

**Capacity Building Workshop Series 2014/15:
Learning from WHO Healthy Cities**

Putting a Value on Health Benefits of Cycling & Walking



Dr Nick Cavill, WHO HEAT Expert Trainer with participants in the HEAT workshop at Dunsilly, Antrim
Belfast Healthy Cities Board Member, Dr Karen Casson, Trudy Brown, Northern HSCT
and Wendy Broly, Newtownabbey Borough Council

We often hear of the benefits of a healthier lifestyle and now the World Health Organization (WHO) has devised an assessment tool which puts a monetary value on cycling and walking.

On Thursday 29 January Belfast Healthy Cities hosted a workshop introducing the Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) to Northern Ireland.

The HEAT tool addresses the difficulty in quantifying the impact of increased cycling and walking by estimating the monetary value of improved health for those who increase regular physical activity. The information gathered can then be used to inform planning and financial allocations by Governments.

The training was delivered in Belfast and Antrim by WHO Expert trainer, Dr. Nick Cavill, and aimed at senior staff from the Active Belfast partnership, the Public Health Agency, the Department for Regional Development and a number of voluntary and community organisations.

HEAT has many practical applications. For example, it can be used to estimate the economic value of a new project such as a bridge or walkway.

Nick Cavill said “The HEAT tool is an accessible online tool that is free to use. It was designed by WHO experts to support evidence gathering about what works and has already been used successfully in several countries. This is a great opportunity for people responsible for planning walking and cycling in Northern Ireland to learn how to measure the financial contribution made by their actions in addition to the health benefits they deliver for the population.”

Welcoming the workshop, Belfast Healthy Cities Chief Executive, Joan Devlin said

“While we know the health benefits of cycling and walking and can clearly see how popular both activities have become, we are less experienced in measuring and fully utilising the financial benefits that they can deliver. Having solid evidence on the monetary value of physical activity strengthens the case for increased investment in both cycling and walking, which must be welcomed.”

“We want to bring the HEAT tool to Northern Ireland in order to support a range of agencies and organisations in gaining a better understanding of how to measure and evaluate both their existing initiatives and future proposals.”

The WHO HEAT tool is an expert led initiative based on the principles of the Health Economic Assessment Tool and is overseen by a panel of international academics. Further information can be found here: www.heatwalkingcycling.org