

## Healthy Children, Healthy Belfast, Healthy Future!

**29 May 2013**

Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) along with Belfast Outcomes Group hosted a special health event which focused on parents and carers of children under the age of 4 years on 29 May 2013. This programme was linked directly to Sure Start programmes of work delivered across specific areas of Belfast.

The event provided an arena for parents and carers to find out information on nutrition; sensory development; the importance of play; home safety information; speech and language development; cervical screening; smoking cessation/passive smoking. There was also an opportunity for families to discuss developmental issues and family health with a midwife and health visitor. Introductory sessions on infant massage, complementary therapies and information on the range of services offered by Sure Start were also provided on the day.

Everyone involved in the care of young children knows that for parents and carers of life can be very challenging and demanding. Keeping the little ones happy, healthy and nourished are just some of the challenges parents and carers face in early childhood. However, help and support is available!

The Healthy Children, Healthy Belfast, Healthy Future event was designed to help parents, carers and their young children experience some of the life-enhancing benefits and opportunities on offer from the Sure Start Programmes and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The Sure Start Programme is designed to provide additional social support to families in specific localities. Examples of the type of support available might include learning and childcare experiences for children, with additional befriending services for parents. However, the scope of the programme is diverse and each family is assessed on individual needs.

Dr Leslie Boydell, Associate Medical Director, Belfast Trust and Belfast Strategic Partnership member, said, *'I fully endorse an event of this kind. The Healthy Children, Healthy Belfast, Healthy Future event was a great opportunity to build on the work that is already taking place and to support our partners with all the work they do in assisting young families.'*

Tina Gregory Sure Start Coordinator and co-chair of the CYPSP Belfast Outcomes Group noted *"We were delighted to be a part of this event. It was an excellent opportunity for expectant parents, parents and their young children to come and chat to a midwife, health visitor and a sure start worker to get information on parenting and children or just to have a complementary therapy. The event is a part of the new future working arrangements with true partnership, which will benefit younger children and families in Belfast and we look forward to more cooperative planning and service delivery"*.

The Health Event was an ideal opportunity for parents and carers to gather more information on family issues and exhibitors present at the event were able to demonstrate how they can provide assistance to parents with young children.

### **Notes to Editor**

- The Health Event took on 29 May 2013 at Grosvenor House from 10am -2pm.
- The BSP was established in February 2011 by the Public Health Agency (PHA), Belfast City Council (BCC) and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT), with support from the Belfast Health Development Unit (BHDU), to address the significant levels of inequality across the Belfast area.
  - The BSP is made up of senior representatives from the community, voluntary, statutory and private sectors
  - BHDU plays a supporting role to the BSP and is made up of staff from each of the lead organisations (PHA, BCC, BHSTC) working together in a single team
- BSP has undertaken a wide engagement process to create a Framework for Action to enable the work of stakeholders to focus on a number of key priority areas that will make a difference to people's lives.
- Belfast Health Development Unit directly and exclusively supports the Partnership to deliver on the Framework for Action and in delivering Annual Action Plans, which are being developed for each of the priority areas to ensure that efforts and resources make an impact.
- **Vision**  
"Our vision is a Belfast and Greater Belfast area in which all of our people and communities can share the same expectations and access of the opportunities, resources and confidence to live longer, healthier lives."
- **Mission**  
"Our mission is to reduce health inequalities and to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in Belfast through proactive cooperation and collaboration with all key stakeholders and by harnessing the enthusiasm, efficiency and experience of all those parties who share the same visions."