



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first edition of the Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership newsletter for 2021.

What better time than Spring to look forward to brighter days for everyone in our communities. The Covid-19 vaccine is hopefully on the horizon for us all in the next few months meaning that people in our city will soon be able to come together in some format to enjoy sport and physical activity face to face. Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Officers and Co-funded Officers are very much looking forward to getting back into sports centres, schools, pitches and parks and meeting programme participants in person.

Looking after our physical and mental health is such an important part of living meaningful, fulfilling and happy lives. This pandemic has brought increased focus on this need and sheds light on the critical role Sports Partnerships and Local Authorities play in nurturing our communities.

Since lockdown DCSWP has focussed on exploring and developing innovative ways to ensure the continuation of our services. It must be acknowledged that the virtual world has been our friend through this tough time. On the 15th March we were delighted to launch our [DCSWP Virtual Hub](#), which kicked off with our core programme Change For Life 2021.

The development of the Hub and other online ventures prove that the combination of resilience, creativity, team-work and commitment will always overcome barriers. The Hub will continue to be of critical importance during this transition period and provide an invaluable supportive resource in the blended delivery of services in the long-term.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all the best to our outgoing Head of Section, Jim Beggan who led the Sports Service for over 10 years through many challenging times and extend a warm welcome to our new Head of Section, Frank d'Arcy. Finally we would like to welcome our new Co-funded FAI Officers, Heather Jameson and Clare Conway and thank outgoing Officers for the incredible work they have done for communities across Dublin City.

LORD MAYOR'S 5 ALIVE VIRTUAL CHALLENGE

Not even a pandemic could stop the annual Lord Mayor's 5 Alive Challenge taking place in 2021. The Challenge is such an important part of DCSWP's calendar as it encourages and supports people to take on the New Year with positivity and determination.

The Challenge is now in its 9th year which is a testament to its ongoing success. As with many programmes LM5 Alive adapted and went virtual this year in view of Covid-19 Health and Safety considerations. Novice walkers and joggers signed up to 5 road races which took place between January and March. Support was provided with regular motivational messages from the Lord Mayor's Office and through the dedicated Facebook page which encouraged 5 Alivers to come together and share their journey. The purpose of the LM5 Alive Challenge is not just to finish the races but to kick start a new lifestyle, one that will see participants prioritise their health and fitness for life, a message that was summed up by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Hazel Chu:

"You have got out there and walked and ran during the hard winter months – keep it up now we are coming into warmer weather. If you need to have something to work towards, there's lots out there. Another challenge is the (not)parkrun which is being done by parkrun Ireland. As they can't hold their weekly 5k runs / walks, they are encouraging all parkrunners to do a 5k a day and you just register online. The best bit is you get into the habit of doing a daily 5k!"

People can register for parkrun [here](#).

Thank you to the team in the Lord Mayor's Office for ensuring the 2021 LM5 Alive Challenge tradition continued.



VIRTUAL CHANGE FOR LIFE

The Change For Life programme is made possible every year thanks to Healthy Ireland and the many wonderful partnerships DCSWP has fostered with groups and organisations in our communities. However, the success of the programme would not be realised without the spirit of our brave participants. It takes courage to make changes in our lives and for many the programme has sparked life-long changes to their

health and wellbeing. Thank you to all our staff members and external partners involved in the development of the DCSWP Hub. Please see next page where we will interview our Change For Life Co-ordinator and DCSWP Sport Officer, Darren Taaffe.

DARREN TAAFFE

Darren, explain to us the basics behind the Change For Life programme.

Change for Life is an 8-week programme focused on giving people from all ages and abilities a greater pathway to sustainable improved health and wellbeing. The programme focuses on promoting opportunities for communities to get sustainably active and create a greater awareness of how some small changes can influence big results. Giving our participants opportunities to become more active and stay social over a wide variety of activities, promoting and educating nutrition and lifestyle management along with assessing and monitoring people's body composition we hope to give people a toolkit for improved physical and mental health.

This has proven to be very successful over the years with huge growth in participants along with a vast geographical spread of programmes within communities all across the city showing brilliant results.



As a DCSWP Citywide Sport Officer you were involved with the development of a DCC staff focused CFL programme in 2020. Tell us a bit about how that came about and why.

With the continued growth of the Change for Life programme we felt that there would be an appetite for a DCC staff focused programme in the main Civic Offices. We sourced two on site locations and two expert coaches and opened the programme to all staff. The feedback was great, so much so that we capped registration due to venue capacity. The atmosphere and work rate was quality with everyone attending and working their socks off during each class. The plan was to branch out to staff locations outside of Civic Offices this year but as we know, Covid had other ideas but we will be there post-Covid in person and in the meantime the Hub is a fantastic resource.

With the incredible challenges Covid has presented for DCSWP as a service in the last year how has the development of the Virtual Hub helped to overcome barriers?

With continued levels of tight restrictions we found huge challenges across the entire team to deliver to the communities within the city. With so much going virtual we needed to change and adapt very quickly. The DCSWP Hub allows us to deliver services and connect with communities once again which is invaluable to some we know. We are so lucky to have an unreal team of Sport Officers, Co-funded Officers and an Admin team too that are always looking to overcome challenges and find a way to get our city active.

How important is a programme like Change For Life for communities in general and particularly at a time like this?

Programmes like Change for Life give communities a huge lift in spirit alone and in these tougher times possibly even more so. We see great enthusiasm from participants to make sure not only themselves but their families and friends are all getting involved and attending the classes. Healthy competitiveness is great within neighbouring communities and in previous years, Sport Officers have supported this by providing opportunities for everyone to compete and have fun. This year has been a challenge no doubt, but our team and coaches have been delighted to see familiar faces getting stuck in and smiling along the way even in a virtual world.

We would like to thank all of our brave Change For Life community participants and our wonderful instructors. Change For Life is made possible every year because of the spirit they bring to the programme. We hope the journey has sparked positive life-long changes to their health and wellbeing.

KEEP WELL CAMPAIGN

SUPPORTING OLDER ADULTS

'Keep Well', the Healthy Ireland and Central government backed national campaign was launched in October last year. The campaign aims to highlight the critical importance of minding ourselves both physically and mentally during these uncertain times. Keep Well is described as a 'call to action' to everyone across society whether at individual, organisational or voluntary level to support people in discovering the many ways we can work together to build community resilience.

DCSWP plays a pivotal role in delivering on the vision of Keep Well. The campaign themes focus on staying active, staying connected, eating well and minding our mental health thereby aligning with many of the goals that have shaped the Partnership's strategic vision. In addition, the campaign is community-centred, all-inclusive and partnership-led; values which reflect our approach to the delivery of our programmes and services.

With these shared values in mind, we were proud to have secured funding from Sport Ireland to deliver three Keep Well initiatives which will build on and enhance many of our existing programmes. With older and more vulnerable people in our communities facing a lengthy cocooning period, supporting their physical and mental health in the confinement of home became a matter of priority for DCSWP. This campaign has provided a fantastic opportunity for us to further enable people to stay active and healthy in the safety of their own homes.

The initiative kicked off on Monday 25th February with 90 brave older adults signing up to take part. Chair-based fitness classes were chosen with adaptations in place to ensure the programme was fully inclusive. The classes are delivered every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and provide a mixture of fitness, pilates and yoga geared towards improving strength and balance. Officers also worked closely with individuals to ease any concerns, advising on issues around technology and engaging with coaches familiar to many of our participants.

However the classes are not just about maintaining fitness – many of us have been deprived of our normal day-to-day social interactions, particularly those forced to isolate from neighbours, friends and families. In a shrunken world, virtual approaches to staying in touch can provide a much-needed boost to our collective mental health. DCSWP Sport Officer Michelle Malone from the South East area tells us that the social element is equally as important and that classes start and end with a chat and a few laughs.

"This is the only time I see people since Covid started. It is my only contact with other people." – Eithne

"I have arthritis and the yoga has really helped to ease the pain." – Lillian

"My Mam and her friends are taking your classes through the community group in Clonshaugh and love your classes. I can see the improvement in not only fitness but also mental health especially for the few who are still cocooning. It has also improved my mam's confidence with Zoom and video calling so they set up coffee/wine dates now. Thank you to you and the team, they all really appreciate the work you are doing."

"Thanks for the online classes. I have really enjoyed them and managed to attend every one of them. They have been a real life saver in the current circumstances."



Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership
Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Couch to 3k Walk to Jog PROGRAMME

FREE TO TAKE PART

6 WEEK ONLINE PROGRAMME
WEEKLY TRAINING PLAN WILL BE SENT OUT

REGISTER ONLINE ON EVENTBRITE
WWW.COUGHTO3K.EVENTBRITE.IE

KEEP WELL
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

STARTS
MONDAY 25TH
JANUARY 2021

hi
SPORT IRELAND
Dublin na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES - COUCH TO 3K

DCSWP walking and jogging initiatives take place throughout the year across our communities but take on a strategic focus from January - March every year as part of our Couch to 5k and Get Dublin Walking core programmes. As 2021 arrived we all needed something to boost our spirits and focus on setting and realising goals. The virtual 6-week Couch to 3k 'Walk To Jog' programme was an adaptation of our core programmes and was designed to give people a starting point as they took on New Year challenges. Over 1000 participants signed up to the virtual programme which was an amazing response to the initiative. DCSWP's Citywide Officers supported participants on their journey by circulating daily and weekly plans and provided advice on building progress steadily. The good news is that another virtual Couch to 3k challenge is on its way!



Please see next page for a snapshot of Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership in 2020

€2.8million budget

56

Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership Staff



19 Sport Officers

2 Sport Inclusion & Integration Officers

7 Admin Staff

27 Co-funded Staff:

1 Health Promotion Officer

12 Soccer

5 Boxing

6 Rugby

1 Rowing

1 Cricket

2 Athletics

58,446 participations in our 1,428 programmes



48% Female



52% Male

4,211 of these from 40 online programmes

2,092

of these are participants with disabilities

1,172

of these participants are older adults

233

people participated in training programmes

Sport for Young People Small Grant Scheme

€51,800

allocated to 147 clubs

COVID-19 Club Small Grant Scheme

€87,030

allocated to 86 clubs