

# Child Friendly Places



**A Call to Action:  
Shaping Healthier Places for Children in Belfast**  
Consultation Document  
www.belfasthealthycities.com



## What is Child Friendly Places?

**Child Friendly Places** is an approach for integrating children's rights into local regeneration or development initiatives and educational programs using a participatory and child friendly assessment and planning methodology. Child Friendly Places empowers communities to improve their local conditions and environments.



## CHILD FRIENDLY PLACES: A PRIORITY FOR BELFAST

### Key Messages - children and place

- Place encompasses a good quality built and natural environment which has a significant impact on health
- Not everyone enjoys equal access to a good quality built environment
- In Belfast almost 1 in 5 are under 13 years of age
- Evidence shows that young children's development is more affected by place
- Giving people a voice in public health is important - engaging with children is essential
- Improved outcomes for children has benefits for wider family, community and Belfast as a whole

Child Friendly Places is a core theme for Belfast as a member of WHO European Healthy Cities Network Phase VI (2014-2018).

Place has a significant impact on our health and wellbeing. Successful places give children a sense of belonging, a sense of identity and a sense of community.

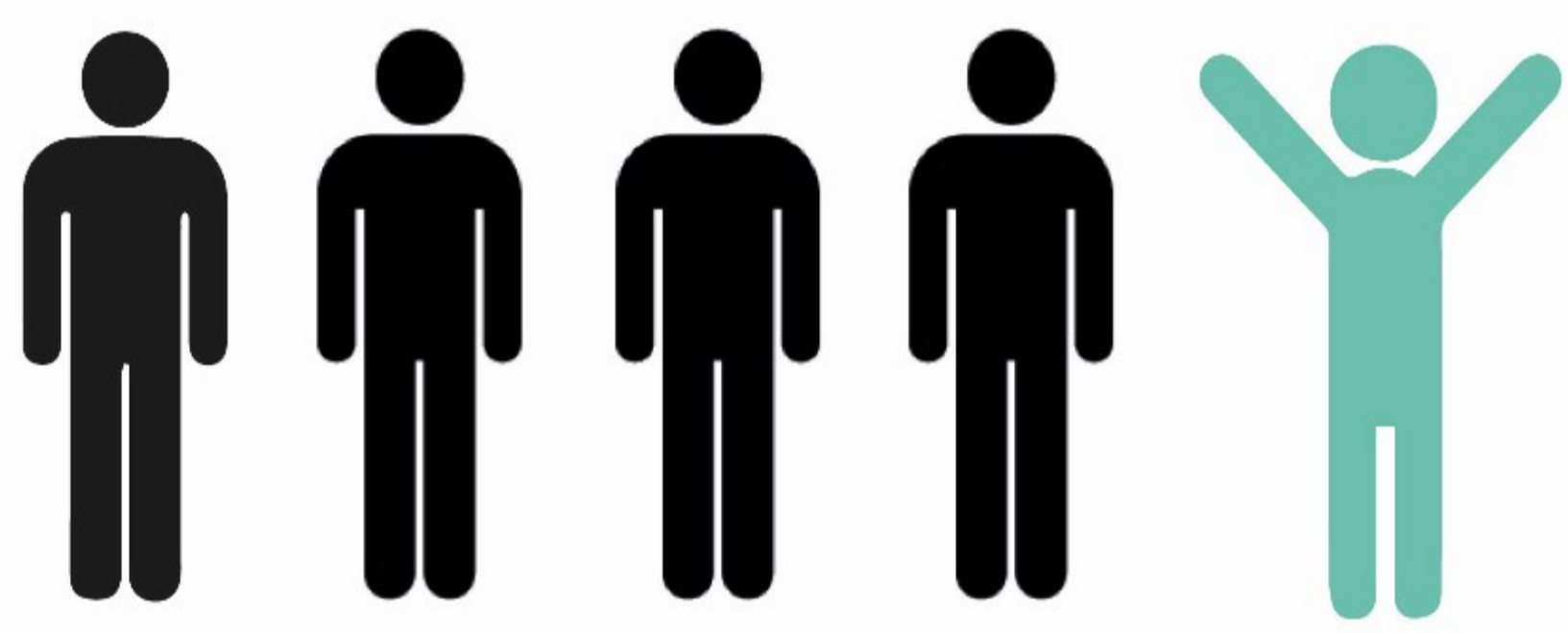
Positive places can be the critical factor in determining whether children's lifestyles are active and healthy. Supportive places enable children to walk or cycle to school, play outdoors, mix with people of different ages and incomes and observe nature.

### Why are child friendly places important?

*Supportive and positive places:*

- Encourage physical activity which contributes to tackling obesity
- Support mental and social development - social skills, independence, healthy risk taking
- Give children a sense of belonging and inclusion in the community
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Encourage active family life, support regeneration

## DEVELOPING CHILD FRIENDLY PLACES IN BELFAST



**50,444** people in Belfast are under the age of 13

That's **one in five** of the population.



### TAKING FORWARD CHILD FRIENDLY PLACES IN BELFAST

A cross sectoral working group was established by Belfast Healthy Cities with key partners in 2013 to take forward the Child Friendly Places agenda in Belfast.

A number of child friendly projects and events have been undertaken as part of developing child friendly places in Belfast, including:

- KidsSpace
- Planning my City
- Shaping Healthier Neighbourhoods for Children
- Children's Schools survey

These projects & events:

- Reflect true engagement with children
- Identify children's priorities
- Have informed the development of
  - A Children's Charter
  - A Call to Action: Shaping Healthier Places for Children in Belfast

### Shaping Healthier Neighbourhoods for Children Project

- Schools Project
- Primary school children aged 9-11 years
- West Belfast (2011/2012) Pilot - 100 children participated
- North, South & East (2013/2014) rolled out 300 children participated
- 400 children in total (17 classes in 12 schools)



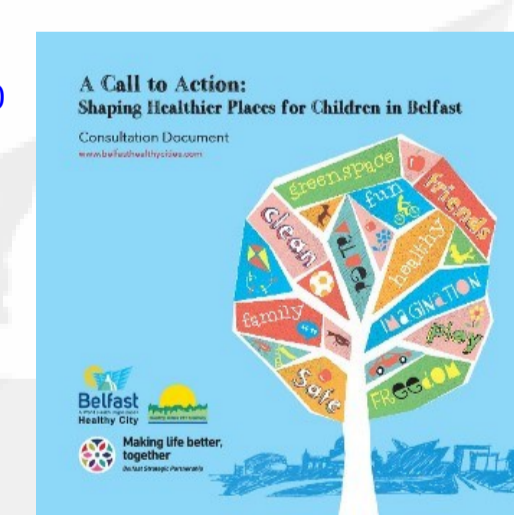
Priorities identified by children in Belfast:

- Greenspace
- Open space
- Clean and Safe Environments
- Liveable Communities
- Less traffic



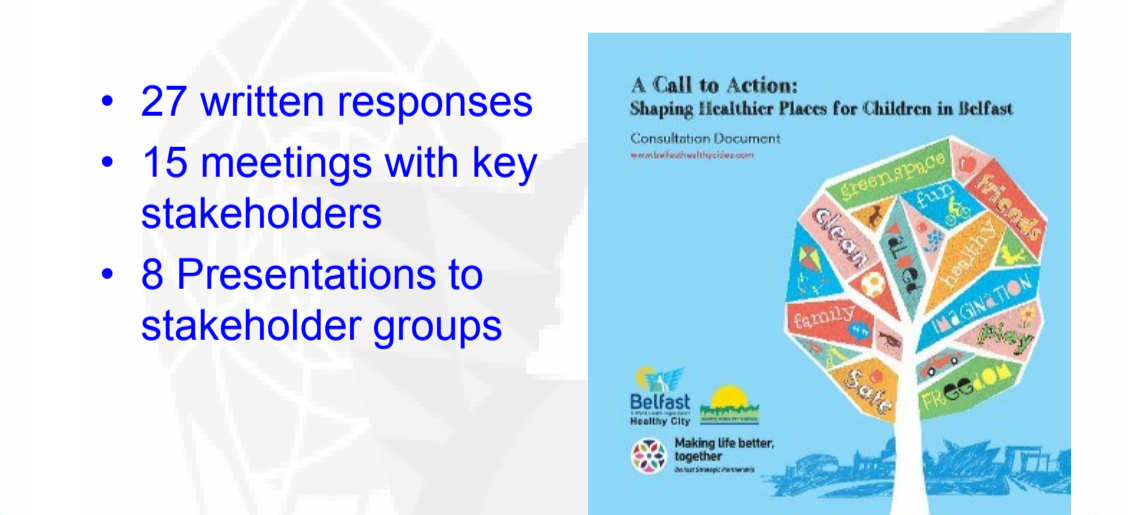
### A Call to Action - Children's Consultation

- All primary schools written to and invited to respond
- Direct engagement with 160 children:
  - St Joseph's, Slate Street
  - Fane Street Primary School
  - Malvern Primary School
  - New Lodge Youth Club
  - Currie Primary School
  - Suffolk After School Club
  - Our Lady's Primary School



### A Call to Action - Stakeholder Consultation

- 27 written responses
- 15 meetings with key stakeholders
- 8 Presentations to stakeholder groups

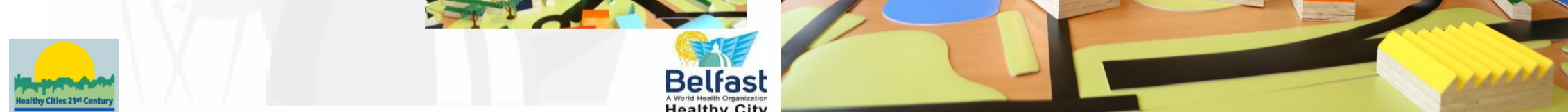


- Pop up child friendly space
- Engages children and families
- Over 5000 participants since 2011

### Planning My City

- Royal Town Planning Institute NI Centenary Event
- Ulster Museum Halloween 2014
- Model designed by students of Ulster University

Children encouraged to plan a city where they would like to live. Model has been used in schools and at community events to gather the opinions of children on good city planning



## CHILD FRIENDLY PLACES: NEXT STEPS

Development of strategic action plan with stakeholders, examples of actions include:

- Mapping of children's health and place issues
- Pilot of schools resource 'Healthy Places, Healthy Children'
- Development of child friendly place principles
- Host a Child Friendly Places conference with International experts

### FIND MORE INFORMATION ON CHILD FRIENDLY PLACES



[www.belfasthealthycities.com/child-friendly-places](http://www.belfasthealthycities.com/child-friendly-places)



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