

## West Belfast Locality Planning Group

Whiterock Children's Centre, West Belfast Locality Planning Group, the West Family Support Hubs, and the Belfast Childcare Partnership hosted a screening of *"Resilience: the Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope"* documentary and discussion panel as part of the Féile an Phobail (West Belfast Festival). This is the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Whiterock Children's Centre. Deidre Walsh opened the event by highlighting how needs and issues affecting children, young people and families have changed over the 30 years since the children's centre first opened its doors and continues to support a wide range of family needs daily.



*Photograph Caption: Deirdre Walsh, White Rock Children's Centre and West Belfast Locality Chair*

The one hour documentary, directed by James Redford, looks at the long term impact of childhood trauma and explores the findings of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study and looks at how to address and prevent toxic stress.

Approximately 90 people attended the screening in St Mary's University College on 2 August, the first event of the Féile's full programme.



After the screening the audience had the opportunity to discuss the issues raised by the documentary with an expert panel made up of Maurice Meehan; who works for the Public Health Agency as Head of Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement (Northern Team).



*Photograph Caption: Maurice Meehan Public Health Agency, Deirdre McLaughlin Connected for Life and Dr Suzanne Mooney, Queens University Belfast*

In this role he leads a Team focused on population health improvement and also leads within the Agency on Early Years interventions that support the theme of 'Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life'. This includes a social and emotional learning programme delivered in Primary Schools called 'Roots of Empathy'; development and implementation of an Infant Mental Health Strategic Framework

(<http://pha.site/IMHF>) and evidence based parenting programmes and family support services. He is active on the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) agenda through the 5 Nation Public Health ACE Network, and is a member of the NI ACE Reference Group.

Deirdre McLaughlin; who has worked for 18 years in Youth Justice Agency as a social worker and manager and is currently a part time lecturer in social work at Belfast Met. She set up Connected for Life with Marie Blaney in 2016 to raise awareness of the far reaching impact of childhood adversity and to support those impacted. They brought the resilience film to Northern Ireland with a series of public screenings last year and have since developed wraparound training and workshops on ACEs and Resilience. They have now shown the film to over 2000 people within organisations, groups and communities.



*Photograph Caption:*

*Maurice Meehan Public Health Agency, Dr Suzanne Mooney, Queens University Belfast, Deirdre Walsh White Rock Children's Centre and West Belfast Locality Chair and Deirdre McLaughlin Connected for Life*

Dr Suzanne Mooney, social worker and systemic family psychotherapist, joined the Social Work team at Queen's in 2014, where she leads the multidisciplinary systemic practice and family therapy programme. She

has over twenty years' clinical practice experience with children, young people and their families in a range of cross-sector contexts including physical health and disability, mental health, and children's services. Suzanne was involved with her QUB colleagues in the pilot application of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) research in frontline child welfare teams led by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust in 2015-16.

This led to the regional roll-out of the ACE initiative 2017-18, where Suzanne delivered training workshops to social workers across NI looking at how the ACE research might be used to enhance the outcomes for children and families. She designed a Family Life Stories practice workbook for use with parents in various settings and produced accompanying practitioner guidance.

## **Contact Us**

For more information about this event please contact Una Casey, Business Support Manager and Interim Belfast Locality Planning Officer by email at [una.casey@hscni.net](mailto:una.casey@hscni.net) or visit [www.cypsp.org](http://www.cypsp.org)