



Title: Measuring Success: Belfast Healthy Cities Mid-Term Review
Summary of Key Findings

This document presents a summary of the key findings of the Mid term Review of Belfast Healthy Cities (BHC) Phase V (2009-2013) Strategic Framework. The full report is available from the Belfast Healthy Cities website

<http://www.belfasthealthycities.com/PDFs/Phase%20V%20Mid%20Way%20Review%202012%20Web.pdf>

Background

In 2008 BHC developed a strategic framework to guide the strategic direction and implementation for the delivery of work based on Phase V priority themes. This was produced in consultation with a wide range of stakeholder groups at executive level within partner organisations and agreed by BHC's Board in April 2009. The Equity from the Start: Health and Health Equity in all Local Policies in Belfast (referred to as the BHC's Phase V (2009-2013) Strategic Framework) identified a range of aims, objectives, building blocks, actions and targets.

Within the overarching goal and core themes, a number of priorities were agreed:

- Health & Health Equity in All Policies and Caring and Supportive Environments: Develop a model to embed health and health equity in all local policies, with special emphasis on better outcomes for children.
- Healthy Living: Priority areas chosen were Wellbeing, Happiness & Resilience and Active Living with special emphasis on equity.
- Healthy Urban Environment and Design: to identify ways of integrating health into planning, focusing on urban environment, design, regeneration, housing, active transport and open space. Within this is also contained the priority of Climate Change with proposed action on Healthy Transport and Active Living.

Building Blocks

A number of building blocks were agreed to achieve the overarching goal of health and health equity in all local policies in Belfast that are systemically applied to deliver actions on the objectives set for each of the selected priority issues within the three core themes. The building blocks agreed were as following:

- Evidence base and effective interventions
- Data, health risks, social distribution and monitoring
- Capacity building
- Intersectoral action, equity and innovation
- Leadership, stewardship and collaboration
- Engagement: political and civic society

Mid Way Review - Methodology

In June 2011, at the mid-point stage in the delivery of Phase V, as part of its commitment to good practice, BHC agreed to carry out a mid-term review of the implementation of the Phase V Strategic Framework with the following objectives:

- To review the strategic objectives set within BHC's Phase V (2009-2013) Strategic Framework to assess progress, achievements, appropriateness, and change required
- To review and map progress on actions within the annual action plans, 2009 – mid 2011 and identify key deliverables achieved
- To identify and review additional programmes and actions that were delivered
- To identify success factors in work programmes, barriers to progress and areas for future development

The period of review was January 2009 to August 2011. The review was carried out in two stages, commencing with an internal review which was followed by external review.

Internal Review

In July and August 2011 an internal review led by BHC's Director was carried out with staff. The purpose of this exercise was to assess progress on Phase V strategic objectives, building blocks and actions; identify key Phase V achievements to date; identify barriers, challenges and change required to the strategic framework and annual reporting mechanisms. The findings of this internal review were presented to the BHC Board of Directors meetings in August & October 2011 through a variety of mechanisms including: A Phase V Mid Way Report; A Summary of Achievements 2009-2011 paper; a Summary of Key Activities paper; BHC Events and Publications 2009-2011 paper; and BHC Annual Action Plans, 2009-2011.

External Review

Following the consideration of the findings of the internal review, BHC appointed an independent evaluator in November 2011. The role of the evaluator was to independently assess and verify the progress and achievements delivered within the Phase V Strategic Framework over a two year period in relation to a number of specific tasks. These were:

1. Consider the key findings of the internal Phase V Mid way review report.
2. Carry out face to face and telephone interviews with a range of key stakeholder agencies to gather feedback on: the key achievements, challenges and critical success factors of BHC Phase V; the effectiveness of BHC partnerships and levels of engagement; and, identify future priorities for the next stage of Phase V delivery.
3. Design and analysis of a questionnaire to gain feedback from working group members and Board of Directors on the success factors in working group programmes; barriers & challenges and identify areas for future development.
4. Produce a short mid-way review report incorporating the findings of external review.

Collection of Data

The methodology used to collect data for the external review involved a number of elements including documentary review and consultation with key stakeholders. Documentary review included the review of a range of papers including the Phase V

Mid Way Report: A Summary of Achievements 2009-2011 paper; BHC Phase V Action Plans 2009-2011; and BHC Events and Publications 2009-2011 paper and Belfast Healthy Cities Phase V Operational Plan 2011/12. Consultation with key stakeholders involved a combination of face to face and telephone interviews including:

- Face to face interviews with: BHC's Director; representatives of BHC's funding agencies and officers of the BHC Board of Directors representing the following agencies: the NIHE, BHSC Trust, the PHA, BCC's Environmental Health Department and Bryson Charitable Group (6);
- Telephone interviews with BHC's Chair of the Climate Change and Health (CCH) Working Group; Chair of the Healthy Urban Environment and Design (HUE) Working Group; and, the WHO European Healthy Cities Network representative (3).

Additional feedback was also captured through a questionnaire distributed to 52 participants of 4 key target groups: BHC's regional Climate Change and Health Working Group; the Healthy Urban Environment and Design Working Group; the HEiAP (Health Equity In All Policies) Steering Group; and the Board of Directors.

Following the collection and collation of data, this set of data was analysed against a number of criteria in respect of the delivery of Phase V Strategic Framework including: key outputs, outcomes and achievements, challenges and critical success factors of BHC Phase V; and, future priorities for the next stage of Phase V delivery.

The findings of the mid term review indicate that BHC has been extremely successful in in delivering on stated Phase V outputs and outcomes during 2009-11. There was overwhelmingly positive feedback from respondents on the overall performance of BHC in its delivery of the Phase V Strategic Framework. Key stakeholder agencies representing funders and user agencies of BHC (Belfast City Council, NI Housing Executive, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency) expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the quality and nature of the services and activities delivered over the two and a half year period.

Key Achievements:

Respondents highlighted the focus on key policy issues and education and awareness raising work to multi-agency, multi-disciplinary audiences as valuable outcomes. Progress has been achieved on 98% of all stated actions which represents an exceptionally high standard of performance consistent across all of the key areas. An outline of these key achievements are outlined below:

1. Building intersectoral partnerships to advance health equity is central to the work of BHC and this was seen as a key achievement of BHC during Phase V delivery. Respondents consulted regarded the collaborative and partnership approach developed by BHC as a key strength of the organisation which was described as being a key player in the city and at local and European levels. One stakeholder agency summed up the assessment of many commenting 'BHC is really skilled at partnership working and always has been'.

2. Education and Learning Outcomes - BHC's delivery of education and learning outcomes were also highlighted as a key achievement during 2009-11. Agencies consulted felt that BHC's wide range of events and activities had brought new ideas and insight into health and wellbeing issues and affirmed BHC's pioneering and innovative role.

3. Shaping Policy and Practice in Public Health and Wellbeing - BHC's role in shaping and developing public policy and practice in relation to health and wellbeing was recognised as a key success during this period. Consultees to the mid-term review identified a variety of ways in which BHC had contributed to influencing practice through its innovative delivery on WHO core themes.

4. BHC Working Groups - The establishment of three key working groups (Healthy Urban Environment; Climate Change and Health; and Health Equity in all Policies) by BHC was also recognised as delivering a wide range of outcomes during Phase V and further illustrated the complexity of the strategic and operational contexts for BHC.

5. WHO Secretariat Role - The successful appointment of BHC to provide the secretariat for WHO was also considered by respondents as major achievement of

Phase V which has endorsed the credibility of BHC 'as a safe pair of hands'. BHC was seen to be a significant resource for WHO's European Network.

Key outputs delivered include:

- The engagement of 2253 participants in a wide range of activities such as seminars, lectures, consultation meetings, working group related events, conferences and advisory group meetings.
- The delivery of 8 keynote lectures by international speakers including Professor Sir Michael Marmot (University College London) and Danny Broderick (Public Health Directorate, South Australia) linking global health with local health issues.
- The establishment and development of three intersectoral working groups on core Phase V health and wellbeing themes: Healthy Urban Environment, Climate Change and Health and Health & Health Equity in All Local Policies.
- Workshops on Health Impact Analysis, Climate Change and Health and consultations on mental health, older people and homelessness.
- Production and circulation of over 7000 copies of reports and information resources during 2009 – 11 including conference and workshop reports as well as guidance manuals such as Healthy Places – Strong Foundations and A Guide for Political Representatives Tackling Inequalities and Promoting Wellbeing.
- BHC website usage indicated a high level of interest in BHC resources with the website currently averaging over 800 'hits' on a monthly basis.

Key outcomes delivered through intersectoral partnerships, working groups and training workshops included:

- policy development
- capacity building
- network development
- collaborative stakeholder engagement throughout the health and social care sectors in Northern Ireland.

BHC's education and learning development has improved knowledge, skills and understanding on a wide range of health issues to diverse participant groups within public sector agencies. BHC demonstrated its effectiveness in the core roles of influencing public health policy and practice and bringing new approaches and thinking regarding health inequalities to a wide stakeholder audience.

Critical Success Factors

Respondents identified a number of unique factors which have contributed to the success of BHC's delivery of the Phase V Strategic Framework to date.

1. Independence as an organisation: The independence of BHC from any specific agency was seen by nearly all respondents as critical to their success. One stakeholder commented 'one of the most important things for me is that BHC are not 'owned' by any one agency- it provides a platform where partnerships can be formed into working relationships' whilst another stated 'Its independence enabled it to move forward to deliver Phase V successfully'. Many agencies felt that the success of BHC in its influencing role was linked to its independence– 'it can act and advocate outside the silos of individual government departments' – and that its vibrancy and dynamism would be at risk were it to be a part of a larger corporate public body.

2. Innovative in approach: At a more strategic level, BHC was praised for its innovative and resourceful approach to the development of Phase V delivery. The diversity of the Board was also recognised as a key strength in this respect. Securing the commitment from key individuals on the Board of Directors and Working groups who were at sufficiently senior level in terms of policy and practice had enabled the support for BHC in taking risks in being innovative and creative and had delivered key benefits for BHC as well its partner agencies.

3. Access to International / European learning and models: BHC's relationship with WHO and being part of a European wide network that was recognised as 'collaborative and at the edge of new learning and models of practice' was also a factor in the capacity of BHC to transfer and adapt different models of practice and policies to the local context.

4. Level of staff skill and commitment: BHC staff members were commended for their level of commitment, skills, professionalism and effort. The resource of the staff as a team was seen as central to the success of Phase V.

5. Diversity and Commitment of Members of Board of Directors and Working Groups: The mix of Board members across statutory voluntary and academic

institutions was described as 'a real strength' and 'critical to the success of BHC'. Members and partner organisations of the Board and working groups were regarded as extremely supportive which was a key element in the success of BHC.

Future Challenges

Respondents identified a number of challenges facing BHC in the next stage of delivery of Phase V. These included:

- the extent and volume of demands on BHC
- the changing strategic and operational contexts within the health and social care sectors
- the importance of maintaining clarity of stakeholder roles within the context of partnership working
- the current funding climate where pressures on services and resources is high
- demonstrating the value of a collaborative partnership approach within a 'silo' operational culture
- the need to balance BHC's regional: city wide roles. BHC has already progressed actions on several of these issues.

Whilst significant challenges face organisations delivering in the health and social care sector, there are many opportunities for BHC to continue to build on the success of the delivery to date.

Key priority actions for the future delivery of Phase V

- the need to build on improving political engagement and strategic influence
- to develop engagement with new sectors
- to develop a more diverse funding base
- focus on balancing the city wide and regional roles for BHC

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Our Vision

Our vision is of a healthy, equitable, and vibrant city where all sectors provide individual and shared leadership, enabling citizens to achieve their full potential.

Our Mission

Our mission is, through our leadership and innovation, to inspire and utilise the collective and individual strengths of partners who deliver the World Health Organization European Healthy City Phase V (2009-2013) goals and requirements and maximise their impact on health and inequalities.

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Tel: +44 2890 328811 www.belfasthealthycities.com Twitter: @belfasthealthy