

## Taking Action on Wellbeing

This local government bulletin, developed in association with Belfast Healthy Cities, is the fourth in a series looking at the concept of wellbeing and its relevance to local government. The series of bulletins is aimed at supporting members and councils in their wellbeing agenda, exploring how wellbeing is relevant to their Council and constituency. Previous issues have looked at definitions, measuring wellbeing and models for engaging communities

## Types of Action

Actions relevant to improving wellbeing can span a wide range of issues and sectors. For example, clean streets may be an important maker of local pride and wellbeing. Access to leisure facilities and services, including public green and open space, libraries and cultural events, can also help strengthen and maintain wellbeing. Job opportunities and services to support employability can be important to create greater confidence and support more secure living conditions, which in turn underpin wellbeing. Many actions can successfully be delivered in partnership with other agencies and local organisations, but councils are well placed to lead action on wellbeing through the civic leadership role.

## Preparing Action: Understanding Evidence

The key message of Issue 2 and 3 was that action to strengthen wellbeing must be based on a strong understanding of local needs and priorities, along with a clear picture of how wellbeing is defined. Statistical evidence assists in identifying central issues and needs in an area, while communication with residents and businesses provides an insight into the reasons and wider issues behind key needs and priorities. Engagement with residents and businesses can also help identify and develop ideas and initiatives for action. However, a clear analysis and collation of evidence from all stakeholders and sources is required to identify the core issues in an objective and systematic way. Statisticians and research experts play a vital role in this process, which is essential to prepare effective action planning.

## Planning Action: Agreeing Priorities

The analysis of needs identified will provide an overview of priorities, and will help highlight which ones are core needs, and which are factors linked to the core needs. For example, a real perceived lack of job opportunities may be associated with increased taking behavior, anti social behavior or limited interest in further and higher education, particularly among more vulnerable young people. This offers a starting point for identifying the most relevant and effective points for intervention. Professional and technical support for detailed action planning will be available within the council, and also from a number of statutory sector agencies, many of which will be involved in the community planning partnership.

The action planning process can include further engagement with residents and other stakeholders, to ensure that emerging actions remain aligned with the needs and priorities

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*Our vision is to be a leader in creating a healthy, equitable and sustainable city.*

Identified across communities. This process can be undertaken informally alongside a formal consultation, and can provide opportunities to clarify actions and timescales with communities. Interaction with decision makers, to reassure users that comments are utilised in decision making and service planning.

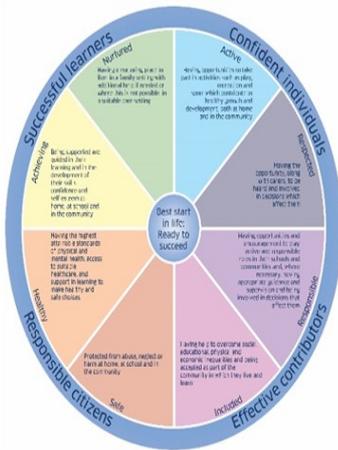
### Taking Action: Setting Goals and Monitoring Progress

Setting ambitious but realistic goals is a key element of developing action plans. It is also essential to monitor progress against goals throughout the life of the plan, in order to ensure effective and efficient delivery. Evidence gathered to underpin the action plan will assist in identifying relevant progress measures, and provides a baseline against which future progress is measured. This is also relevant for Outcomes Based Accountability, which focuses on monitoring key progress measures to assess the impact of initiatives.

### Examples

#### Getting it Right for Every Child, Scottish Government

Wellbeing has been integrated as a central element in the Scottish Government's approach to support children and young people, known as Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). GIRFEC aims to improve the wellbeing of children and young people by creating structures that work in partnership with children, young people and their carers to deliver services built around their needs. Wellbeing in this approach focuses on tailoring services around individuals, if and when they need additional support. Wellbeing is also an integral part of the monitoring framework, which is based around eight outcomes identified as key components of a healthy childhood.



#### Belfast Strategic Partnership

Belfast Strategic Partnership was set up to reduce inequalities in Belfast. It is led by Belfast City Council, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency. It involves a range of statutory as well as voluntary sector agencies in the city. Mental health and emotional wellbeing is a key theme of the partnership, which has developed an action plan on emotional resilience. Wellbeing is also a key theme for Active Belfast, a sub group of the partnership aiming to increase physical activity. More information is available at <http://www.makinglifebettertogether.com/wellbeing-in-belfast>



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