



MAKING LIFE BETTER

NEWS

ISSUE 5 - Spring 2024

WELCOME

CMO Foreword

Welcome to the Spring edition of the MLB Newsletter.

Following on from the previous issue I am pleased to introduce you to my All Departments Officials Group (ADOG) colleagues Jackie Robinson, Director for Public Transport Policy and Climate Response in the Department for Infrastructure and Andy Cole, Director for NI, Food Standards Agency.

As supported by Minister in his endorsement, co-production is at the heart of MLB and the success of a Newsletter lies in the contents, your contributions and the engagement of the audience. I would therefore encourage you to consider submitting articles for inclusion in the "News from the Network" section in future Newsletters, this is a good opportunity to share your work with the Network and identify areas of common interest. To find out more please email MLBNetwork@hscni.net.



Professor Sir Michael McBride

Health Minister's Endorsement

I am delighted to see the Making Life Better Newsletter and Network have been reestablished.

The Making Life Better Network, with its wide-reaching membership, is an incredibly important mechanism to promote the different aspects of work being taken forward under the strategic framework and provides an excellent platform for collaboration.

Co-production is at the heart of Making Life Better and now, perhaps more than ever before, it is important we find out about different initiatives taking place and begin conversations with colleagues about synergies within our work areas, learning from past experiences and forming new collaborative partnerships.

Mike Nesbitt MLA



Get In Touch

If you have any questions about the content of MLB News, have work you want to share with the Network or wish to join please email :

mlbnetwork@hscni.net

All Departments Officials Group (ADOG) - Introductions

The Food Standards Agency's (FSA) job, set out in law, is to safeguard public health and protect the interests of consumers in relation to food. Our mission is food you can trust, meaning a food system where, food is safe, food is what it says it is, food is healthier and more sustainable. In NI the FSA has a dietary health remit and is a lead delivery partner in the Department of Health's obesity prevention strategy on food industry focussed outcomes. Our Making Food Better Programme (MFB) underpins all dietary health workstreams across manufacturing, out of home and retail. A key priority this year focuses on changing the food environment through the ***introduction of nutritional standards*** across vending in local council and wider public sector settings. Partnership with ADOG will be instrumental in driving system change.

Andy Cole
Director for NI
Food Standards Agency



Jackie Robinson
Director - Public Transport Policy and
Climate Response
Dept for Infrastructure

Public transport is an enabler and allows citizens to travel to work and school, attend health appointments or meet up with friends and family. It is therefore important to both physical and mental wellbeing and is particularly important for people who do not have access to a car. Many people who use public transport also include an element of active travel in their journey by walking, wheeling or cycling to the bus or train. As well as the Translink service DfI also supports the Dial-A-Lift and Disability Action Transport Schemes which are member only services to people who cannot access scheduled public transport services because of location or accessibility issues. Working with ADOG has allowed me to meet officials in other departments, learning from their knowledge and experience but also seeing where public transport can and does add value. This will be particularly important over the next 12 months as we in DfI review the community transport schemes we fund to ensure we maximise the opportunities they gives us.



Did you know?



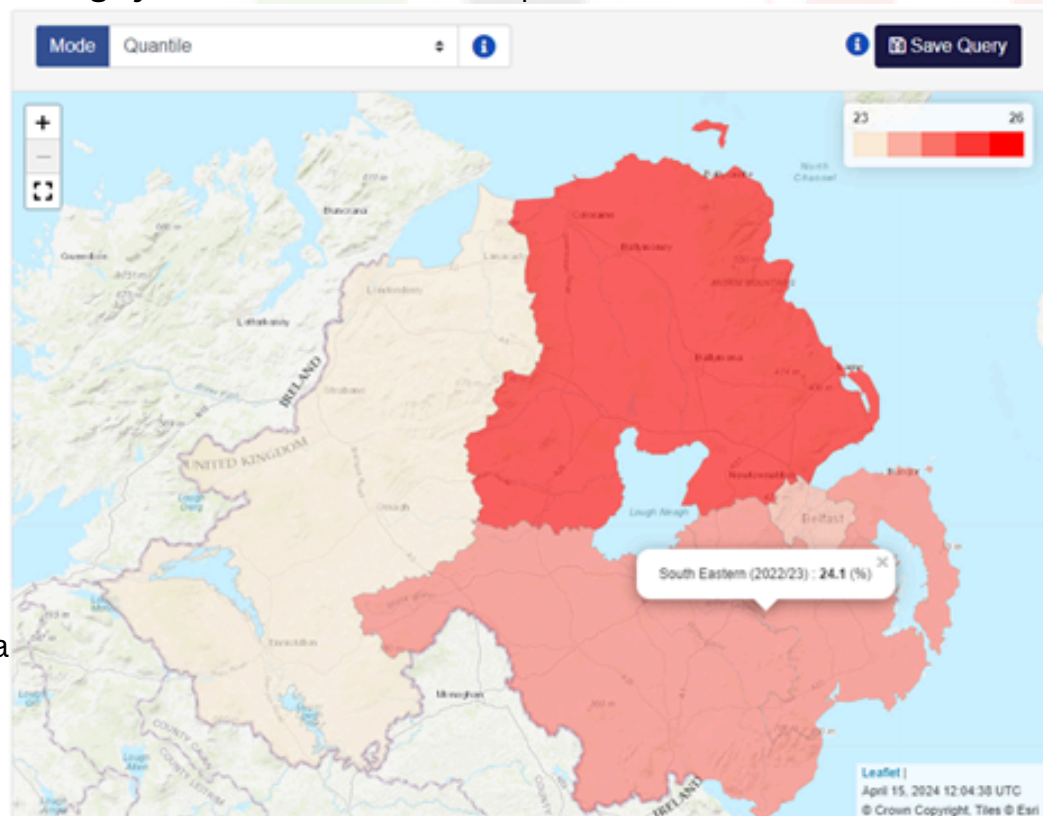
A dedicated section has been developed on the NISRA Data Portal website at data.nisra.gov.uk to facilitate the high-level monitoring of progress on the key Making Life Better indicators. Over the next few newsletters, we will be highlighting some of the information available.

Childhood BMI

Childhood BMI data sits under 'Theme 1 – Giving Every Child the Best Start' and is available at Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) and Local Government District (LGD) level on the NISRA Data Portal. *Data source: Information Analysis Directorate, DOH*

You can view and filter the data, download the table, or build your own chart.

You can also use the built-in mapping tool to show the data on a thematic map (see below) You can use the drop-down boxes to change your selection for the map.



These charts and maps can be included in your own reports or downloaded as 'widgets' which update automatically when data is updated on the NISRA Data Portal. To find out more about widgets, why not check out [the user guide and instructional video](#) on the NISRA website.

On-line training sessions will also be available. Please contact

mlbnetwork@hscni.net

to register your interest.

If you need further information or assistance with the

Data Portal, contact us at info@nisra.gov.uk.

For further information or assistance in understanding the childhood BMI statistics presented, contact the data providers at healthinequalities@health-ni.gov.uk.

NICS staff requiring statistical input and advice should continue to contact their departmental statistics colleagues in the first instance.

Strengthening Communities for Health

Supporting investment decisions in community health programmes.

Background

Strengthening Communities for Health is a partnership approach to enhance community centred and community development approaches to reduce health inequalities, following the ethos and principles set out in Making Life Better. With this approach partners are taking a collective and collaborative view on how communities can be better supported to improve their health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.

Working collaboratively, a digital platform has been created to collate and show a sample of investments made in community capacity building programmes for health. The platform is being considered as the starting point for the development of a decision support tool, which could help enhance collaborative working through sharing information on investments to reduce health inequalities and the wider health context for investments i.e. social determinants, population demographics, etc.

The decision support tool is currently a proof of concept and engagement continues to take place with a range of partners linked to the work of the Strengthening Communities for Health approach and those who might benefit from having access to such information.



The planned next steps

The continued involvement and engagement of stakeholders will be critical for the development of the decision support tool. An Action Group of representatives from relevant organisations will therefore be established to co-design the further development of the decision support tool. If you would like any further information please contact andrew.stenson@hscni.net.

News from the Network



The Executive Programme on Paramilitarism & Organised Crime

A standing article in this Newsletter is “News from the Network”. This is an opportunity for members to provide an introduction to / update of their work area.

Whole System Approach Required to Tackling Paramilitarism

In the last Making Life Better newsletter, The Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime (EPPOC) explained how they’re delivering on their commitments collaboratively and using a public health approach to actively support people and communities who are vulnerable to paramilitary influence and harm.

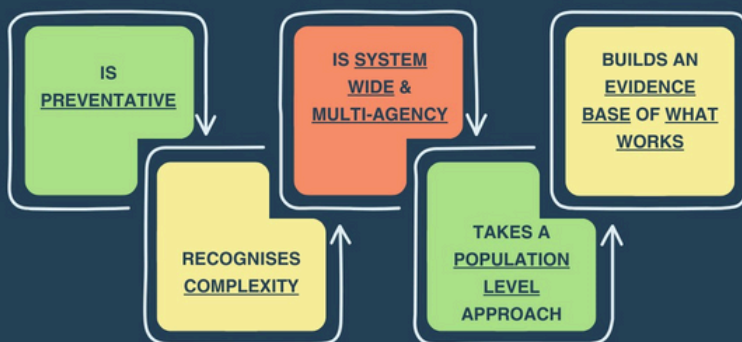
This approach allows more flexibility to talk, not just about paramilitarism, but about harm, vulnerability, and safety. It creates more opportunities to engage partners who might think they have a peripheral role in addressing paramilitarism but who are in fact critical to overall change.

The current Programme structures and governance have all been designed to broaden and deepen collaboration, requiring individuals, communities, organisations, and systems to work together to ensure success.

Sponsors (senior officials from across the public sector) are responsible for championing the Programme in their own business areas and understanding and addressing the external risks, opportunities or dependencies that will either accelerate or slow progress towards outcomes.

EPPOC’s Programme Director, Adele Brown, delivered a presentation to the All Departments Officials Group on 30th May.

A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH



EPPOC@endingtheharm.info

endingtheharm.com

@endingtheharm



For more information on the range of projects that EPPOC invests in, please visit:

endingtheharm.com/about-us.

You can follow them on X/Twitter: [@endingtheharm](https://twitter.com/endingtheharm).

If you would like to sign up for the EPPOC Newsletter, [please click here](#).