



2020 | Winter

newsletter | nuachtlitir

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a very special edition of the Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Winter Newsletter.

2020 has been a year like no other in living memory. Looking back at our last newsletter in March which celebrated the end of our Change For Life programme it is difficult to process what we have all been through in the last nine months. The arrival of Covid-19 has tested both ourselves and our loved ones in so many ways. The 'stay home, stay safe' message along with other national health and safety initiatives has been critically important in terms of protecting and saving lives. However on an emotional level it has infringed on our previously taken for granted liberties.

In the midst of this crisis, maintaining positive health and wellbeing took on an even greater significance.

The benefits of enjoying regular physical activity regardless of age, ability or background and providing opportunities to do so has always been the fundamental goal of DCSWP.

A recently shrunken world has and will not diminish that aim. The commitment of our team and the ability to reimagine and adapt programmes to support residents in the city through this challenging time has been inspirational. Working with partners remains very important in the delivery of these programmes and this will be shown in stories throughout the newsletter.

We also have to pay tribute to our amazing communities. A pandemic may have deprived people of maintaining their normal day to day activities and social interactions but it has not prevented them from taking up new challenges and showing us all what real resilience looks like.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and thank you from all of us at DCSWP for playing your part over the past few months.

COVID RESPONSE

STAY HOME, STAY ACTIVE, STAY HEALTHY

With older people in our communities facing a potentially lengthy cocooning period, supporting their physical and mental health in the confinement of home became a matter of priority for DCSWP.

As discussed in the introduction we value the many partnerships we have with other organisations and the contribution they make to the delivery of our programmes and services. In March the 'Stay Home, Stay Active, Stay Healthy' initiative was made possible in a very short timeframe because of the close working relationship we have cultivated with Age Friendly Dublin City. The swift response to a changed environment show that urgency and innovation often go hand in hand!

'Stay Home, Stay Active, Stay Healthy' was designed to enable older people to keep active and healthy in the safety of their own homes. This guideline booklet provides critical advice on recommended daily activity times older adults should aim for, handy tips on how to achieve this at home and easy to follow exercises with instructions.

Speaking about the initiative former Lord Mayor of Dublin, Tom Brabazon said:

"It is important that everyone continues to keep active and healthy during the Covid-19 pandemic and I welcome these exercise guidelines as they will allow older people to stay active and healthy in the safety of their own homes."



COVID RESPONSE



Shauna McIntyre, General Manager of Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership said:

"We are delighted to produce the Stay Home, Stay Active, Stay Healthy booklet for our older citizens in collaboration with Dublin City Council and Age Friendly Dublin City. Exercise is really important as it not only keeps your body strong and healthy, but also your mind, especially during difficult times like these. We hope people will find it useful and will enjoy doing the exercises at home."

The booklet was initially distributed to older people in Dublin City through our Staff and Volunteer Network and continues to be delivered by DCSWP Sport Officers in local communities. A follow up booklet 'Let's Get Moving Again' was also developed to support older adults to safely embrace exercise in the outdoors following the easing of post-lockdown restrictions in June.

This response to the lockdown challenge has also produced an invaluable long-term resource for ongoing support in a post-covid world.



COUCH TO 3K

On the 29th June, Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership ran the Couch to 3k - Walk to Jog programme in conjunction with Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, South Dublin County and Fingal Sports Partnerships. The 6-week programme saw over 2000 people talking part across Dublin City. A weekly plan kept participants on their toes, gradually increasing the difficulty of daily tasks as the weeks went on. Our walkers and joggers were sent weekly emails to check in on their progress and to give them some wise words of encouragement. At the end of the 6 weeks each participant was sent a medal to celebrate their fantastic achievement.

REMOTE EXERCISING

As our city began to change in March we needed to adapt and provide remote ways for our communities to keep active and healthy. For many it was difficult to find time or ideas for physical activity so over 4 weeks we introduced a series of 9 online exercise videos – from fun family workouts, to Chair Yoga, to DanceFit classes, there was something for people of all ages and abilities.

To kick-off the series we had a fun and engaging family workout with Irish Football International Áine O'Gorman which included the opportunity to win a jersey signed by the Irish Women's Football Team! Áine and Shannen Devlin picked up the pace in their HIIT and DanceFit classes for those energetic people at home trying to blow off some steam.

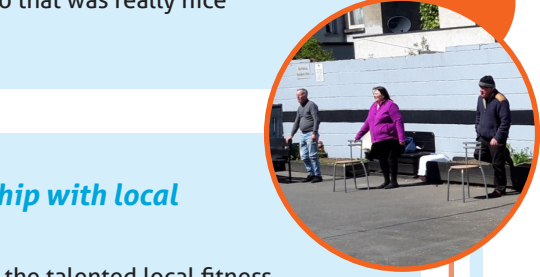
Liagh Miller and Sarah Murphy slowed things down for others who just needed a bit of relaxation time. Our Sport Inclusion and Integration Officers Nuala and Lisa demonstrated fun and adaptable games suitable for the whole family to enjoy, using any household items they could get their hands on – from pots and pans, to bedsheets to the lid from a Celebrations chocolate box!



SPORT INCLUSION & INTEGRATION

Earlier this year our Sport Inclusion & Integration Officers Lisa Kelly and Nuala O'Donovan facilitated the Change for Life Programme for a number of disability organisations. Men and women from the Central Remedial Clinic in Clontarf and Raheny benefitted from getting fitter, healthier and socialising throughout the programme. During the first phase of Covid-19 restrictions our SIOs stepped up to the mark and adapted the programme to deliver weekly physical activity sessions online, with guest instructors delivering boxercise, yoga and more. The online classes kept the participants' spirits up and maintained a sense of normality during challenging times.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



We recently spoke to Catherine Flood, Sport Officer for Canal Communities in the South Central area about the Doorstep Challenge Programme, which was one of the many heart-warming stories of how communities came together during this crisis.

CATHERINE FLOOD

Catherine can you tell us how the Doorstep Challenge got up and running during lockdown?

It all started through myself and the community groups I work with – Fatima Groups United, Bluebell & Inchicore Community Development Project and Dolphin Health Project.

It was very important for me to maintain contact with the communities I work in and find ways to respond to their needs and wants. In speaking with them I found that there was a huge outcry from people to facilitate exercise classes. Due to restrictions at the time the only safe option was to run the classes within the communities where people could safely exercise from their doorstep.

We initially started out with Zoom classes bringing those communities together through the online. This then led on to the doorstep exercise class which in turn led us to live stream the doorstep classes to people who were not from the area or didn't feel safe to come out.

Maintaining physical exercise is really important but can you describe how the programme connected people in the community during this time?

Physical exercise can be done anywhere in our homes, in our back garden, alone in the park or via Zoom. Since Covid hit this is what was happening and it is still happening. People are reaping the benefits which is amazing. However as human beings we need social interaction – it has a huge impact on our overall health and wellbeing and is an essential part of our everyday life. When we first started the classes just watching everyone meeting each other for the first time since Covid hit was amazing. Everyone was buzzing and our classes were full of laughter and craic.

It was a privilege to be part of it.

It lit the spark back into them and many described it as a lifeline.

Requests soon came in following the first classes asking that we deliver the programme in their locality so it has grown which is brilliant. Active participants go beyond those who come out onto their doorsteps – we had some of our most important followers watching from their windows with many commenting that they just loved seeing their locality come alive. It has been a lonely time for many so that was really nice to hear.

Finally Catherine can you tell us how important working in partnership with local groups is especially at a time like this?

I work closely with these groups on an ongoing basis but I was genuinely amazed at the talented local fitness instructors who responded so quickly with care and compassion to communities during this tough time.

Each and everyone involved played a huge part in helping their community cope with the sudden life change. It is important to say that this was a cross-community project – we worked together to bring the doorstep exercise programme to life.

**Thank you Catherine and to the community you work in.
Who says you can't keep up exercise levels while having a good old gossip with the neighbours!**

REACT, RETHINK, RESTART

SPORTSFEST 2020 - BE ACTIVE BINGO

This year as part of European Week of Sport and Dublin Sportsfest 2020 we hosted BeActive Bingo – an exciting, interactive online event led by the one and only Eoghan McDermott of RTÉ. With the support of Sport Ireland and the European Union Erasmus+ Programme the participants got ready to PLAY, MOVE and WIN on 26th September 2020.

We brought Bingo to your kitchens, sitting rooms, bedrooms and back gardens. In between Bingo rounds Dublin families across the city got their heart rates up with a series of fun activities suitable for all fitness levels led by our very own Aideen O'Connor (DCSWP Programmes & Services Development Manager), Gerard O'Donnell (Co-funded Athletics Ireland Officer) and Keith Coleman (Dance Instructor). Dublin's amateur boxing legend Kellie Harrington made a special appearance to run through some simple boxing drills with our online audience. We were delighted so many people all around Dublin could join us and be a part of our special event.

We at Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership wanted to thank everyone for playing their part during challenging times. We couldn't bring Bingo to you in person this was the next best thing. Amazing prizes were won on the night including a €2000 voucher for Center Parcs Ireland! 100% of ticket sales from BeActive Bingo went back into Community Fund prizes won by a number of local sports and activity clubs within Dublin City.



DISCOVERING THE JOY OF DIVING

Summer is such a great time to truly enjoy the simple benefits of exercising in our natural surroundings. Engaging with nature often helps us to leave the stressors of the world behind for a while, breathe a little and focus our minds on the here and now. As restrictions started to ease on 29th June our Sport Officers were on hand to support local groups and communities to get out and get exercising in a Covid-safe environment.

We spoke to Sport Officer Sharon Kelly about supporting young people in the summer months through her collaboration with Diving Ireland and teaming up with her colleagues to deliver the Head to the Hills Walking and Hiking programme.

Sharon is a qualified diving instructor with Aquatec TUDublin Sub Aqua Club and in early 2020 she collaborated with The National Governing Body for scuba and snorkelling, Diving Ireland to support the planning and delivery of a pilot Junior Diver One Star Programme aimed at young people in disadvantaged areas. As with many other programmes Covid temporarily halted progress but Sharon continued to meet virtually with Diving Ireland and our wonderful partners, Ballyfermot Youth Service and Adventure Centre (BYS) to discuss how the programme might be progressed during the summer months.

Despite Covid related closures our Sports & Fitness Centres continue to provide fantastic training facilities. Sole access to Ballyfermot Sports & Fitness Centre allowed young divers to learn snorkelling and scuba techniques in the pool and undergo important theoretical classroom training in a safe environment before taking to the open water.

Once out in the water scuba sessions took place in stunning locations including Slade Harbour and Hook Head in county Wexford. Each student was required to complete five dives to achieve their qualification and additional dives were facilitated by Portmarnock Sub Aqua Club and Aquatec TUDublin Sub Aqua Club.

The quick adaptation and delivery of this special programme is testament to the commitment of our Sport Officers and the importance of fostering very positive working partnerships.



HEAD TO THE HILLS

As part of the January to March 2020 Change for Life programme a team of Sport Officers in partnership with the Ballyfermot Youth Services Outdoor Adventure Centre, worked closely together to develop an intergenerational walking programme with people of all ages taking part in a selection of hill walks. Participants commenced with flat walks and worked up to some of the more well known Dublin Wicklow Walks as part of the 'Head to the Hills' programme. Just before lockdown arrived the final walk took place in beautiful Roundwood with approximately 60 to 80 participants from various locations around the city.

There are moments in our lives when we all need to take time to discover or rediscover life's simple pleasures and there has never been a more important year to focus on activities that can boost our mood and overall mental health. During the summer when the Covid restrictions were somewhat relaxed our team of Sport Officers was ready to hit the ground running with plans in place to help adventurous groups hit their stride and safely explore our extraordinary hill and mountain trails.

ACTIVATOR POLES

The Activator Pole Programme is just one of many initiatives that demonstrates how valuable cross-area collaborations can be. Michelle Waters, Sport Officer in the Central area spoke to us about her partnership with Sharon Kelly in the planning and delivery of this unique programme. While facilitating a workshop delivered by FitWalk Ireland, both officers realised the potential of developing the programme in local communities.

So just what are Activator Poles and how does the programme work? Activator Poles were designed by therapists and are particularly suitable for people with balance concerns or mobility issues. The programme has benefits for disability groups and inactive adults as it reduces the impact on hips and knees, develops core strength and improves posture. It isn't all hard work though – participants learn to master the technique while listening to music, mingling and making new friends!

Due to Covid-19 roll out of the programme halted. However, a number of outdoor sessions were made possible. One very positive partnership was with the Heels & Wheels group in Drumcondra delivered in partnership with colleague Derek Ahern. The good news is that a four-week programme will be offered to members in the New Year with a back-up online programme in place to make sure there is no stopping this creative approach to keeping active and connected.

ORIENTEERING

Many of us hear the words physical activity and think immediately of competitive team sports, heading to the gym in the mornings or jogging through the city in the evenings but there are so many alternative ways that we can boost our levels of activity while also learning new skills and having some fun along the way.

DCSWP is always looking for creative ways to engage people whatever the choice of activity. With this in mind we recently teamed up with Orienteering Ireland to support people to take up something a little different. Orienteering provides great opportunities for everyone to develop important life skills, build self-esteem and learn the benefits of teamwork in the great outdoors. Training workshops delivered by Orienteering Ireland in October have provided DCSWP Sport Officers with the knowledge and practical understanding of teaching the basic skills of orienteering. In Dublin we are lucky to have some of the most beautiful green spaces in the world lovingly tended to by our wonderful colleagues in the Parks & Landscape Services Department. These spaces and parks will play host to our orienteering programmes in 2021 meaning participants can enjoy a new challenge in a very special environment.



CO-FUNDED COVID HEROES

In DCSWP we always talk about how the choice of physical activity runs deeper than simply staying fit. Whatever our age or ability we can continue to learn and be motivated by pursuing our passions or taking on something new. Our 27 Co-Funded Officers in Athletics, Boxing, Cricket, Football, Rowing and Rugby have worked very hard in the past few months to adapt their programmes to meet the demands of Covid 19 safety provisions and offer something for everyone. There have been so many supports offered, from club support to online or adapted versions of new and existing programmes, ongoing work with local youth services and engagement with local schools.

STARTBOX AT HOME - BOXING BASICS

Starting in May our Co-Funded IABA Boxing Officers Ed Griffin and Oisín Fagan began StartBox at Home: Boxing Basics, an introductory 8-week programme for beginners. Ed covered the sequence of online boxing tutorials including basic boxing techniques, combinations and drills, while Oisín covered strength and fitness training. At the end of each week Ed hosted amazing interviews with current and former professional and amateur boxers, along with high performance unit coaches. Well known boxing faces included World Champion Kellie Harrington, 2-time Olympian Philip Sutcliffe Snr., former World Middleweight Champion Andy Lee and many more. Ed discussed their boxing careers to date and the highlights of their careers.





MARATHON KIDS

Marathonkids Ireland is an 8-week educational, health and wellbeing program for primary school students. The program involves daily short runs, education on physical and mental health, nutrition and exercise.

The programme commenced in 2015 and in 2019 Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing teamed up with South Dublin and Fingal County Council's LSP's to deliver the programme in schools across the Dublin region. Our Sport Officers are engaged with schools in every area to maximise delivery of important initiative for our young people. Sport Officer, Will Morris said:

"Life might be very different this year but it didn't stop over 3000 brave school children and their teachers in the Dublin City area taking up the 2020 challenge."

In previous years the programme focussed on 5th and 6th class students but this year it encouraged students at 3rd and 4th class to also get involved. Each school not only stayed the distance but maintained the distance by running their own final mile event due to Covid-19 restrictions. T-shirts, medals and booklets were supplied to all schools to ensure the incredible achievement of our young participants was acknowledged.

An online version of the information booklet and a weekly link to the Marathonkids interactive website was also made available to support delivery of the programme.

DCSWP is so proud to have been involved in the successful adaptation and continuation of the programme. The relentless enthusiasm and energy of young people reminds us all to keep going in difficult times. Well done to all of our 2020 Marathonkids students.



BIKE WEEK

As part of Bike Week 2020 our Sports Officers, Fergal Scally, Olivia Shattock and John McDonald delivered and led two Community Cycling Workshops.

The first of the workshops was aimed at beginner/intermediate cyclists to improve their confidence and bike handling skills. Sanitised bikes, helmets and high-vis vests were provided for all participants by Dublin City Council before they could complete a safety and skills workshop. They then cycled the coastal cycleway stretching from East Wall Water Sports Centre to Sutton before stopping for a socially distanced coffee and catch-up in St. Anne's Park.

Our second Community Cycle Workshop was geared towards intermediate cyclists but still followed the same gear, safety and skills procedures. Participants accepted the 26km cycle challenge from East Wall to Howth Village, stopping to take in the scenery before heading back.

All sessions were delivered and led in a safe manner and all government guidelines were adhered to during the workshops. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 restrictions the planned bike safety and maintenance workshop with the group could not take place, however our Sport Officers plan to deliver it in 2021 when it is safe to do so.



SUPPORTING OUR CLUBS

SPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE SMALL GRANT SCHEME

We support our local clubs every year via the The Sport for Young People Small Grant Scheme. The grant is available to sports clubs operating within the administrative area of Dublin City Council affiliated to a National Governing Body of Sport. The purpose of the scheme is to provide opportunities for young people aged 4 - 21 years to participate in sport and physical activity. The grant scheme is funded by Sport Ireland and administered by Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership. Applications for the grant opened at the end of June 2020 and we are delighted to announce 151 sports clubs across the city have been approved for funding under the grant scheme for 2020.

SPORT IRELAND COVID-19 CLUB SMALL GRANT SCHEME

As a response to the pandemic crisis the new COVID-19 small grant scheme was introduced as part of an overall programme from the Government of Ireland, implemented through Sport Ireland and the Local Sports Partnerships to support the sports sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. This scheme was designed to help clubs that did not have the finances to implement COVID-19 related hygiene and social distancing protocols. This much welcomed support scheme was designed to assist clubs during their return to sporting activities and events.

GET ALL GIRLS ACTIVE

GAGA

A critical part of DCSWP's role involves supporting young women to stay active and healthy. We play a lead role in an interagency health and wellbeing collaboration led by Children & Young People's Services Committee, Northside Partnership, TUSLA, Healthy Ireland, Pobal and relevant partners in Central Government.



Get All Girls Active or 'GAGA' is DCSWP's core programme is dedicated to increasing opportunities for females to participate in sport and physical activity. Research has shown that teenage girls are at a higher risk of dropping out of sport and exercise than any other demographic. Our dedicated programme recognises that we have a pivotal role to play in ensuring opportunities like this are provided to keep teenage girls active and healthy.

In 2020, as part of the expansion of programme, DCSWP applied for and secured Healthy Ireland funding to roll out a Women in Sport Initiative which led to the development and delivery of a school physical activity and exercise programme aimed at teenage girls aged 12-15 years.

While the Covid-19 pandemic has proved to be a challenge in getting this programme up and running it has been successfully delivered in 5 schools in North Dublin this semester:

- Mount Carmel, Kings Inns St., Dublin 1
- Colaiste Mhuire, Cabra, Dublin 7
- St. Mary's Holy Faith, Killester, Dublin 5
- Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont, Dublin 9
- Trinity Comprehensive, Ballymun, Dublin 9

To date approximately 150 girls have taken part in this initiative which has included Zumba classes, aerobic and circuit training, athletics, volleyball, and tag rugby. Delivery of these multi-sport programmes would not be made possible without the support of schools, coaches and our co-funded colleagues. Girl power will continue in schools in 2021 with the planning of further programmes.

PE teacher Andrea from Mount Carmel Secondary School in D1 was kind enough to share her own experience of the programme and insight from the GAGA class of 2020:



2020
IF SHE CAN'T SEE IT, SHE CAN'T BE IT

"The GAGA programme has really benefitted the girls in our school and it is great that they were encouraged to get active early on a Monday morning. The girls seem more alert in their classes throughout the day and their moods are automatically lifted. Lauren is a fantastic dance teacher and very accommodating. She really has impacted the students in a positive way and I hope that this will encourage a more active lifestyle amongst the students."

Mount Carmel students have said:

"The dance sessions really boosted up your mood, especially on a Monday morning, which made you engage really well in other classes throughout the day. Tried out new things and learning dance routines were fun."

"I really liked the dance session and I really enjoyed it. I like dancing and it was so much fun. The teacher was an amazing teacher also. I really liked her."

"I really enjoyed the past weeks because of the GAGA programme. It got us to be more active by doing a fun and activity. We laughed and danced together along with the extraordinary trainer."



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



The Healthy Ireland Fund supported by the Department of Health, and Department of Children and Youth Affairs



LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING AHEAD

**CHANGE
FOR LIFE**

CHANGE FOR LIFE

Early 2020 seems like such a long time ago but prior to the March lockdown DCSWP was proud to see the completion of our flagship new year initiative, Change For Life. The programme has been a highlight for DCSWP bringing local communities together since 2013 and it continues to grow from strength to strength every year. It runs in tandem with and emulates the format of RTE's Operation Transformation providing communities across the city with the opportunity to embrace healthier habits for life. Change For Life initially targeted underactive adults of all ages and abilities but due to its phenomenal success it has expanded to include children and teenagers.

In 2020 DCSWP was proud to introduce a staff programme in order to support our colleagues in Dublin City Council. The average worker spends a significant amount of time in the workplace so developing and introducing a staff focussed programme was something the Partnership was passionate about.

As discussed in the opening message, agile thinking and contingency planning has meant the continuation of many of our programmes albeit in a different format. We are very excited that funding from our partner Healthy Ireland has been approved meaning that Change For Life will march on for another year. The message of the programme is that we can all remove the barriers we so often put up for ourselves once we set our mind to it and learn to thrive both physically and mentally. That message remains steadfast even during these incredibly difficult times. It takes great courage to change our lives and DCSWP will be there every step of the way to support our 2021 Change For Life participants.



LORD MAYOR'S 5 ALIVE 2020

In 2019 Paul McAuliffe, the then Lord Mayor of Dublin, announced the introduction of the eighth year of the Lord Mayor's 5 Alive challenge. Over the years LM5Alive has encouraged hundreds of people to take up regular exercise by participating in five of Dublin's famous road races.

Sadly the challenge was cut short in March this year prior to its fourth event, the St. Patrick's Day Festival race. However participants were encouraged to keep the momentum up and stay the course through inspirational emails from the Lord Mayor's Office providing information on initiatives such as virtual parkrun and DCSWP's Couch to 3k.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank staff

in the Lord Mayor's Office for all the hard work organising the distribution of medals and certificates for the class of 2020. It gave a much needed boost to collective morale. That message of gratitude comes straight from horses mouths as two of our own staff members in DCSWP took up the challenge this year.

In very positive news plans are in place to ensure LM5Alive continues in 2021 by running the five race events virtually. DCSWP is currently discussing the possibility of linking in with this initiative thereby providing our 2020 participants with the fantastic opportunity to complete the challenge they set themselves twelve months ago.

A Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year
from all at Dublin City
SPORT & WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP

