



PRESS RELEASE

Date: Friday 5th April

**BELFAST SPORTS CLUBS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS GET 'ON THE RIGHT TRACK!'
WITH PEACE IV FUNDING**

A new sports development initiative combining sport and opportunities for young people from different backgrounds in the city to learn, share and play together was launched today.

'On The Right Track!' is one of Belfast PEACE IV projects, under the Children and Young People theme and is targeted at 13-16 year-olds. PEACE IV is funded from the European Union and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) and is designed to support peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border region.

Sporting champions and ambassadors' Jane Adams and Shirley McCay joined Siobhan Toland, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services at Belfast City Council and Leanne Massey, Director Joint Secretariat at the SEUPB to launch the project at the Rise sculpture.

Siobhan Toland said: **"This is an exciting project for sports clubs and community groups across the city and launching it at the RISE sculpture is significant in itself, representing the rising of the sun and new hope for Belfast's future. The young participants will be encouraged to build positive relationships, learn and socialise together, free from any prejudice and intolerance."**

Welcoming the project, Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body, said: **"The PEACE Programme recognises the importance of sport as a powerful medium through which people from different communities can come together and learn from each other. Over the years, it has supported many different sporting initiatives and facilities which have helped to overcome division and prejudice, on both a cross-community and cross-border basis. This is one of the core objectives of the EU's PEACE IV Programme which aims to build a more cohesive, peaceful and forward-thinking society."**



The project will combine three elements. Track 1 is aimed at increasing ‘Participation’ which will help build lasting partnerships between sports clubs and community groups encouraging partners to work together on programmes to build resilience within communities. Track 2 focuses on ‘Club Development’ and will upskill club coaches to deal with peace and reconciliation issues, helping them become drivers for peace building in Belfast. Coaches receive training on how to address sectarianism, racism and sexism and mental health. And finally, Track 3 will look at personal development for young champions, motivating young people to develop skills that will support their club and community.

Jane Adams previously captained Ulster senior champions’ Antrim and has three All-Star awards and five Ulster GAA writers awards for outstanding contribution to camogie as well as leading her local club O’Donovan Rossa to an All Ireland title.

Shirley McCay is the most capped female sports star for Ireland, earning 278 caps and also bringing home silver in the 2018 Women’s Hockey World Cup.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

In January 2018, Belfast City Council secured £8.79 million of PEACE IV funding to deliver its plan to support peace and reconciliation in the city across three main themes: Children and Young People; Shared Spaces and Services and Building Positive Relations. Additional funding of over £5.5 million was secured in March 2019 to promote projects in the city bringing the total amount of PEACE IV funding for Belfast to over £14 million. The Council’s Shared City Partnership oversees the implementation of the Belfast PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

Find out more about PEACE IV and On The Right Track! on the council website at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/peaceIV

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Notes for the editor:



SEUPB

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland.
- It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross - border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The PEACE IV Programme has a value of €270 million and aims to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu