



Subject:	Roll Out of 'Take 5' Benches in BCC Parks
Date:	10 th May 2022
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Director of Neighbourhood Services, CNS
Contact Officer:	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager, CNS Jim Morgan, Project Development Senior Officer, CNS

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To update Committee on work proposed to locate approx. 16 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' benches across Council's parks (up to 4 per locality i.e. North, South, East and West) in 2022/23.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the content of the report; and• Agree to the Department's request to work in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA) to use park benches to promote the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' approach as well as information contained on the PHA's Minding Your Head website, accessible via a QR code visible on each bench. Up to sixteen benches will be identified within parks across the city, four benches within each locality.

	Belfast Health Development Unit staff will work with BCC Open Space and Street Scene Managers to identify and agree locations.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background to Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing</u>
3.1	The Public Health Agency have adopted the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing messages as a key component in their work supporting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing. Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing is a set of evidence-based public health messages aimed at improving the wellbeing of the whole population. It is based on the Five Ways to Wellbeing developed by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) as the result of research undertaken as part of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing (2008).
3.2	The 5 steps are; ‘Connect, Be active, Take notice, Keep learning and Give’ – please refer to the leaflet in Appendix 1 for more information or visit: https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/take-5-steps-wellbeing-english-and-11-translations to access downloadable PDFs. These simple and effective messages are based on solid evidence and draw on a wealth of psychological and economic literature from inter-disciplinary work. Evidence indicates individuals who practise all ‘5 steps’ have the highest level of wellbeing regardless of circumstances.
3.3	Council already supports the ‘Take 5’ approach both internally through the promotion of the ‘Take 5’ messages across all BCC facilities as well as externally via social media, open call grant funding, and its work with partners under community planning. BCC staff located within the Belfast Health Development Unit are also supporting this work by providing resources and training opportunities linked directly to the ‘Take 5’ approach. BHDU have also produced a useful toolkit which can be viewed online: https://www.makinglifebettertogether.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Take-5-Toolkit.pdf
	<u>Background to proposed Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing Benches initiative</u>
3.4	Pre-covid and following a request from the local community and subsequent meetings and discussions facilitated by staff from within the Belfast Health Development Unit, a ‘Wellbeing’ bench was placed in Falls Park in West Belfast in December 2019 in partnership with St Paul’s ABC and Suicide Awareness Support Group.
3.5	In the interim period, other councils have installed similar ‘Chatty Benches’ in some of their parks also focussing on the Take 5 messaging (i.e. take notice and connect) such as Ards and North Down, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon and Mid East Antrim Councils.

3.6	<p>Earlier this year, staff from within the Belfast/South Eastern team of the Public Health Agency approached Council via the Belfast Health Development Unit for support in promoting the Take 5 messaging specifically via the installation of more Take 5 benches within Council's parks.</p>
3.7	<p>Both elected members and council officers continue to be regularly approached by members of the public and/or community/sporting groups in relation to memorial benches. And whilst council does enable individuals to purchase memorial seats – see https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/births-deaths-and-ceremonies/crematorium/memorial-options#320-1 this can however be quite costly, and several of our parks now have reduced capacity in terms of being able to locate the seats in people's preferred locations. Council is planning to develop a memorialisation policy in due course which will look at this more broadly in terms of the related issues and proposed solutions applicable across our cemeteries, parks and open spaces.</p>
3.8	<p>However, in the meantime, officers are keen to work in partnership with statutory and community partners to promote our parks and open spaces as places where our residents can go to improve, not only their physical, but also their mental and emotional wellbeing. Thus, Belfast Health Development Unit staff have spoken with Open Space and Street Scene colleagues, alongside Property Maintenance colleagues and with funding available from PHA, we would be able to repurpose up to 16 existing benches to become colourful 'Take 5 benches', incorporating the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing messaging, along with a QR code linking to the PHA's Minding Your Head website and placed in prominent positions within 16 of our parks across the City (4 per area).</p>
3.9	<p>Should the initiative be well-received, and further funding become available, we can consider a further phase/roll out in 23/24.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.10	<p>There are no financial or resource implications to the recommendations outlined above as the required financial resource (£5,000) has been allocated to BHDU via the Public Health Agency.</p>
	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p>
3.11	<p>Staff within Belfast Health Development Unit currently support Take 5 work and this will be the case going forward with this proposal.</p>

3.12	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no equality or good relations implications to the recommendations outlined above.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Take 5 Leaflet