Reading Together
- 6 Children completed Maths Together
- 27 Children completed Tuition in Maths and English
- 8 Children took part in our Summer Scheme 2022
- 10 Children were supported through a Personal Education Review in Post Primary school
- 9 month employment opportunities in the Trust
- 3 Apprentices who all gained full time permanent employment
- 36 Young People Supported through Job Coaching and Mentoring
- 27 Young People took part in Give and Take Scheme with Include Youth
- 16 Young People completed Essential Skills qualifications through Give and Take.



Children looked after enjoying the Summer Scheme in 2022.





## Theme 1b: Youth Council

Action Lead:  Education Authority

### 1b Youth Council

The development of a Youth Council for the Lisburn and Castlereagh area demonstrates our young people are part of the community planning process and that their voices are heard at a strategic level. Children and young people have traditionally had a restricted voice and little influence over service delivery (in 2018, only 2% of young people in the Northern Ireland Young Life and Times survey felt they had influence over local decisions).

The Lisburn & Castlereagh Youth Council however has provided a formal process for children and young people to have their say on issues affecting their lives. This model of partnership working has been now in

existence for six years. It has been held up as a model of good practice across NI resulting in similar youth council models being delivered within most council areas.

During the past two years as we have worked through and out of COVID-19 the delivery of Youth Council has changed and developed to fit with the needs of the young people within the group. The previous cohort of young people were recruited during the height of the pandemic with the programme delivery reflecting the restrictions at the time. Whilst the programme has developed, the issues facing young people have been consistent throughout and this has been reflected through the issues raised by Youth Council.

An LCYC member commented: "Sometimes it is hard to see how our voice can be heard as young people, through Youth Council I know that I have the opportunity to speak with the people who can make changes in my life."

- completed a graffiti project in Bow Street Mall focusing on Mental Health
- consulted with various Government departments on issues that impact young people e.g. Department of Education and Department of Justice
- planned and facilitated local Regional Advisory Group / Local Advisory Group Stakeholder event
- consulted with PSNI on the Local Policing Plan
- designed and developed resources to address key issues impacting young people in the borough e.g. Jobs & Employability and Relationships
- represented young people on several panels including the Small Grants Assessment Panels and TBUC Ambassadors
- completed an Exchange Programme with Lewisham Youth Council
- completed a training residential in committee roles and responsibilities. Office bearers were then elected
- attended regular meetings with the Mayor and Elected Representatives to learn more about political life and discuss and progress youth issues
- carried out Youth Council led consultations directly with young people
- engaged with the EA Youth Service and provided feedback on key youth issues
- attended meetings with PSNI and PCSP to deliver presentations on the work of the Youth Council and to discuss key youth issues
- undertook a range of accredited and non-accredited training e.g. Good Relations, OCN Planning and Hosting an Event, presentation skills training, consultation skills training, Millennium Volunteer Awards etc.
- supported LCCC with the promotion of key COVID-19 messages by producing videos aimed at young people
- helped with tree planting across the city.





## Theme 1c: Early Intervention – Help Kids Talk

Action Lead: 

### 1c Early Years

Help Kids Talk is an award-winning project and a priority for the Early Intervention Lisburn Partnership, a locality planning group led by The Resurgam Trust since 2012. It comprises of community, voluntary, statutory, and private partners who collectively plan to improve outcomes for children and young people up to 18 years old.

#### Help Kids Talk was initiated following:

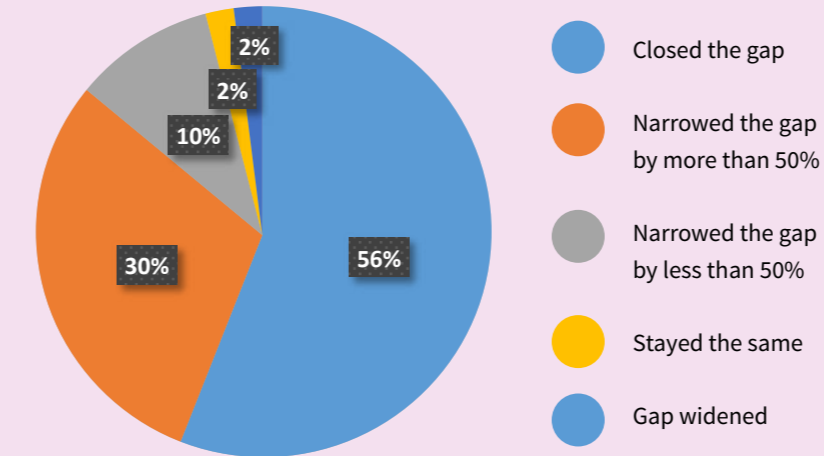
1. The extensive research report ‘the Best for Every Child’, 2012 which highlighted that 74% of young people were leaving the post primary sector in that year (excluding Wallace and Friends) without 5+ GCSEs (including English and Maths).
2. A prevalence study in 2013 carried out by Early Intervention Lisburn in partnership with the SEHSCT, which showed 32% of children entering primary one in nine schools in Lisburn had a mild to severe speech, language, and communication problem, of which 74% were boys from disadvantaged areas.

It is a priority for Help Kids Talk to tackle this issue and prevent a generational cycle of poor attainment for children and young people in Lisburn and Castlereagh.

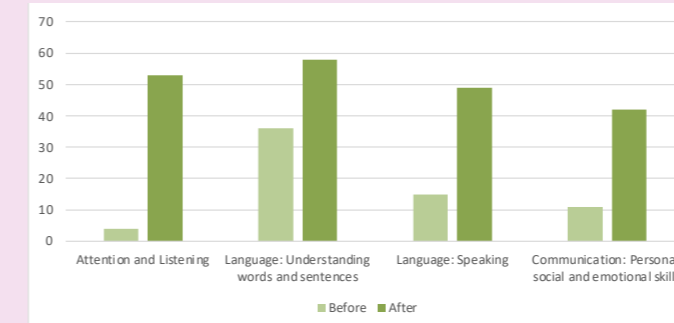
Help Kids Talk is led jointly by the Resurgam Trust, Barnardo’s and the SEHSCT speech and language team and is based on the successful ‘Stoke Speaks Out’ model of delivery. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council has funded the project since 2019.

The project aims to give every child the best start in life by prioritising speech, language, and communication development. There are connections with parents/carers through 64 partners (early years’ settings, playgroups, nurseries, and primary schools), social media, training, monthly newsletter and a parent representation group. Our monthly newsletter is distributed to over 1,000 individuals including our partner organisations.

#### Early Talk Boost: %Children Narrowing the Gap towards Expected Levels



#### % of Children at Expected levels Before and After Intervention



#### Outcomes achieved are:

- **389** children received targeted support for their speech, language, and communication development between November 2021 and June 2023 (771 children completed programmes since 2015). These targeted programmes supported children to close or narrow the language gap between themselves and their peers (see graphs)

Parent feedback following targeted programmes:

- “I see a big difference in his vocabulary asking for things at home”
- “My child’s speech has come on great, they did Early Talkboost in Barbour Nursery and Talkboost in P2 and I can see the difference”

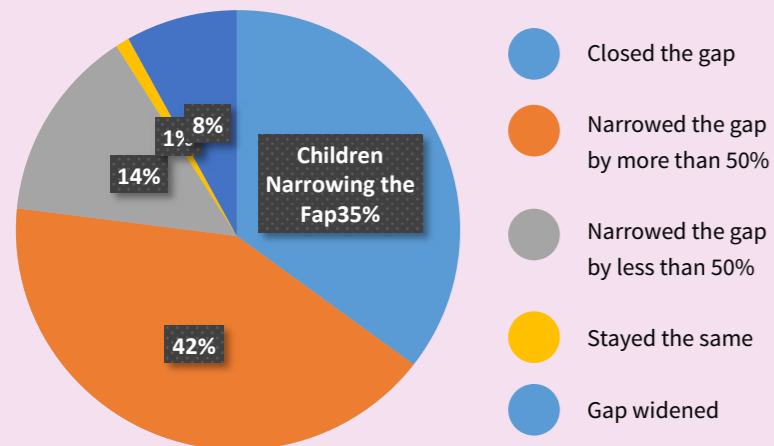
#### Between November 2021 and June 2023

- **635** individuals (75% practitioners, 25% parents/family) completed Basic Awareness training on Early Talkboost. A pre-score highlighted 45% participants rated themselves as mostly confident/ confident supporting speech, language, and communication and post-score rising to 79% based on a 62% response rate (1,360 individuals in total have completed Basic Awareness since 2019).

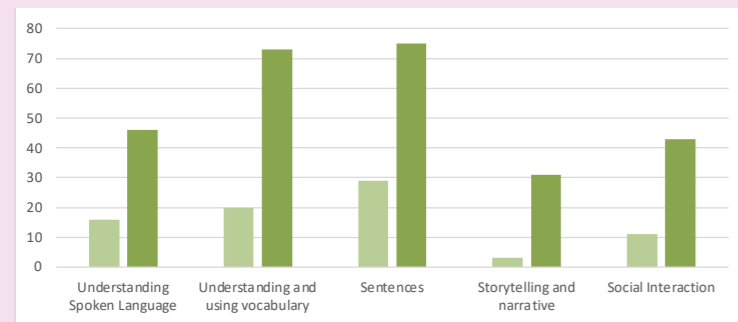
#### Feedback from these participants:

- “I always thought to improve my child’s speech I had to have elaborate activities but now I know I can use any situation or simple moments to help my child”
- “I really liked the key messages & felt they were easy to remember. I have learned so much”

### Talk Boost KS1: % Children Narrowing the Gap towards Expected Levels



### % Children working at Expected Levels Before and After Intervention



- **270** individuals (78% practitioners, 22% parents/family) completed Level 1 training on Talkboost. A pre-score highlighted 56% participants rated themselves as having good/very good understanding of speech, language and communication milestones and post-score rising to 97% (based on a 66% response rate).

#### Feedback from Level 1 participants:

- “Excellent training. Well-presented and presenter very approachable and engaging. Very good summary of key SLC issues. Would recommend to others”
- “Very informative on what is normal development and strategies to improve”
- **over 4,300** followers across Help Kids Talk social media platforms (**37% increase** since November 2021)
- **94% respondents** to community wide survey\* reported Help Kids Talk initiative had been extremely helpful/helpful.

Reasons cited included: support and partnership working, provision of resources, training, monthly messages, targeted interventions and the provision of practical tips and strategies (\*Based on 143 responses)

- A Help Kids Talk case study was published by Royal Society for Public Health as an example of best practice and innovation for reducing health inequalities (Help Kids Talk case study)

#### Recent research across the UK since lockdown has highlighted the following:

- there is growing evidence that lockdowns during the pandemic have had a negative impact on children’s speech, language and communication skills (BBC report, July 2021)
- **89%** of early years’ settings are reporting an increase or significant increase in the number of children with communication needs or the complexity of children with communication needs within their setting (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Early Years Scotland, May 2022)
- **1.7 million** children in the UK are behind in talking and understanding words. Without the right support, these children will face challenges across all areas of their life including: learning to read and write, making and maintaining friendships, staying in good mental health and in the future getting and holding down jobs and staying out of trouble (Speech and Language UK, October 2022)
- a rapid response report from academics in Northern Ireland following education cuts has emphasised the vital importance of a suite of funding for early intervention and sustained support to address educational disadvantage (The Consequences of the Cuts to Education for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland report, June 2023).



Help Kids Talk parent training session at Lisburn City Library (Sarah Ratcliffe HKT co-ordinator, Michael Fry Libraries NI).



Give your dummy to the Easter Bunny event at Bow Street Mall - lots of conversations with families about reducing dummy use and encouraging children’s communication skills.



## Theme 2: The Economy

**Outcome: Everyone benefits from a vibrant economy**



### Supporting the outcome:

*We want to develop the economy of Lisburn & Castlereagh so it:*

- offers work to everyone
- provides access to goods and services we value
- shares economic benefits in ways that reduce inequality
- has a positive impact on our environment.

A skilled workforce is central to the health of the economy as businesses increasingly need well qualified people. For employees, the acquisition of new skills can open up new opportunities.

We also need to improve both our physical and digital infrastructure and to make the council area an attractive one for new businesses to locate in and for existing businesses to grow. Maze Long Kesh, for example, offers exciting new opportunities.

*Other opportunities include:*

- growth in international visitors based on the development of Hillsborough Castle and Gardens
- tourism numbers based on our wealth of historic assets
- promoting sustainability through an economy designed to eliminate waste from manufacturing by recovering and reusing materials to make new products i.e a circular economy.

Furthermore, there are significant opportunities relating to the current Belfast Region City Deal multi-million pound 'Destination Royal Hillsborough' tourism capital project. It aims to re-develop Hillsborough as an internationally appealing heritage village experience.



Lisburn based manufacturer CASC invested £1.7 million in its business growth through the creation of 26 jobs and the skills development of its team during 2022. These jobs contribute over £800,000 in additional annual salaries for the local economy.

*Pictured (L-R) are Grainne McVeigh, Director of Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering, Invest NI; Karl Crockard, Managing Director, CASC; Mark Bleakney, Southern Regional Manager, Invest NI.*

## 2a Business Development

Action Leads:



Since November 2021, the council's Economic Development Unit has continued to provide a range of Business Support initiatives to ensure ongoing support and advice to LCCC businesses. The council has continued to deliver the Business Start-Up programme, commonly known as 'Go for It' through a contract with Enterprise NI and local enterprise agencies. Since November 2021, the programme reported that 279 new businesses' plans were completed and 167 jobs created.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes were the key development programmes delivered by the Economic Development team during this period. These programmes included Mentor Growth, Digi Growth, Sales and Trade, Digital Surge and Bid 2 Win - a varied suite of programmes that provides support to all LCCC businesses. The programmes were very successful with over 1,000 businesses receiving support. 450 businesses on Mentor Growth; 202 on Sales & Trade, 340 businesses on Digi-Growth and further numbers spread over Bid 2 Win and Digital Surge.

The council has also delivered a number of networking events throughout this period, the Digi Growth – Digital Summit and a series of entrepreneur networking events to discuss topics such as influencer marketing and creating a successful mind-set. A very successful series of events attracted over 500 participants throughout the series.

## 2b Social Economy

Action Lead:



LCCC undertook several actions to support social enterprises over the last year including taking on a corporate membership of Social Enterprise NI.

Funding was also offered to support the sector through the Mayor's Innovation Fund Award for Social Enterprise in February 2022. An award of £5,000 was given to Yalla CIC in Lisburn to develop their training programme throughout LCCC. Yalla plans to train refugees, asylum seekers and migrants living in the LCCC district, in the areas of English, communication skills, food hygiene, cooking and presentation skills.

# Theme 3: Health and Wellbeing



**Outcome: We live healthy, fulfilling and long lives**

## Supporting the Outcome:

Healthy, fulfilling and long lives depend much more on the capacity individuals have to live well than on a healthcare system that, no matter how good it is, can only help once things have gone wrong.

Excellent healthcare is important for this community plan but our focus is on:

- empowering people to lead healthy lives
- preventing physical and mental illness
- helping people to cope with disability
- intervening in those crucial early years
- helping people to age actively.

We have an ageing population and one of the most effective means of improving quality of life for older people is to encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles in middle age.

The plan will promote healthy lifestyles for everyone through improved diets, a clean and green environment and opportunities to participate in society through, for example, volunteering, arts, culture and sport.

One of the greatest injustices of our society is that the poorer you are, the worse your health and the shorter your life. A priority for this plan will be tackling health inequalities.

## 3a Be Active Lisburn Castlereagh

Action Lead:



## Macmillan Move More

LCCC has been working in partnership with Macmillan and the South Eastern Trust to provide a 12 week Physical Activity programme supporting people living with cancer to become more active. There were 141 people referred onto this programme in the past year. and Participants found it improved both their physical and mental health as well as meeting people who had been through the same experience.

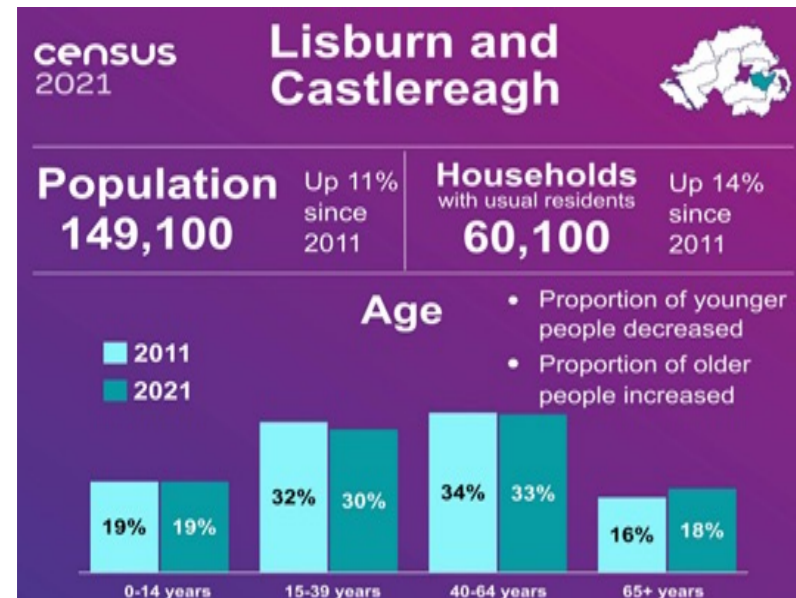


## Cardiac Rehabilitation

The Sports Development Unit at LCCC has also worked with the South Eastern Trust on the Cardiac Rehabilitation programme.

Personal trainers provide a 12 week programme for people with known coronary heart disease which includes support and a range of activities to aid recovery.

### Our council area



## Mary Peters Running Festival

The Mary Peters Running Festival took place in October 2022 at the Eikon Centre outside Royal Hillsborough. This was to mark the 50th anniversary of Mary Peters winning a gold medal in the Olympics in 1972.

The Sports Development team at LCCC worked in partnership with the Mary Peters Trust and sponsor Forestside Shopping Centre. All fitness levels were catered for with routes to run a 5k, 10k, half Marathon, full marathon and a 20 mile route. It was the first time a full Marathon took place in the council area and was a very successful event.

## 3b Age Friendly

Action Lead:  Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Lisburn and Castlereagh has an ageing population. According to the latest 2021 Census the age demographic with the largest increase is in the 65+ age range. The 65+ age band now represents 18% of the total population for Lisburn & Castlereagh, which is 26,214 individuals

The Public Health Agency funds the council's Age Friendly programme which aims to provide a varied range of activities to support and engage with our older residents.

Positive Ageing Month is celebrated in the month of October, and is a campaign of events, activities and programmes to promote positive ageing as well as celebrating the contribution older people make to their communities. 38 events were held in October 2023 for Positive Ageing Month.

Over 100 people attended the Active Ageing Morning in Lisburn LeisurePlex to experience taster sessions in a number of activities such as Zumba, armchair aerobics, pickleball and circuits. A number of statutory partners were in attendance to provide information on healthy and active lifestyles, including Good Morning Call, community dieticians, Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP), Alzheimer's Society, Macmillan Move More, C-SAW and Caring Communities Safe & Well.

Before the event 60% stated their confidence to engage in physical activity was good/very good and after the event this rose to 87%.

Three Winter Warmer Road Shows provided information around staying warm and well during winter. Participants were able to learn about staying warm, preventing burst pipes, keeping active and a range of services delivered by different agencies.

Before the Winter Warmer Roadshow 64% felt that their knowledge around available services and information was poor/very poor. Following the Winter Warmer Roadshow 98% of attendees felt their knowledge around available services and information was good/very good.





Participants at the Winter Warmer event in Maghaberry Community Hall taking part in active ageing.

To help support the Age Friendly process and to ensure the Age Friendly ethos 'nothing about us without us', an Over 50s Forum was established in June 2023. The aim of the Over 50s Forum is to provide a mechanism to engage, consult and listen to the concerns of older people.



Attendees at an Age Friendly Over 50s Forum Information session in June 2023 along with Age Friendly Co-ordinator.

### 3c Good Mental Health

Action Leads:  Public Health Agency  South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

The Public Health Agency (PHA) currently commissions over 20 mainly community and voluntary initiatives and services in the LCCC area. South Eastern Trust & Belfast Trust directories of services, list support to help improve mental health and emotional wellbeing. Many of these mental and emotional wellbeing services can be accessed regardless of address by individuals seeking support. The cards include local mental and emotional wellbeing services based in Lisburn and Castlereagh.

These support services are additional to prevention and early intervention services across numerous thematic areas including Community Development, Alcohol and Drugs, Physical Activity etc. They all contribute to promoting the health and wellbeing and positive mental health of both young and old across the council area.

#### Walking for Health

The Walking for Health programme was initiated in 2001 to encourage good physical and mental health. It is delivered through HSC Trusts across Northern Ireland and supported by the Public Health Agency.

Walking for Health encourages adults to minimise the amount of time they spend sedentary each week. It encourages them to engage in walks to accumulate the recommended 2.5 hours of physical activity each week.

#### A volunteer Walk Leader from the Trust's Walking for Health programme explained:

“Walking is free and a great social activity, you can meet interesting people from a variety of backgrounds and enjoy improving your fitness at a gentle pace.” During Men's Health Week (12 – 18 June 2023) the Trust particularly promoted the importance of men being physically active.

“It's great to see so many men within the walking groups, often we can be guilty of not really focusing on our health and wellbeing so walking is a great option for many, especially those in this area who previously worked the land as a farmer, but have retired from their daily farming life. Walking keeps them connected to the area that they propagated for so many years and has provided them with an opportunity to meet others in the same situation, which in turn has created friendships and connections outside of the walking groups.”

“I would encourage everyone to give walking a try, it's such a wonderful way to exercise and it helps you to de-stress, especially after a busy day. It has great health benefits and is something that a majority of people are able to take part in, give it a go, you have nothing to lose but a lot to gain.”

#### Take 5

87 people completed the Take 5 Ambassador training in 2022-2023 and an ambassador network has been established to support them. The Trust coordinates and delivers PHA commissioned training and awareness programmes and sessions such as Safe Talk, ASIST and Understanding Self Harm. In partnership with the PHA, community and voluntary organisations across Lisburn and Castlereagh have delivered regional campaigns to raise awareness on Men's Health, Mental Health & Suicide Prevention. Working in partnership Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, PHA and South Eastern and Belfast Trusts are arranging a workshop for autumn 2023 to agree priorities and develop an action to support and encourage good mental health.

## Theme 4: Where We Live

**Outcome: We live and work in attractive, resilient and environmentally-friendly places**

#### Supporting the Outcome:

The physical world that surrounds us is a vital component of our wellbeing. Many places are clearly disadvantaged and would benefit from regeneration. Other more prosperous areas may lack a focus for community life as people retreat behind gates and high hedges. Libraries, workplaces, shops, places for leisure, transport, the built heritage and wild and green spaces all make vital contributions to creating better places to live.

Good housing is fundamental and this plan envisages a supply of suitable housing to meet a range of needs with diversity of tenure, appropriate size, accessibility and energy efficiency. This outcome is about ensuring all these elements come together in a way that helps build strong and resilient communities.

Our environment is vital to our wellbeing but we must all take responsibility for both the local and global environment. The plan will help tackle a wide range of issues from local biodiversity to climate change.



The Local Development Plan is an important means of realising the vision and achieving the outcomes of this physical dimension of the Community Plan.

#### 4a Housing

Action Lead:



As the population of Lisburn Castlereagh increases, the need for appropriate housing will change; which will be addressed in the housing policies in the emerging Local Development Plan. Growth is concentrated in the 0-15 age range and working age profiles.



Though it is noted that the population change for those aged 65+ increased by 24% between 2011 and 2021, with this growth trend likely to continue (an estimated increase of 32.9% of those aged over 65 in the years to 2029). So whilst the need for small family accommodation remains strong, there will be an increased requirement to design and construct suitable accommodation for older persons. 66 CAT1 (active elderly accommodation) units were completed in 2021-2023.

Housing need has remained at a consistently high level in Lisburn and Castlereagh with a focus in urban settlements. The future housing mix in new build developments will need to cater for singles, small families and older persons. There is an increasing need for two and three bedroom wheelchair units that remain flexible to meet the needs of a wider range of applicants. Numbers in housing stress have remained high in the area (1,817 in March 2023) and the number of allocations remain inadequate to meet demand.

Over the time period 2021-2023 there were 293 social dwellings started in the LCCC area, with 223 completions.

House prices, land availability and lower rates of development may make finding affordable accommodation in rural areas more problematic. NIHE continues to work with rural communities to identify hidden or 'latent' housing need through rural housing needs tests. Recent Site Identification Studies focussed on the settlements of Annahilt and Drumbo to complement the Village Plan programme.

The NIHE Lisburn & Castlereagh Area Office will continue to invest significantly in its current stock. The recent global pandemic and also Brexit

has brought about a number of challenges particularly in relation to the supply and cost of materials. However it is envisaged in excess of 20,000 jobs will be completed during 2022-2023 within a response maintenance budget of £4.35 million for the year.

***Despite various challenges and constraints the following planned schemes have been programmed for completion 2022/2023:***

- Scheme Type Units Bathroom / Kitchen / Rewire - 443 units
- Bathroom only – 311 units
- External Cyclical Maintenance – 1239 units
- Double Glazing – 1,413 units
- Heating – 380 units

Further enhancements to the area will be made through the Grounds Maintenance programme which invested over £277,000 last year in Lisburn & Castlereagh.

NIHE continues to promote community support funding within the area. To date in this financial year they have provided close to £18,500 of funding through community cohesion.

It has once again provided £6,000 to Lisburn SAFE through community safety and the organisation has committed to providing almost £17,000 funding to a number of groups in support of community based activities.

### ***Case study 1: Coolmoyne, Rathmoyne Tower***

## **Block redevelopment**

The Housing Executive engages with local communities and others to tackle issues that make a real difference to everyone's quality of life including the physical and social regeneration of local neighbourhoods.

In this case study NIHE was keen to involve architecture students in a future housing design ideas competition. The aim was to create a social housing scheme that could potentially be built on the site of two tower blocks in Seymour Hill, Dunmurry – Coolmoyne House and Rathmoyne House, once they are demolished.

In collaboration with both Queen's University of Belfast and Ulster University, students worked to develop design concepts across the last academic year. They were asked to envisage what the social housing of tomorrow might look like and consider factors such as energy efficiency and carbon neutral homes, and homes that could easily be altered to accommodate tenant's changing needs and lifestyles.

As part of this project the NIHE hosted a public exhibition to showcase student design ideas. The event took place in June 2023 and was very well supported by members of the local community and a number of local MLAs and LCCC councillors. The exhibition gave the local community and elected representatives an opportunity to visualise, comment on, and participate in the future housing ideas competition by voting for their preferred student design idea in the category 'Community Choice Award'.

The NIHE subsequently received very positive feedback from the Seymour

### ***Hill and Conway Residents Association, including the following comments:***

'Thank you for inviting us and letting us engage in the process, there was some great designs from the students, it give us a great insight into what could be achieved when the flats are demolished.'

'We look forward to seeing the winning showcase and we would be delighted to work with yourselves in any future developments.'



***Students showing their designs for a new social housing scheme in Dunmurry***

### ***Case Study 2:***

## **Mountview**

Following the successful delivery of 36 homes in the Phase 1 Development at Mountview in Lisburn, Clanmil Housing were nominated and supported to refurbish a further 59 former Ministry of Defence (MOD) dwellings comprising properties at Mountview Drive and Skyline Drive in Lisburn. Constructed around 1975, the houses had remained unoccupied for a number of years and had fallen into a state of disrepair, becoming a magnet for anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

Contractors began work on the empty dwellings in early 2019 with the

aim to complete the refurbishment of all 59 dwellings within a 24 month construction period. Despite the challenges faced as a result of COVID-19, the homes were completed in 8 phases with the final phase handed over to tenants and new owners in 2021. All the homes are four-person three-bedroom properties and each home benefits from having a detached garage.



**House in Mountview, Lisburn, which was renovated.**

The ex-MOD dwellings have been completely transformed into 30 homes for social rent and 29 affordable homes for those wanting to make their first step to get on the property ladder. This is a good example of a range of partners working together to bring an existing underused resource back into use in order to provide a long term sustainable mixed tenure housing solution.

## 4b Sustainable and Active Transport

Action Lead:  Department for Infrastructure  
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

The council has been working with Sustrans to develop an Active Travel Strategy which will help to identify projects and programmes over the next 15 years. It aims to increase the number of people engaged in active travel and encourage the use of more sustainable travel.

A number of active travel schemes have benefitted from joint Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure funding and include the provision of seating, improved path surfaces, bike parks, bike repair stations and signage along our existing greenways and pathways.



**Comber Greenway**

# Theme 5: Our Community

**Outcome: We live in empowered, harmonious, safe and welcoming communities**



## Supporting the Outcome:

The previous outcome 'Where we live' was all about the physical environment – the 'hardware' of community. This outcome is about the 'software' of community: the things that contribute to building everyday relationships based on respect, solidarity and working for the common good.

Much of this is about empowering people to participate in decisions that affect them. We want them to be actively engaged with community planning partners in delivering services such as care or leisure facilities, for example. It is also about participating in the everyday life of the

community: in health, sport, the arts and / or simply spending time with friends and neighbours.

Feeling safe is vital for wellbeing including for people from minority ethnic groups who can be more vulnerable than most. It is important everyone is welcomed in a place where diversity is celebrated and everyone belongs. Good relations across traditional divides cannot be taken for granted either, so the plan aims to actively support harmonious and inclusive communities.



## 5a Support Hub

Action Lead:  **PSP**  
Policing & Community  
Safety Partnership  
making Lisburn & Castlereagh safer

The Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH) continues to meet monthly to provide help to vulnerable people.

With the commitment of its partner agencies (LCCC, PSNI, NIFRS, SEHSCT, BHSCT, EANI, NIAS, NIHE, NIPB) 48 people have been supported to date to help them cope with a range of issues such as mental health, addictions, housing, education, hoarding and disability.

Currently 6 people and their families are receiving support from the Hub. Positive feedback has been received from individuals who have been discharged due to their needs having been met.

## 5b Establish a Community Network

Action Lead:  **LCCC**  
Lisburn &  
Castlereagh  
City Council

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council has been building on previous progress to develop localised community conversations with key stakeholders within the community and voluntary sector with the overarching objective of establishing a community network.

The initial stages have included having consultation sessions to gather the views and opinions from stakeholders.

In addition, 17 bespoke training sessions and workshops have been delivered in local communities with the aim of increasing the capacity of residents to empower communities to develop into robust voices for their own communities.

Through the Community Services Unit of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, a range of social and community-led events have been organised with the aim of enhancing the community relations between various groups and organisations.

These events have included International Women's Day, Good Relations Week and the successful participation of over 7 best-practice visits with the aim of increasing shared learning across the community and voluntary sector.

## 5c Volunteering

Action Lead:  **VOLUNTEER NOW**  
connect · build · change

As we began 2021-2022 Northern Ireland was beginning a slow emergence from the 'stay at home' COVID-19 lockdown orders. These restrictions impacted volunteering activity as heavily as every other aspect of life but volunteering continued in new and vital ways across the LCCC region. Some of the work done by LCCC volunteers in the midst of COVID-19 was featured



Volunteers' Week 2023.



Funding Clinic.

in the 'Ordinary People Extraordinary Times' photo series VN produced at the end of 2022 (Ordinary People - Extraordinary Times Photographic Series - Volunteer Now).

One notable area where volunteers were very much needed in 2021 was in the COVID-19 mass vaccination centres that began operating in early 2021.

Volunteer Now (in partnership with British Red Cross and Ulster GAA) had to recruit and manage a team of approximately 400 'event' volunteers to facilitate the smooth running of these centres. This included recruiting 22 new volunteers from within the Lisburn and Castlereagh area who, along with 15 longer-serving LCCC volunteers, gave an amazing 4,020 hours of their time to the COVID-19 vaccinations centres in Craigavon, Ballymena & Belfast between February and July 2021.

Interest in volunteering from people in the LCCC area remained steady during 2021-2022 despite the ongoing disruption of COVID-19. At least 70 new volunteer members from the area joined our online volunteering platform 'Be Collective' to seek out roles during 2021-2022.).

LCCC based organisations needed all the support they could get as the number of new volunteering opportunities in the area grew by 8% during the same time (83 new local roles on offer from 32 different organisations in 2021-22). There was also a notable 6% increase in the number of 'virtual' volunteering opportunities on offer within the LCCC area compared to the previous year, reflecting the changing volunteering environment.

To support those volunteers who continued supporting the community throughout COVID-19 and beyond and to help them avoid burn-out (and thereby maintain good volunteer retention for local organisations), Volunteer Now created and delivered free Workshops called 'Supporting the Wellbeing of Your Volunteers'.

These workshops (online and face-to-face) gave attendees a chance to explore their mental health and taught them and their managers how to create and use a Wellness Action Plan (as created by Mind UK) to support their emotional wellbeing. 78 of the attendees at these workshops were from within the SEHSCT area, including LCCC.

In 2022-2023, COVID-19 restrictions continued to lift and more face-to-face work could be done to promote volunteering and support local organisations in their growing need to recruit more volunteers. For example, Volunteer Now hosted volunteering information stands for the public at SERC Fresher's Fair, the NI School Summit, SE Trust Positive Aging Roadshow, and Library NI's Jobs and Employability fairs amongst others in

the LCCC area, with over 200 local individuals supported with information on how to volunteer. As a result of these and other events in the LCCC area, there was a small increase (11%) in the number of new people from LCCC joining their online volunteering platform 'Be Collective' to become volunteers and seek out roles.

Easing of restrictions also meant a return of face-to-face volunteering events such as 'mobile volunteering' sessions, offered to folks with limited ability to travel to volunteering venues (e.g. the elderly and learning disabled), and the beloved Balmoral Show, which attracted 31 local volunteers for their re-launch in May 2022.

We continued to support organisations in the LCCC area to develop new volunteering roles. They could add their organisation and opportunities to the Be Collective Volunteer Recruitment platform to get automatic promotion online.

There was a 15% increase in the number of LCCC area organisations uploading volunteer opportunities to the Be Collective platform during 2022-23. There was also a further 21% increase in the number of 'virtual volunteering' opportunities on the previous year.

Volunteer Now responded to the fact that many smaller and more rural LCCC based organisations can feel isolated and find it harder to access support, by creating a dedicated Volunteer Now Facebook Group page for the LCCC area. It shares local updates, training and support, and provides a site for networking and information sharing amongst these groups.

These smaller local organisations were invited to join the group from October 2022 onwards – this busy page now has 129 members, and

continues to grow. Volunteer retention was supported in local organisations, both large and small during Volunteers Week (1st – 7th June). There were volunteer recognition events to help celebrate local volunteers.

LCCC based organisations continued to benefit from bespoke training, policy analysis and volunteer management best practice support via our free 'Volunteering Health Checks' using the liV standard. In early 2023 a brand-new Quality Standard (Volunteer Friendly) designed for smaller organisations was introduced and launched in the LCCC area with local organisations. This proved to be an excellent networking and learning opportunity for smaller local organisations and provided much needed reassurance that the struggle to recruit and retain volunteer post COVID-19 is a shared one, but one they can overcome with some fresh ideas, flexibility and the right support.

#### *Some Highlights include...*

- **37** Volunteers living in the LCCC area gave over 4,020 hours of their time in support of the COVID-19 mass vaccinations centres and booster centres in Craigavon, Belfast and Ballymena from Feb 2021-Jan 2022
- **148** people from within LCCC area newly signed up to the online Be Collective volunteer Management Platform to seek out volunteering roles for themselves from April 2021-March 2023
- **152** new Volunteering Roles created within the LCCC area and added to Be Collective and the Volunteer Now Opportunity Search page 2021-2023
- **78** local volunteers supported with their emotional wellbeing via online and face-to-face Wellbeing workshops in 2021-22
- Virtual (Phone and Online) Volunteer opportunities continued to grow steadily from 2021 to 2023 with **115** new virtual volunteering

opportunities being added to the Be Collective Platform during this time

- Lisburn and Castlereagh has more people volunteering than any other council with **21%** of local people spending time volunteering.



*Caption*



# Good News Stories

## Participatory Budgeting

In February 2020, Lisburn & Castlereagh PCSP launched Participatory Budgeting as a pilot in the Killulagh District Electoral Area (DEA) with the first Grand Choice event. This was in partnership with, and jointly funded by PSNI, LCCC, Sport NI, NIHE and SE Trust. This pilot was an extremely successful project and was replicated across all DEAs in the subsequent years despite continuing COVID-19 restrictions.

**Castlereagh East: May – Dec 2021**

*(Delivered online with 17 successful projects totalling £15K)*

**Castlereagh South: May – Dec 2021**

*(Delivered online with 16 successful projects totalling £15K)*

**Downshire West: April – Sep 2022**

*(Delivered in-person with 16 successful projects totalling £15K)*

**Lisburn South: Oct 2022 – Feb 2023**

*(Delivered in-person with 16 successful projects totalling £15K)*

**Downshire East: Jan - April 2023**

*(Delivered in-person with 15 successful projects totalling £15K)*

**Lisburn North: March – June 2023**

*(Delivered in-person with 15 projects totalling £15K)*

Each market place event held in person provided an ideal opportunity for local communities to engage in one or more of the Take 5 themes of Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give, with over 1,000 people attending each event.

At the last event held in Lisburn North over 1,100 votes were cast. Feedback from elected members, applicants and members of the public were all extremely positive about the engagement opportunities and the increased knowledge that individuals and groups had on existing and new organisations.

During the two year period from June 2021 to June 2023 a total of 95 groups were funded to a total of £90,000.

### *Participatory Budgeting Case Study:*

## Proms in the Car Park

A Proms in the Car Park event was held outside Hillsborough Presbyterian Church. Music was provided by a variety of performers including Downshire Primary School and locally known soloists and musicians. The musical extravaganza attracted 280 adults and 50 children.

Face painting and balloon modelling was provided and each child was given a goodie bag with confectionary and juice.

Everyone in Royal Hillsborough village was invited to attend with a special invitation to young adults with learning difficulties. This was the first





opportunity since COVID-19 that the church was able to engage with these young adults.

Positive feedback was received from many attendees saying how much they enjoyed the event and how it had really lifted their spirits. There was great participation from the audience.

It is hoped this event will now become a regular occurrence in the church's calendar.

## SERC Eco-Committee



*Eco-Committee members from SERC, Lisburn.*

The Eco-Committee at SERC secured a £3,000 grant from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and were supported by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and NI Housing Executive.

They purchased recycling bins and five 'babbling bins' with sensors which

trigger recorded messages such as 'Give a hoot, don't pollute!' Two bins were donated to the bus station and train station in Lisburn.

This collaboration between SERC, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Translink was the perfect spark to get students ideas flowing. The implementation of these bins presented a new challenge – how to power the talking bins more efficiently and sustainably. Electrical Installation (Level 3) students worked on the 'Babbling Bins' project and their proposal for solar powered bins led to them being selected as finalists for the 2021 Enterprise Final.



*Launch of babbling Vins in Lisburn led to innovative pitch from Electrical Installations students at PBL finals.*

In November 2021, the first environmental event kicked off which was a litter pick at the Lagan Towpath. This has since led to weekly eco-activities in the Lisburn area. These collaborative litter picks have become events which are much looked forward to with both SERC staff and students getting involved. Students from SERC attended ecology training organised by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for National Tree Week and the Big Tree Project. A local ecologist led a guided walk to help them identify different plant and tree species.

Thanks to funding of £500 from the Ulster Wildlife Trust, students from SERC used this grant to build bird boxes to encourage more wildlife into the area and increase biodiversity. The bird boxes were then installed in the Lisburn campus garden.

Live Here Love Here supplied a Rewilding Kit to increase biodiversity in January 2022 which consisted of bird boxes, bug hotels and wildflower seeds. All experiences have been great for the students with animal management students getting involved and being given practical tasks to implement their learning.



*SERC students doing a litter pick.*



*SERC students on their guided ecological tour.*

## SERC collaboration with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council – sustainable fashion

As part of the college's ongoing efforts to promote sustainability within SERC and the wider community, 7 sustainable fashion workshops, open to anyone, in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area were hosted at the Lisburn campus. This was made possible by the successful application to the Climate Coalition where £1,920 funding was secured to host the events during Big Great Green Week in September 2022.

The issue being addressed in the workshops is that fast fashion is often cheap and does not last long but sometimes seems the only option for those with little disposable income.



**These events aimed to:**

- help raise awareness of the impacts of fast fashion on the environment
- educate those invited to think about alternatives to fast fashion
- showcase more sustainable options that could work out more affordable in the long run
- provide skills to mend and upcycle clothing as an alternative to fast fashion.

The workshops were facilitated by two local sustainable fashion businesses, Titanic Denim and Sew Ready, as well as SERC Art and Design lecturer Keri-Ann Ross. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council provided support for the events, including a connection with local environmental charity Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, who delivered a talk on the environmental impact of fast fashion.



*Joanne Templeton (LCCC), Sarah Hoppe (Sew Ready), Siobhan Purnell (Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful), Keri-Ann Ross (SERC) and Natasha Lloyd (SERC).*

The events were incredibly successful, with a total of 88 participants attending the workshops and talks. All participants gained valuable skills and knowledge on how to mend or upcycle their clothing, contributing to the reduction of textiles going to landfill.



*Participants of the Sustainable Fashion Workshop hosted at SERC repurposing denim jeans into tote bags.*

The workshops not only provided valuable skills and knowledge to the participants, but also inspired SERC students who participated in the workshops to enter their upcycled clothing creations into a competition.

These creations were then showcased as part of the 'Refashioned



*'Refashioned' Exhibition held in ISLAND Arts Centre, Lisburn.*



Exhibition' at the ISLAND Arts Centre. The exhibition, held in collaboration with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, was a celebration of European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) and featured a remarkable display of 75 upcycled clothing items and accessories.

The students' efforts in tailoring, tie-dye, fabric painting, crochet, Sashiko, and other techniques were showcased in the exhibition, highlighting their creativity, innovation, and commitment to sustainable fashion. The exhibition served as the culmination of their hard work and provided a platform for them to share their upcycled designs with the wider community.

This collaborative project between SERC and LCCC received well-deserved recognition for the exceptional efforts and initiatives in sustainable fashion during European Week for Waste Reduction in November 2022. The sustainable fashion workshops and subsequent Refashioned exhibition were selected as finalists in the Public Administration category of the EWWR Awards.



**SERC & LCCC Eco Fashion Competition finalist in EWWR Public Administration and Organisation category.**

The EWWR Awards Ceremony, held annually, aims to acknowledge and honour the most outstanding actions and projects carried out during each edition of the EWWR. It serves as a gathering for coordinators, action developers, and individuals interested in the EWWR to celebrate the achievements and impact of the participants.

SERC and LCCC attended the awards ceremony held in Dublin on 1st June 2023, alongside other inspiring sustainable waste reduction projects from across Europe. The event provided an opportunity to showcase their efforts and achievements on an international platform.

### **Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) links up with Libraries NI knitting groups to create special Trauma Teddies**

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) joined up with Libraries NI Knit and Natter groups across Northern Ireland to create hand-knitted teddies which can be given out as a comfort item to children, or adults with dementia or a learning disability, at incidents NIFRS attends. The idea is that NIFRS Officers will carry the hand-knitted 'trauma teddies' in their fire cars to give out to people in need of comfort at emergency incidents. Firefighters often see people during very difficult and traumatising times and the hope is that these special teddies will help provide some degree of soothing and reassurance.



*Caption.*





**Knit.**

At Lisburn City Library, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) and the Knit and Natter group worked together to agree how the teddies were to be used.

**The NIFRS staff also:**

- delivered home safety talks to the group emphasising potential fire dangers in the home,
- highlighted the importance of having working smoke alarms and a fire escape plan
- encouraged people to apply for a free Home Fire Safety Check if eligible.

To date, nine knitting groups have contributed to the project and the teddies are being carried by 48 NIFRS Officers across Northern Ireland. This is community planning in action when two organisations combine seamlessly for the benefit of local people. Library Knit and Natter groups are important for many and they play a vital role in helping people to engage with others to find support and combat loneliness.

## Biodiversity Action Plan

Over the last two years 2,514 participants have engaged in 63 biodiversity events across the council area, including the very successful Bat Walk and Talk events.

**Testimonials include:**

*“What a fantastic evening. All five of us had a wonderful time. We learnt so much that we had no clue about.”*

*“Both my son and daughter were a bit afraid of bats when they hear them flying past our house at night so I thought this would be a great opportunity to have more of an understanding and to overcome their fear. Boy did it work - they are now all biz about bats and telling everyone about what they got up to Wednesday night.”*

*“Allowing us to use the bat detecting equipment and walking around in the dark with someone who knows what they are talking about and knowing where to look was such a delight and we just cannot believe how many bats we actually managed to see and hear.”*

*“It was a very enjoyable talk.”*

*“The children were very engaged throughout the talk and they loved handling the bats and having a close up look.”*

*“The children also loved being able to learn about different facts and also sharing their knowledge on the animals.”*



**Children on an interactive Biodiversity walk.**

**The council has also partnered with:**

- Probation Board NI - Community Service Volunteers litter pick areas and make bird boxes for schools and community groups
- SERC Lisburn on cleans ups along the River Lagan
- DAERA, NIEA, Water Quality unit on funding projects
- RNIB on designing Braille signage within sites
- The Woodland Trust on The Big Tree project and planting 21,000 trees within Billy Neill MBE Country Park, Dundonald
- RSPB on biodiversity enhancements within Billy Neill MBE Country Park
- Carryduff Regeneration Forum on biodiversity enhancements within Lough Moss Playing fields
- Friends of Duncan’s Dam on a water quality improvement project which included wetland planting and bat/bird box installation to enhance the biodiversity within Duncan’s Park
- Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful for environmental improvement projects, litter picks and river clean ups
- Lagan Valley Regional Park, Belfast Hills Partnership and Lough Neagh Partnership to support outdoor recreation and protect the environment.

## Glenmore Parkland Trail

Funding was secured for Glenmore Parkland Trail in Hilden which includes paths to improve inclusive access for all users and to link to the Lagan Towpath for sustainable travel. Works included various planting schemes to enhance biodiversity, installing wood sculptures to promote biodiversity and erecting signage to promote the history and biodiversity of the site. Signs were designed with RNIB and include Braille for visually impaired visitors.



Data estimates that 13,440 people visited the trail from March to December 2021. Since then a further 61,572 people have visited.



Sign at Glenmore Parkland Trail which includes map.

## Derriaghy Glen

Derriaghy Glen Linear Park is approximately 5.5 hectares situated within Lagan Valley Regional Park, an Area of Natural Outstanding Beauty (ANOB). The linear path links two areas of woodland that were planted by land owners linked to the old linen industry. The site is linked to Aberdelghy Wood Oak Tree Walk and runs through Seymour Hill Community Woodland which leads to Ramblers Bridge and the Lagan Towpath.

This project involved the treatment and removal of a range of invasive non-native plant species and the subsequent planting of a range of native tree and shrub species to restore and enhance a long established woodland present across much of Derriaghy River Glen, Dunmurry.

The native trees which were planted were grown locally in LCCC's tree nursery, which was funded through Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Fund. Sourcing locally-grown tree species reduces the carbon emissions of transporting trees from elsewhere, such as Europe. Native trees grown on the island of Ireland also prevent the spread of invasive species or disease, such as the case with ash dieback.

***This site was identified for a woodland restoration project and the following work was completed:***

- approximately 3,000 native trees from Oak (Both Irish/Sessile & English/ Pedunculate), Birch (Downy & Silver), Holly, Scots Pine, Rowan, Alder and Hawthorn planted with tree protection in the form of Biodegradable tree guards
- approximately 250,000 bulbs (snowdrops & bluebells)
- a total of 12 invasive non-native species were recorded within the site, including cherry laurel, Himalayan balsam, salmonberry and bamboo. Vast areas have been treated and cleared of invasive species
- path surfaces have been improved to facilitate users of all ages and abilities, with a small bridge also being refurbished.
- bat and bird boxes installed across the site.



Group walking in Glenmore Parkland Trail with a guide.





## Ballybeen July/August 2022

Castlereagh Neighbourhood Policing Team successfully applied for funding in summer of 2022 from our Crime Prevention and Early Intervention department to help break down barriers with hard to reach groups, especially young people the Ballybeen area.

The aim of the project was to develop better relations between police and young people to increase confidence in policing but at the same time provide a diversionary activity to reduce ASB/Crime. Funding was received to provide 4 gaming sessions in a local venue close to Ballybeen during July and August and also work with a relatively newly established group in Ballybeen (BEACHH) by attending their summer scheme and 'Auld Doll' evenings to talk about ASB/crime followed up with a trip to the Siege Museum in Londonderry which aims to break down barriers between police and also the young and older members of the community to reduce the fear of crime. All events took place and some very positive feedback noted through evaluation questions and on social media



channels. The local Neighbourhood Policing Officers have developed better relations with local youths and also local organisations and youth groups as a result of the initiative. The events also provided youths from the area with an alternative activity on the evening's events were run rather than congregating in the local area and gave police the opportunity to speak to them in a neutral environment about crime and ASB and the consequences.

## Be Safe Be Seen Awareness December 2022 – March 2023

Funding was requested to purchase high visibility accessories to support walking, cycling and road safety engagement that the neighbourhood teams along with the local policing teams in B district can use to raise awareness of how to stay safe on roads.

From previous engagement and through requests for assistance from police for such engagements group leaders or organisers are keen for police to deliver road safety engagements as they believe it has a better impact, especially on children and young people when delivered by uniform police officers. The engagements mainly consisted of talks delivered by the local neighbourhood policing teams to schools, youth and community groups during which they were provided with a free high visibility accessory to make them more visible on our roads.

In addition to the group engagements the local policing teams were also given a selection of high visibility accessories that they can take out on patrol with them and hand out, should they observe a pedestrian or cyclist on our roads putting themselves at risk of being hit by a vehicle due to a lack of visibility. The main purpose of the initiative is to help make roads safety through better visibility of road users and educate groups/persons on road safety.

Local Neighbourhood Teams have attended a number of events each

month and delivered road Safety Talks or promoted Road safety at events though a crime prevention stand.



## SYTES

Castlereagh NPT were involved in a SYTES project with Dundonald High School in the run up to the summer months between April 2022 and June 2023 along with The Education Authority. SYTES Programme ‘Supporting Youths Through Engagement in Schools’ has a strong focus on early intervention with young people at risk of paramilitary groups. Small Group of Youths from Dundonald High School participated in weekly sessions run by EA and supported by officers for the local Neighbourhood Team.

## City NPT

City NPT have been involved in 134 drugs offences in the time period given, a lot coming from intelligence received and with the help of local community reps, therefore improving confidence within the community. These searches and offences have led to prosecutions and large quantities of drugs being removed from the streets. Whilst drugs are still a problem within Lisburn, Police continue to engage with the communities to gather information.

Clanmil Housing Association opened Wardsborough Apartments and Police have attended every tenancy signing with the housing association.

ASB in City Centre, City NPT have identified suspects before Crimes have been reported by working with LCCC and Citywatch who assist City NPT. Local businesses and YMCA also assist.

## Rural NPT

- Initiative in Glenavy in order to address recent rise in ASB in the village – Engaged with the “townland” boxing club which was a hard to reach local club for teenagers in the area. Obtained a grant and purchased new gloves and boxing equipment which the club badly needed. This was followed up with social media posts and well received by the club organisers
- In response to theft of farming equipment in rural areas the team successfully bid for a Tracker quad and in conjunction with Bangor DST ran operations on a number of days focussing in the Dromara areas where local farmers had been targeted. Although the tracker quad was not stolen it was advertised this tactic was being deployed and resulted in a reduction of these type of thefts.
- Through engagement with local people in Hillsborough the team were able to develop received intelligence and after liaison with colleagues in Serious Crime and our local DST a search conducted resulting in a large scale cannabis farm being discovered and a large amount of drugs recovered. These were displayed on social media.
- In response to school and parents’ concerns around inappropriate social media use, disruptive behaviour both in and out of the classroom and awareness of alcohol and dangerous drugs including prescription drugs: Rural NPT organised a series of station visits (6) to meet

the classes along with their teachers to meet our team, talk about the role of the police, consequences and the criminal justice system, social media use and the effect it can have on behaviour utilising the Bee Safe model and presentation. In conjunction with PCSP a theatre company put on a play for the whole school assembly highlighting the dangers of alcohol / drugs. The school have written to the neighbourhood team expressing their thanks for our contributions over the academic year and they are keen for the team to meet the pupils at key times throughout the year to reinforce our key messages and to include key seasonal topics such as road safety, firework safety etc.

- In response to an increase in road traffic collisions resulting in injuries Rural NPT linked in with Roads Policing Education and commenced a series of school presentation talks (still ongoing) whereby the local officer will take part in the presentation with Roads Policing.
- In response to rural crime the team are enthusiastic when promoting the “Farmwatch” initiative resulting in a far larger uptake than was previously the case.





Lisburn & Castlereagh  
**Strategic Community  
Planning Partnership**