

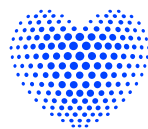
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Foreword – By Jason poots (Programme Coordinator)

Since being in post from the end of October 2024, I have had the pleasure of working with many people who are either already using the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing in their own work, or who are excited to learn more about how they can use it. This Newsletter will hopefully highlight the fantastic work that exists around Belfast in different areas of life and will provide some ideas to those who would like to use the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing more in their own work or their own personal life. Thank you to everyone who supports this programme through their tireless work.

Jason Poots – Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing Project Coordinator



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CHARITIES
TOGETHER**



Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust



**Making life better,
together**

supported by Belfast Health Development Unit

ashton
Supporting
North Belfast



**Connected
Community Care**
Empowering Local Wellbeing



**FORWARD
SOUTH
PARTNERSHIP**



CANS
COUNSELLING ALL NATIONS



**Survivors
of Suicide**



**East Belfast
Community
Development
Agency**



The Spectrum Centre
Shankill Road, Belfast



Clare Flynn

Job Title: Advanced Mental Health Practitioner

My favourite part about the job is: I know from experience that it's the small decisions and actions I take every day that really make a difference to how I feel, so I really believe in the Take 5 message. A lot of the things that cause us difficulties in life are out of our control but Take 5 reminds us that we do have control over how we spend our free time and energy.

How I use Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing: One of the ways I connect, and give is through taking part in sobriety communities. I stopped drinking several years ago and connecting with people who understand has been really helpful. I also share my recovery journey on blogs and at conferences as a way of supporting others. I find it hard to slow down and take notice but my favourite way to do this is going to a gong bath. Just listening and noticing the sounds is so relaxing.



Jason Poots

Job Title: Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing Programme Coordinator

My favourite part about the job: The variety of activities that I get to do in my job really makes me challenge myself in terms of creativity and trying to meet as many people as I can to discuss the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing.

How I use Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing: I have only started using the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing actively although I have always done a lot of music in my spare time. I make sure to Take Notice as often as I can as I can quite easily forget about this step. Even having a cup of tea and noticing the warm cup in my hands, the smells and the tastes can help me to be in the present and give some headspace, which I don't always have lots of.



Jim Morgan

Job Title: Senior Project Development Officer, Belfast City Council

My favourite part about the job: I get the opportunity to meet and work with so many enthusiastic people across the youthwork, schools, community and statutory sectors every day. All of whom have a genuine and committed interest in supporting other people's wellbeing in their own organisations. This provides an opportunity for good discussion around practice and approaches on how people use Take 5 steps to wellbeing.



Dolores Atkinson

Job Title: Project Development Outreach Officer

How I use Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing: I build Take 5 into my daily routine, even in bite sized bits. I open the blinds first thing in the morning and take in the weather and the view of Belfast, we live on a bit of a height, so I get to see a lot of the famous landmarks in the city, but it's the trees and the colours of nature that really get me going!

I love learning, I love reading and I love the cinema, I depend on cups of tea constantly to recharge the batteries, I rely on music in the kitchen for dancing and I love to spend time with good friends and family. Spending time with my grandchildren pretty much brings together all of the Take 5 steps for me!



Connect



Keep learning



Be active



Take notice



Give

The 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' initiative was first released in England, 2008 by the New Economics Foundation and has become a popular message all across the UK and beyond since then.

The '5 Steps' were chosen as they are the most accessible ways for the general population to take ownership over their wellbeing. These steps are a positive way to take notice of what you're already doing, to connect with yourself and others about the topic of wellbeing and to be active about taking ownership of your own wellbeing.

Why not try to 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' as many times each day as you can and see what kind of difference it can make in your life?



Connect

Connect with your family or friends. You might have a conversation with a friend or family member, maybe that that you haven't talked to in a while. Or simply say hello to a passerby on a walk



Keep learning

Keep Learning in your everyday life. You could learn a new skill, craft or hobby. If you are more interested in education, there are plenty of free courses online that you can avail of through the Open University



Be active

Being Active is an essential part of wellbeing which can be tough sometimes. Do something that slightly pushes you out of your comfort zone, but which feels manageable and sustainable, such as going for longer or more frequent walks, going to the gym, cycling or something even creative like dancing



Take notice

Take Notice of how you feel in yourself and of the things around you – be present in the moment. Use techniques such as mindfulness or meditation or simply make a point to look around you when outside or in a new environment



Give

Giving can be done in many ways. Whether you give to charity or charitable causes, give your time to those who might appreciate it, or simply make a cup of tea for or make dinner for someone who needs it, giving benefits those around you and your own wellbeing and self—esteem.

On Tuesday 21st January, the BHSCT Health Improvement Team, in partnership with Belfast Health Development Unit and Business in the Community, celebrated the first Take 5 in the Workplace awards. The event was attended by the 13 organisations who achieved an accreditation level through the award scheme, reaching nearly 9,000 employees and their families in the Belfast Trust area and beyond. Guest speakers included the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Micky Murphy, Dr. Emma Nolan, lecturer of Psychology at Queen's University Belfast, and Annette Kelly from the widely recognised social media mental health page "Little Penny Thoughts". 50 people attended the event, which was the inaugural event to celebrate and acknowledge the work that partners are doing to implement the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' widely across a number of settings (in workplaces, in schools and in the community). We would like to extend a massive thank you to all involved in organising the day and ensuring that it ran so smoothly.



From October 2024, NHS Charities Together has funded a new post for a Coordinator of the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' Programme Coordinator. This funding allows for extra capacity to help the people of Belfast to learn more about and carry out the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing'. The allocation also allows for programmes such as the 'Take 5 in Workplaces', 'Take 5 in Schools' and 'Take 5 in Communities' initiatives to run successfully and smoothly.



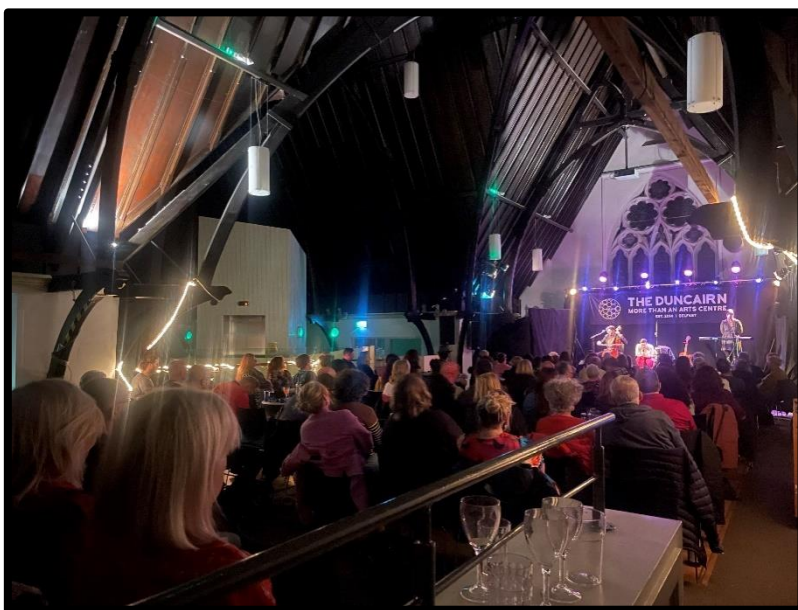
Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing 'Gig'

Justine Brown, Health and Wellbeing Development Officer for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, has been based in the Duncairn Arts Centre since 2017 and has been working collaboratively with the Centre's Arts Team in co-designing and co-delivering community-based Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing events 2017-2025. Events such as 'No More January Blues Festival' (2018 & 2019); 'Northern Lights Online Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing Challenge' (2021); 'This Is Where I Be Photography Project' (2022) and most recently, 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing Gig @ The Duncairn' (2023).

The idea for 'The Gig' came about as a way for people to connect in person after the covid pandemic.

Furthermore, we wanted to offer folks an evening of creativity, connection and fun as an antidote to the societal and financial pressures, especially being during winter months. We curated a programme of music, poetry and storytelling, with approximately 120 people attending.

A pre-gig 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' reception was hosted in the Duncairn Arts Centre Café, where approximately 70 people were able to connect, learn, chat and browse through information stands on the Take 5 themes.



To highlight an event that your community group may have run recently in line with the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' in future editions of this newsletter, please contact Jason Poots (Jason.poots@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing in the Greater Shankill Area

Dympna Johnson is a member of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Health Improvement Team, based in the Greater Shankill Partnership. Dympna wanted to raise awareness of the 'Take 5' messages as well as demonstrate how people living in the community can bring Take 5 to life by participating in local initiatives and connecting to existing networks.

I provided 'Take 5' stalls at a variety of well-attended Health Fairs in the Greater Shankill area e.g. Sure Start and Job Assist. The membership of the Greater Shankill Health Forum has also agreed to pull together a 'Take 5' leaflet specific to the local area. This will be a really useful tool for the membership to spread the 'Take 5' messages moving forward.

The outcome of the Take 5 stalls was that it generated conversations with local people about the 'Take 5' messages and gave them ideas of how they could get involved. It also raised awareness of how we can have more agency over our own wellbeing.

"I didn't really understand what Take 5 was about other than it was something to do with health. I didn't think it would apply to me, and I wouldn't have the time to be starting anything. But now I see how easy it is to get involved and it has reminded me that are things I can do to help myself"

- Local Parent

Healthy Hens at the Hens' Shed

In September 2023, Oonagh McNally, with the help of two friends, founded the Hens' Shed in Stranmillis. They meet every Wednesday evening and many of their members have missed very few, if any, Wednesday evening sessions showing the kind of commitment that the group fosters.

The Hens do what they can to keep healthy, but most importantly they keep connected with each other. This might be by going for walks in the park in their pink high-visibility jackets, by doing yoga together or trying out palates.

Oonagh and others sometimes organise workshop for a Wednesday evening, from Sourdough making to Self-defence classes promoting learning together. By embedding the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing in their programme planning, the Hens are able to Connect, Keep Learning, Be Active, Take Notice and Give back to each other and the local community.



Belfast has been a leader of the WHO Europe Healthy Cities project for over 35 years, making it one of the longest-standing members. One of the project's most recent initiatives, named 'Greening the City', aims to make local communities aware of the green spaces, walks and supports in their local community. These maps will act as a signposting service and will make people aware of what is in their local community that they might not have otherwise known about.

Maps have been developed so far for East Belfast, South Belfast, the Greater Care Zone (North Belfast), Upper Springfield Road and West Belfast.

Click here to
view all the
maps

What are green spaces?

Green spaces can include parks, children's play areas, woodlands, riverside footpaths such as greenways, and blue spaces which represent water elements.

🌿 Bog Meadows

A green oasis with species-rich meadows, reedbeds, ponds, hedgerows, and grazing animals. A huge asset for local people and wildlife, and a great opportunity to enjoy nature in the city.



🌿 Falls Park

Home to many fine mature trees, beautiful flowers, horticultural displays and grassland areas. With outdoor gyms and classrooms, a refurbished play park, and Féile an Phobail, the largest community festival in Europe.



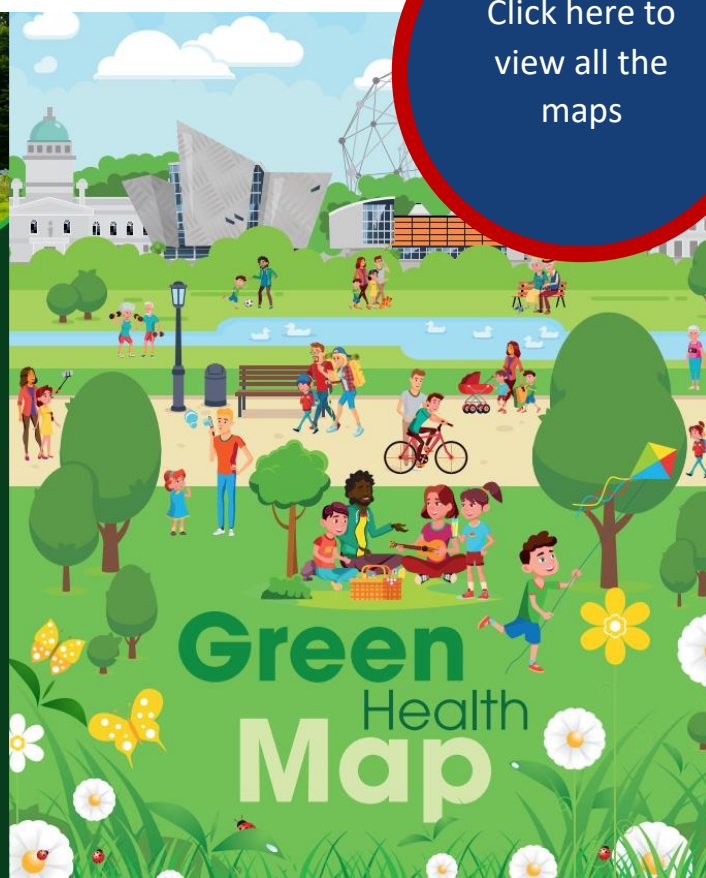
🌿 Springfield Park (or Dam)

A redeveloped, quiet and scenic place to walk, wheel, and jog with friends or sit and take notice of nature.



🌿 Dunville Park

A series of paths, landscape areas, and a historic fountain filled with over 6,500 flowers. You can enjoy a sports pitch for soccer and GAA, a changing pavilion, and senior and junior playgrounds.



The Public Health Agency has released non-recurrent funding up to £5,000 for Community and Voluntary Sector Groups to deliver a project which will support the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing'.

Applications close: Friday 16th May (3pm)

Find out
More

If you would like to advertise any funding opportunities, please get in touch by emailing jason.poots@belfasttrust.hscni.net

‘Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing in Schools’ commenced in August 2024 and currently has 11 post-primary schools and 1 primary school involved.

The programme of levelled accreditation was designed by our colleagues in the Northern Health and Social care Trust and has been very widely successful over the past number of years.

Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing in Schools is a whole-school programme, meaning that everyone from pupils to staff and all their families are involved. This ensures that the Take 5 message is spread as widely as possible so that people can easily recognise and use it.

Schools have been coming up with creative ideas as to how to embed Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing within their school such as ‘the daily mile’ to be active, cultural celebration events to connect with many of the cultures represented in a school’s community and charity concerts to give to charitable causes.



Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing Senior Project Development Officer, Jim Morgan, comes from a background of Youth Work and continues to be as active as he can by working in a local youth setting.

Jim could see the benefit of 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' being used in Youth Groups and has worked with a range of youth work providers to roll out the programme.

Jim and Dolores currently work with 10 Youth Organisations, 5 youth groups from the Education Authority and 5 youth groups from Community and Voluntary sector across Belfast.

They are all working hard to achieve their levelled Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing accreditation and gain status as a 'Take 5 Youth Organisation'.

Belfast City Council, alongside community and statutory partners, have helped to deliver the third successful round of participatory budgeting, this time based around the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' theme.

78 groups who applied were successful in receiving the funding that they had applied for, totalling a pot of £184,179 for projects to benefit the residents of Belfast. These projects have started to have been delivered from April 2025 and will continue to be delivered until October 2025.

The public attended 4 voting events in February (1 held in each area of the city) and cast their votes to decide which projects would best benefit their own community. Over 2,000 members of the public voted in these events at which groups were able to advertise what they would be able to bring to the

