



Rugby at the **HEART** of the Community

Health & Wellbeing Strategy



Project supported by the PHA





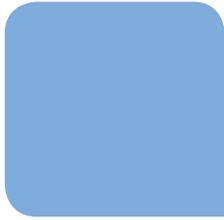
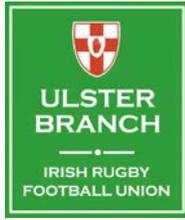
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- ▶ Representatives from Local Authorities



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Executive Summary

As part of the on-going development and growth of the game, Ulster Rugby recognizes the significant health benefits associated with participation and involvement in Rugby Union. Ulster Rugby is committed to supporting the welfare of everyone involved in the game and promoting positive health & wellbeing as an emerging priority moving forward with future developments.

The development of the “Rugby at the Heart of the Community” health & wellbeing strategy provides Ulster Rugby with an opportunity to add value to clubs and schools and to deliver on core business objectives of the organisation.

This innovation presents Ulster Rugby with an opportunity to demonstrate community leadership, to further the strategic aims of the Irish Rugby and to fulfil its vision for Rugby in Ulster.

The strategy seeks to ensure that Ulster Rugby continues to promote a positive social experience whereby people feel connected and fulfilled by a lifelong involvement in Rugby Union. The vision for this strategy is as follows:

Ulster Rugby supporting Healthier Clubs &
Healthier Communities

***“Meeting the needs of the Person, the Player,
the Club & the Community”***

This vision provides the framework for the identified strategic priorities. The strategic priorities include the following:

- 1** To implement a values driven health and wellbeing programme led by Ulster Rugby through collaboration with identified partners.
- 2** To increase young people’s awareness of the importance and link between emotional & mental wellbeing, and physical health.
- 3** To increase life-long participation in the Rugby family.
- 4** To secure resources, which will ensure the programme delivers maximum benefit to local communities, clubs and schools.
- 5** To provide a high-quality experience that is evidence-based, delivers positive outcomes and captures best practice.



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1.0
Background



1.0 Background

Ulster Rugby

Ulster Rugby is one of four provincial branches of the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) with responsibility for the leadership, development and growth of the game of Rugby Union within the province of Ulster. This includes the full spectrum of Rugby Union from grass roots participation through to the Ulster Rugby professional team.

Ulster Rugby aims to continue the growth of the game at club and school level through creation of positive social experiences that maximise retention and opportunities for all those who wish to get involved in Rugby, from all communities. It is our view that to create a sustainable and vibrant club & school environment, we need to ensure that males, females, people with disabilities and people from all backgrounds receive equal access to our game.

As part of the on going development and growth of the game, Ulster Rugby recognizes the significant health benefits attached to participation and involvement in Rugby Union. Ulster Rugby is committed to supporting the welfare of everyone involved in the game and promoting positive health & wellbeing as an emerging priority moving forward with future developments.

This is of significant relevance to the *IRFU Age Grade Player Welfare Policy*, which cites Positive Mental Health as a key element to the holistic development of rugby players in Ulster & Ireland.

Since their codification in the 19th century, British and Irish major sports have always had an enduring social, cultural and political relevance to the enhancement of the health and wellbeing of the population. While the decades in-between have seen significant gains in the health of the Ulster population, there remain large inequalities in health status both across and within the nine counties.

The development of a health and wellbeing strategy provides Ulster Rugby with an opportunity to spread the values of the game, to make a positive contribution to clubs and schools and to deliver on core business objectives of the organisation.

The Public Health Agency

As the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)¹ and the Public Health Agency (PHA)² note, there remain persistently large health inequalities among people from different socio-economic and cultural groups. These disparities are linked to many factors, including variations in health provision, living environments, lifestyles and behaviours. As Ulster progresses into the 21st century, it is evident that these pressing issues require a strategic approach from key partners from a cross section of society. Sport, in particular Rugby Union, has a crucial role to play in promoting positive health messages and delivering health outcomes that are aligned to the Northern Ireland Executive's 'Making Life Better' Strategy.

The DHSSPS 'Making Life Better Charter and its 'whole system' approach for the delivery of public health detailed in '**Making Life Better**' were influential in the development of the strategy. The six defining themes of this framework are:

1. Giving every child the best start;
2. Equipped throughout life;
3. Empowering healthy living;
4. Creating the conditions;
5. Empowering communities;
6. Developing collaboration.

The key priorities within this strategy are closely aligned to the above themes within the 'Making Life Better' framework. As well as this, the 'Take 5' for your Emotional Wellbeing initiative runs implicitly throughout this strategy. These five strands include:

- ▶ Connect
- ▶ Be Active
- ▶ Take Notice
- ▶ Keep Learning
- ▶ Give

Ulster Rugby holds the view that sport has the power to create positive social change. Acting as a delivery vehicle to communicate health messages Ulster Rugby will adopt an interactive, values based approach.

1 DHSSPSNI (2014) Making Life Better: A Whole System Strategic Framework for Public Health 2013-2023

2 HSC_PHA (2015) Quality Standards for Services Promoting Mental and Emotional Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention; Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement: <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-and-social-wellbeing-improvement>





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1.1 Ulster Rugby: Health and Wellbeing Context

1.1 Ulster Rugby: Health & Wellbeing Context

The core objectives of Ulster Rugby at a school and club level are to grow the number of people actively involved in the game and further develop the overall quality of Rugby in Ulster across multiple areas (E.g. facilities, performance, social experience). As part of this on-going development Ulster Rugby has gained considerable experience in the delivery of social impact programmes, particularly relating to health & wellbeing.

Ulster Rugby has experience in delivering health and wellbeing programmes through previous projects. During 2014/15 the Ulster Rugby Fitness Education team delivered over 2000 physical activity sessions across upwards of 130 schools, rugby clubs and community-based organisations. As well as this, presentations on Healthy Lifestyle and Nutrition were delivered to over 10, 000 participants.

Community Gym Initiative

As part of an innovative project supporting the local community Ulster Rugby established a Community Gym Initiative, whereby local organisations, sports clubs and schools were supported to develop 15 regional gyms. To further enhance the sustainability of the initiative and in order to deliver fitness and healthy living programmes, local volunteers gained professional qualifications.

Get Fit with Ulster Rugby (GFWUR) Bootcamp

To support the development of Female Rugby the GFWUR programme was launched at a range of local Rugby clubs in 2014. This project utilised rugby based fitness activities to promote the female game, whilst also appealing to specific health related needs focusing specifically on physical activity and nutrition. Within the strategic framework for Women's Rugby in Ulster, this project has been cited as a model of best practise in the recruitment and retention of females at a club rugby level.



The Nevin Spence Centre

The Nevin Spence Centre (NSC), which is an education and heritage facility at the Kingspan Stadium, provides an excellent resource for the promotion and dissemination of a wide variety of health and wellbeing programmes, messages and outcomes, which will be an important support for the successful delivery of the strategy. At its core, the NSC will “maintain a service of the highest quality to promote the game and values of rugby football by inspiring, educating and entertaining visitors from all sections of the community and all nations.” The NSC provides an inclusive platform for positively impacting young people and their families across schools, clubs and the community. It will act as an educational hub, promoting the health and wellbeing initiative to visiting schools, clubs and families.

Partnerships

Ulster Rugby, through its network of clubs and schools, has a range of facilities that enable the delivery of a broad range of key health messages and flagship programmes. In seeking to establish core health & well-being resources and programmes, Ulster Rugby will work with a number of collaborative partners whose expertise is essential to the development and delivery of the strategy. Some of the potential delivery partners will include both Public and Commercial sector organisations such as Health and Social Care Trusts, Public Health Agency (PHA), Sport Northern Ireland, a range of schools and the Ulster network of clubs across the province



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2.0 Methodology



2.0 Methodology

The aim of the strategic process is to provide a clear and focused outline for delivering the key priorities within the strategy. The plan should be energizing, inspiring and relevant to core business of Ulster Rugby. It should articulate a clear purpose and provide a strategic framework for an operational plan that is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

The strategic planning methodology consists of the following steps (See detailed overview in appendix 2):

- Step 1: Strategic review (external and internal)
- Step 2: Visioning
- Step 3: Strategic development
- Step 4: Action planning
- Step 5: Monitor and evaluate

Step 1: Strategic review (Internal & External)

This step involved a review of Ulster Rugby's current state and external environment to establish the position of the organisation with respect to the need for and focus of a health and wellbeing strategy. The consultation involved internal and external stakeholders to establish the strategic plan that can bring energy and direction to Ulster Rugby and its health and wellbeing work. Areas examined included financial condition, organisational personnel, management, programs and services, physical facilities, use of technology and location.

Step 2: Visioning

The strategic visioning engaged internal stakeholders in discussion about past trends, present realities and an exploration of new, creative and innovative ideas that could be adopted as pivotal components of the emerging health and wellbeing strategy.

The purpose of strategic visioning is to:

- ▶ Encourage and engage organisation participation
- ▶ Develop a shared "road map" for the future
- ▶ Advance the capacity of Ulster Rugby and its affiliate network of clubs and schools
- ▶ Collectively identify and analyse what is important in the development of the health and wellbeing strategy
- ▶ Use resources more effectively

Step 3: Strategic Development

In this step, strategic priorities were developed based on the results of the consultation and visioning processes. The outcome was the establishment of a number of strategic priorities covering the next five years that will drive the strategy in the implementation phase.

Step 4: Consultation (Internal & External)

As part of the process a significant consultation with key stakeholders was carried out to ensure that the strategy is realistic and relevant to the needs of Rugby in Ulster.

The consultation involved the following key elements (See appendix 5):

- ▶ One to one interviews
- ▶ Online survey
- ▶ Focus groups
- ▶ Consultation summary report

Step 5: Action planning

In this step, actions were formulated for each priority. This strategy is a statement of how Ulster Rugby values can play an important role in the health and wellbeing of our communities. The actions to deliver the strategy are derived from the clear strategic priorities developed from the assessment and the context within which Ulster Rugby operates.

Step 6: Monitor and evaluate

Once developed and communicated, Ulster Rugby will monitor the strategy's development to assess progress towards the agreed outcomes and to make any adjustments necessary. It is imperative that management within Ulster Rugby develops an annual monitoring process to embed in the operational plans, which ensure delivery of priorities.





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3.0 Health and Wellbeing

3.0 Rugby at the Heart of the Community: Health & Wellbeing

The strategy uses National Institute and Clinical Excellence's (NICE) widely accepted definition of health and wellbeing as it highlights the importance of both emotional and physical health. Health and wellbeing is thus understood as: "...feeling able to cope with normal stresses, and living a fulfilled life. It can be affected by: worries about money, work, home life, the people around you and the environment you live in. An individual's sense of wellbeing is also affected by whether or not they feel in control of their life, feeling involved with people and communities and feelings of anxiety and isolation."

This definition highlights the significance of four pillars that underpin the strategy (highlighted below), which are essential to improving the health and wellbeing of individuals across the province of Ulster.



The strategy is therefore committed to:

Strategic Pillar	Commitment	Link to “Making Life Better”
Pillar 1: Mental & Emotional Wellbeing	To the view that “there is no health without mental health.” Promoting positive mental health for young people and other members of the wider community will allow them to realise their full potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively and make meaningful contributions to their communities	Empowering Healthy Living Equipped throughout Life
Pillar 2: Physical Activity	To an understanding that physical activity is an essential part of health and wellbeing. Physical activity is a defining element of rugby and there is an undisputed linkage between physical activity, health, emotional and mental health and quality of life.	Empowering Healthy Living Equipped throughout Life
Pillar 3: Nutrition	To the promotion of healthy eating. Young people & the wider community are highly susceptible to low self-esteem and confidence based on body image and the adoption of a healthy diet is an important constituent of both mental and physical health and wellbeing.	Empowering Healthy Living Equipped throughout Life
Pillar 4: Healthy Lifestyle	To the adoption of a healthy active lifestyle for young people and the wider community. A healthy lifestyle is one that promotes regular moderate levels of physical activity; feeling energised (physical and mental) reduced risk of ill health, based on habitual choices made on a daily basis i.e. smoking and drug & alcohol abuse. Sedentary lifestyles are an endemic part of the everyday lives of young people; having an active lifestyle brings many social and psychological benefits.	Empowering healthy living Equipped throughout Life





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4.0
Strategic Priorities

4.0 Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority	Strategic Foundation	Pillar	Aim
Implement a values driven health and wellbeing programme led by Ulster Rugby through collaboration with identified partners	Maximise available resources Partnership Needs assessment Levels of health inequality & community resource Funding Legacy Governance	Physical Activity Nutrition Healthy Lifestyle Mental Resilience	Enabling, equipping, encouraging and empowering people and their families' health and wellbeing Focusing delivery and support on the key determinants of mental health, improved levels of physical activity and nutrition Delivering age appropriate intervention Consolidating progress, underwriting sustainable benefits
Increase young people's awareness of the importance and connection between emotional & mental wellbeing and physical health	Maximise available resources Partnership Funding Levels of health inequality and community resource	Physical Activity Mental Resilience	Enabling, equipping, encouraging and empowering people and their families' health and wellbeing Focusing delivery and support on the key determinants of mental health, improved levels of physical activity and nutrition Delivering age appropriate intervention
Increase life-long participation and involvement in the rugby family	Maximise available resources Partnership Funding Levels of health inequality and community resource	Physical Activity Mental Resilience	Enabling, equipping, encouraging and empowering people and their families' health and wellbeing Focusing delivery and support on the key determinants of mental health, improved levels of physical activity and nutrition Delivering age appropriate intervention
Secure resources, which will ensure the strategy delivers maximum benefit in a sustainable manner to local communities, clubs and schools	Maximise available resources Partnership Needs assessment Levels of health inequality & community resource Funding Legacy Governance	Physical Activity Nutrition Healthy Lifestyle Mental Resilience	Consolidating progress, underwriting sustainable benefits
Provide a high quality experience that is evidence based, delivers positive outcomes and captures best practice	Maximise available resources Partnership Needs assessment Levels of health inequality & community resource Funding Legacy Governance	Physical Activity Nutrition Healthy Lifestyle Mental Resilience	Consolidating progress, underwriting sustainable benefits

Strategic Priorities:

1 To implement a values driven health and wellbeing programme led by the Ulster Rugby through collaboration with identified partners.

Key Outcomes:

- ▶ The implementation of a health and wellbeing programme led by Ulster Rugby;
- ▶ Develop a strong collaboration among Ulster Rugby and its strategic partners in the development of a range of health and wellbeing initiatives;
- ▶ The implementation of a range of health and wellbeing initiatives that are clearly informed by the values of rugby.

2 To increase young people's awareness of the importance and connection between emotional & mental wellbeing, and physical health.

Key Outcomes:

- ▶ Increased awareness of behaviours that promote emotional & mental wellbeing, and physical health;
- ▶ Equip participants with resources and coping mechanisms that can be directly employed to impact their personal, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.
- ▶ Increase awareness of the importance of positive mental health including recognising signs and symptoms of mental ill health in themselves, family and friends;
- ▶ Provide clear sign posting for additional support;
- ▶ Participants to clearly understand the link between physical activity and emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.

Vision Statement

Ulster Rugby supporting Healthier Clubs & Healthier Communities

“Meeting the needs of the Player, the Person, the Club & the Community”

3 To increase life-long participation & involvement in the rugby family.

Key Outcomes:

- ▶ Increased levels of people actively using clubs and schools to enjoy and take part in rugby as participants, volunteers and supporters;
- ▶ Increased awareness in the wider community that rugby offers a wide range of exciting health enhancing opportunities ‘beyond the playing of the game;’
- ▶ Increase the perception of rugby clubs and schools as community hubs open and available to all sections of the local community.

4 To secure resources, which will ensure the strategy delivers maximum benefit in a sustainable manner to local communities, clubs and schools.

Key Outcomes:

- ▶ Resources (human, financial and educational) secured to implement a range of health and wellbeing programmes;
- ▶ Enhanced reputation for rugby and its values as a positive force for change in the lifestyle choices of young people, which delivers value for money results;
- ▶ Increased use and awareness of the local rugby club, its facilities and the other services it offers;
- ▶ Increase membership base for the clubs;
- ▶ Ulster Rugby is recognised as leading and delivering innovative Rugby based programmes.

5 To provide a high-quality experience that is evidence-based, delivers positive outcomes and captures best practice.

Key Outcomes:

- ▶ Programme is acknowledged as best practice in sport, public health and community development;
- ▶ Programme evaluation and assessment that monitors strategy outcomes and demonstrates the impact and effectiveness of the programme on the health and wellbeing of its participants, club and community;
- ▶ Programme of staff development and training to constantly up-date and improve the quality of service provided.





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5.0 Strategic Foundations underpinning Delivery

5.0 Strategic Foundations underpinning Delivery

As one of the leading sporting governing bodies in Northern Ireland, Ulster Rugby is well positioned to enter into a collaborative partnership with the Public and Private Sector organisations such as, PHA, HSC, Sport NI and other key stakeholders to make a positive impact on the pressing health and wellbeing challenges within Northern Ireland.

The Framework

Through the delivery of this strategy, Ulster Rugby aims to positively help young people prepare for the challenges of adult life. The delivery model recognises the interaction between the challenges presented by life and the often lack of resources available to young people and their local communities.³ This approach will be driven through the following framework:

1 Maximise available resources – use the resources of Ulster Rugby and its network of clubs and schools to introduce a range of physical activity based health and wellbeing programmes, which are guided by the values of Ulster Rugby that are designed to challenge and stimulate a young person’s physical and mental development;

2 Partnership – collaborate with the Public and Private sector organisations and other community-based organisations to provide a range of activities that improves people’s health and wellbeing with indicators that are measurable. Ulster Rugby will set out clear governance structures during the implementation phase of the strategy, which will include project steering groups with appointments from key partners.

3 Needs assessment – identify areas of need where people are not adequately supported to make positive transformations and work effectively to develop a

comprehensive physical and mental resilience programme. Ulster Rugby’s club, school and community links are fundamental to the sustainability of health and wellbeing initiatives. Where possible programmes will be developed (and offer flexibility) through a needs-based analysis.

4 Levels of health inequality and community resources – Ulster Rugby’s strategic approach recognises that the health challenges, which individuals face are strongly impacted by external social and economic forces (health inequalities).⁴

5 Funding – crucial to the success and sustainability of the strategy is finding diverse sources of funding in order to create a secure base from which Ulster Rugby and other stakeholders can plan effectively. This strategy fully complies with the Northern Ireland Government’s Priorities for Action and may find support from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, PHA, Sport NI and potential commercial sponsors. EU funding opportunities are discussed in Appendix 4.

6 Legacy – Ulster Rugby’s health and wellbeing strategy will create clear mental and emotional health, physical activity and sporting legacies for the communities engaged.

7 Governance – Ulster Rugby will employ best practise governance structures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to support the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of potential projects.

³ Hendry, L and Kloep, M. (2002) Lifespan Development: Resources, Challenges and Risks, Cengage Learning

⁴ Huber, M., Knottnerus, J.A., Green, J., van der Horst, H., Jadad, A.R., Kromhout, D., Leonard, B., Lorig, K., Loureiro, M.L., van der Meer, J., Schnabel, P., Smith, R., van Weel, C. and Smid, H. (2011) How should we define health? *BMJ* 2011; 343:d4163.

Transforming well-established sedentary lifestyles will not be achieved by short-term interventions. There is substantial evidence based on various programme evaluations⁵ that these are often costly and largely ineffective, as the at-risk groups require sustained and credible interventions that do not “parachute in” and then “walk away” once a programme delivery is complete. This is where the club and school network becomes a vital asset as they represent real long-term commitment into the community. This means that a well-planned programme of activity must include long term and sustained contact before, during and after programme delivery.

There is also strong evidence that the ‘Ulster Rugby branding’ of the delivery will enhance participation, sustainability and migration into life-long involvement in Rugby.

One of the major challenges facing health and wellbeing interventions seeking to help ‘hard to reach’ sectors of the population is engagement and recruitment on to the service/programme. The programme will therefore from the outset collaborate with key partners to maximise engagement with the target population.



5 PHE (2014) Identifying what works for local inactivity interventions: NI Sports Council (2013) Sport Matters Targets Review Paper



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6.0

Developing and Delivering a Health and Wellbeing Strategy

6.0 Developing and Delivering a Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Rather than replicating other health and wellbeing strategies, the Ulster Rugby strategy is a unique and innovative approach to addressing issues related to mental and emotional health, physical activity, and diet and lifestyle choices. All outcomes will be built on evidence-based methods of constructive challenge, supported by an empathetic and empowering culture.

Core Aims

Enabling, equipping, encouraging, and empowering people and their families' health and wellbeing

The core aim is to enable people to make better life choices, to implement realistic, change-oriented plans and to equip people with knowledge, skills and strategies that will secure sustainable change and to consolidate progress into a lasting positive health and wellbeing legacy.

Focusing delivery and support on the key determinants of mental health, improved levels of physical activity and nutrition.

The strategy will:

- ▶ Be directed at young people and, where appropriate, their families;
- ▶ Have multi component programme design, which positively impacts on mental health;
- ▶ Actively use both our networks of clubs and schools to promote and, where appropriate, deliver health and wellbeing initiatives;
- ▶ Promote physical activity, reduce sedentary behaviour & address obesity;
- ▶ Aim to influence dietary and lifestyle behaviours of young people;
- ▶ Encourage self-supporting individual capacities and resilience.

Delivering age appropriate intervention

Based on successful programme models delivered elsewhere in the UK, the strategy proposes the following programme design characteristics:

- ▶ The focused interventions will cover issues related to mental and emotional health and develop positive attitudes towards participation in physical activity.
- ▶ The specific programmes will be based on current best practice, be locally needs based and age group and gender specific.

Consolidating progress, underwriting sustainable benefits

The strategy will be subject to detailed evaluation in order to progressively refine their development with direct learning from delivery. By building on the emerging best practice, the strategy will embed a continuous improvement culture, which will ensure the health and wellbeing models are operating at the highest possible standard.

Project Team: Promoting excellence

Based on evaluations of similar programmes and best practice, Ulster Rugby aim to attain funding that will enable the recruitment of a Health & Wellbeing Officer that will be responsible for:

- ▶ Programme development;
- ▶ Coordination with partner organisations leading to the construction of an effective network of stakeholders, community contacts, health service agencies and higher education contacts
- ▶ Programme promotion which positively exploits the Ulster Brand and their highly recognisable professional players to endorse and support our health and wellbeing messages;
- ▶ Programme recruitment;
- ▶ Programme evaluation and reporting to Ulster Rugby senior management and funding partners.

The delivery of training in emotional wellbeing or resilience will link with programmes delivered by the Irish Rugby Union Players Association (IRUPA) as well as the PHA training co-ordinator to ensure quality service standards are met. Furthermore, this will ensure safe consistent messages for clubs, schools and communities.

This approach will enable an authentic opportunity to contribute something meaningful to local areas. This represents a significant improvement over shorter, lower quality programmes, which lack the time, expertise and institutional support to go the extra mile in delivering outstanding support and a legacy of sustainable change within young people and their families.

Transformative Change

To maximise effectiveness, the programmes must understand the underlying issues influencing young people's lifestyle choices and habitualised behaviours (income; access to resources; family structure etc.). Focusing on embedding transformative change within the delivery of programmes will enable Ulster Rugby to make long-term behaviour changes: first, by identifying the underlying lifestyle issues; then, by identifying which of these are open to change in the short, medium or long-term.

Many existing programmes do not tackle these issues for the very reason that behaviour change can be, and often is, tied to very complex emotions and situations that are beyond the ability of team members. While acknowledging the challenges that this might create for programme development, achieving transformational change is key to delivering long lasting behaviour change for the young person and their family.

One of the challenges in implementing Ulster Rugby's health and wellbeing strategy will be ensuring effective systems are in place to support delivery and maximise the potential for long-term success. The natural support systems that exist through schools and clubs provide an excellent opportunity to create greater impact on individuals and communities.



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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Methodology

There are many different schools of thought surrounding the concept of strategic planning and many different words that can be associated with the word 'strategic' to describe the same process. At its core however, our approach to strategic planning has four main goals:

- ▶ Goal #1: Provide guidance and direction
- ▶ Goal #2: Assist with prioritisation and resource management
- ▶ Goal #3: Enable management, staff and other key stakeholders to understand and support the vision
- ▶ Goal #4: Provide an accountability framework for successfully managing the programmes delivery

Step 1: Strategic review (external and internal)

This step involves a review of the IRFU (Ulster Branch)'s current state and external environment so as to establish the position of the organisation with respect to the need. The strategic planning process includes a consultation involving internal and external stakeholders. Gaining input from these stakeholders is an essential part of creating a strategic plan that can bring energy and direction to the IRFU (Ulster Branch) and its health and wellbeing work.

The organisation identifies and assesses changes in the needs and perceptions of the clubs and other stakeholders. Areas examined include financial condition, organisational personnel, management, programs and services, physical facilities, use of technology and location.

Step 2: Visioning

Strategic visioning is a process through which current issues facing the IRFU (Ulster Branch) and its affiliate network of clubs and schools are filtered to determine positive qualities and assets, to identify future goals, to design, plan and carry out a series of actions and to evaluate the outcomes.

The IRFU (Ulster Branch)'s strategic vision provides a framework to describe overall goals and to determine specific objectives and strategies that guide the development of the health and wellbeing strategic plan. Through collective dialogue and reflection, strategic visioning guides future action by creating a "road map" to the future.

Strategic visioning engages internal stakeholders in discussion about past trends, to evaluate present realities and to determine their common future. The process gives the organisation an opportunity to explore new ideas, to discover creative and innovative ideas and to focus on the positive aspects of a shared future. The purpose of strategic visioning is to:

- ▶ Encourage and engage organisation participation
- ▶ Develop a shared "road map" for the future
- ▶ Advance the capacity of the IRFU (Ulster Branch) and its affiliate network of clubs and schools
- ▶ Collectively identify and analyse what is important in the development of the health and wellbeing strategy
- ▶ Use resources more effectively

Step 3: Strategic Development

In this step, strategic priorities are developed based on the results of the broad consultation and consistent with the vision statement. The strategic priorities are broad statements of what the IRFU (Ulster Branch) hopes to achieve in the next five years. Priorities focus on measurable outcomes and are qualitative in nature.

Step 4: Action planning

In this step, actions are formulated for each priority. Strategies are statements of major approach or method for attaining priorities and resolving specific issues. Ideas for strategy emerge from the assessment and consultation.

A strategy is effective if it does one or more of the following:

- ▶ Maximise environmental opportunities
- ▶ Defends against environmental threats
- ▶ Leverages organisational competencies
- ▶ Corrects organisational shortcomings
- ▶ Offers some basis for future competitive advantage
- ▶ Counteracts forces eroding current competitive position

Step 5: Monitor and evaluate

Once the strategy is developed and communicated, the IRFU (Ulster Branch) must monitor its development to assess progress toward the plan and any changes necessary. It is imperative that management develops an annual monitoring process to embed in the operational plans, which ensure delivery of priorities.



Appendix 2 - Strategic Definitions: Health and wellbeing

Mental Health and Wellbeing

In health and wellbeing, there is often an emphasis on interventions related to diet and exercise. However, research shows that “there is no health without mental health.” Mental and emotional wellbeing is essential to overall health. Creating and promoting positive mental health across the diverse communities of Ulster will allow people within those communities to realize their full potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

There is a strong body of evidence supporting the view that early childhood experiences have lasting, measurable consequences later in life. By developing a range of activities designed to foster emotional wellbeing within children will help build a foundation for overall health and wellbeing.

Mental health promotion works at three levels:

- ▶ Strengthening individuals
- ▶ Strengthening communities
- ▶ Reducing structural barriers to mental health.

The aim is to enhance protective factors and mitigate risk factors at both individual and community level. The evidence identifies the following key areas for attention:

- ▶ Promoting a healthy lifestyle to integrate mental and physical health.
- ▶ De-stigmatising mental health issues.
- ▶ Promoting parental mental and physical health.
- ▶ Promoting good parenting skills.
- ▶ Improving working lives.
- ▶ Building resilience among children and young people in schools and youth settings.
- ▶ Improving quality of life for older people.
- ▶ Tackling alcohol and substance abuse.

- ▶ Strengthening communities through opportunities for participation, personal development and problem solving that enhance control and prevent isolation.
- ▶ Community empowerment and interventions to encourage improvements in physical and social environments and strengthen social networks.⁶

Positive mental health is a vital resource for long-term social and economic prosperity. Therefore, in addition to the human cost at personal and family level, mental illness presents a high cost to society. As around half of individual cases of mental ill-health begin in adolescence and tend to persist into adulthood, the costs involved cumulate over many years.

With this in mind, the strategy draws on Machteld Huber et al’s paper, “How do we define Health?,”⁷ which emphasises the need to construct interventions that will enhance the target populations social and psychological abilities such as resilience, adaptability, self-management and their capacity to face a range of social, physical, and emotional challenges.

The strategy draws on recent evaluations of mental health in Northern Ireland, which recognises the range of barriers to “help-seeking” experienced by young people. This research concludes that the most prominent barrier to help-seeking for mental health problems among young people is the perceived stigma and embarrassment about acknowledging that a problem exists and that help should be sought from an outside party.

6 National Mental Health Development Unit (2010) Adapted from ‘Commissioning Mental Wellbeing for All. A toolkit for commissioners’.

7 Huber et al (2011) How do we define Health, British Medical Journal 2011;343:d4163

Other significant barriers were:

- ▶ Concerns about confidentiality;
- ▶ Poor mental literacy leading to difficulties by families, schools and young people themselves in recognising the symptoms of mental illness;
- ▶ Poor accessibility to mental health resources – especially in rural areas;
- ▶ Powerful discourses in respect to individual capacities and self-reliance;
- ▶ Concerns with young people regarding the suitability, credibility and appropriateness of the programme provider;
- ▶ Limited knowledge about mental health services, and
- ▶ Fear and uncertainty about the act of help seeking or the source of help.

With these likely to be still highly prevalent within the targeted 11-18 year old group it is evident that parents and other adults within the adolescents close circle will be an essential resource in both the recognition of mental health problems and the facilitation of the young person's engagement with the health and wellbeing programme. This research also reinforces the necessity to provide the health and wellbeing programme in localities and communities within which the young person feels familiar and comfortable.

The Physical Activity Health and Wellbeing Context

Across governmental, health and sporting organisations, physical activity is defined as “any bodily movement associated with muscular contraction that increases energy expenditure above resting levels.” It should be noted that this broad definition includes all many non-sporting contexts of physical activity, i.e. leisure-time physical activity, recreational physical activity at or near the home (e.g. in parks, public and private amenities such as gyms).

There is an undisputed linkage between physical activity, health, emotional and mental health and quality of life. Indeed the growing levels of physical inactivity within Northern Ireland and internationally are now recognised as a major health risk and chronic illnesses, including cardiovascular diseases, a main cause of death in Ulster. A recently published study of over 334,000 European men and women (reported in the American Journal of Clinical Exercise) found that twice as many deaths were attributable to inactivity as to obesity. This suggests that any health and wellbeing intervention should have an emphasis on the promotion of regular and sustainable physical activity.

Having an active life also brings many other social and psychological benefits. In an age of massively increasing levels of time spent on screens, it is essential that people with sedentary lifestyles, particularly children and young people, are provided with opportunities to become more physically active. As the recent evaluations of “Get Active Stay Active” detail rising levels of physical activity correlate with reported health and wellbeing improvements from both a physical and a mental perspective. The health and wellbeing benefits of developing the habit of regular physical activity within children and young people have been demonstrated to include the following:

A reduced risk of cardiovascular disease; Prevention and/or delay of the development of arterial hypertension; Improved cardio-pulmonary functioning and combating of asthma; improved metabolic functions and low incidence of type 2 diabetes; Increased fat utilisation aiding control weight and lowering the risk of obesity; Lowered risk of certain cancers, such as breast, prostate and colon cancer; Improved mineralization of bones in young ages, contributing to the prevention of osteoporosis and fractures in older ages (particularly in women). Maintenance and



improvement in muscular strength and endurance allied to increases in functional capacity related to daily living; Maintained cognitive functions and lowered risk of depression and dementia; Lower stress levels and associated improved sleep quality. Specific impacts for children and young people are: Improved self-image and self-esteem and increased enthusiasm and optimism; decreased absenteeism from school and improved exam results.⁸

Physical Activity Guidelines

In 2011, the four Chief Medical Officers in the UK launched physical activity guidelines for all age groups. These were produced in a report entitled “Start Active, Stay Active” – “A report on physical activity for health from the four home countries”:

- 1** All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day.
- 2** Vigorous intensity activities, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least three days a week.
- 3** All children and young people should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods. (Individual physical and mental capabilities should be considered when interpreting the guidelines).

IRFU Vision 20:20

Developing a values based approach to health and wellbeing is in line with IRFU Vision 2020 and its recognition that “It is imperative therefore that Irish Rugby clearly defines what its values are and the only way to do this is for the ‘rugby family’ to engage with its constituents to discover them. It must then communicate and live the values in all its endeavours.”

The development of a health and wellbeing strategy offers the IRFU (Ulster Branch) a significant opportunity to grow the game and strengthen its base through the expansion of community-based programmes. In doing this IRFU (Ulster Branch) will be seeking to further enhance its participative leadership at every level of the sport. As Vision 2020 notes: *“There is a need to ensure that activity shifts from stewardship to creating impact and that leadership in gatekeeper positions moves to one of building capacity in the sport. It requires people to act at a transformational level of leadership. This will require the IRFU and its stakeholders to address its behaviours and capabilities as an entity. It will require a strong vision and values to do this, clarity of purpose that unites all...moving from separated to oneness; Information – moving from silo to system; Relationships – moving from power over to power.”⁹*

Based on the IRFU (Ulster Branch)’s expertise developing and promoting physical activity, their wide range of community-based clubs and their strong connection to schools across the province, IRFU (Ulster Branch) is well positioned to deliver effective and sustainable health and wellbeing programmes.

⁸ Abridged from EU Physical Activity Guidelines, 2008

⁹ Vision 20:20 – Emerging Themes – Irish Rugby

Diet and Nutrition

The construction of healthy/unhealthy lifestyle involves many choices. For young people a crucial component of this will be whether they have a well-balanced and nutritious diet. In broad terms this means the consumption of a diet that:

- ▶ Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat milk and milk products
- ▶ Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- ▶ Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, salt (sodium), and added sugars
- ▶ Stays within the age and gender related recommended levels of daily calorie intake.¹⁰

The health and wellbeing programme will include validated nutritional and dietary advice, which will be supported by qualified dietitians and nutritionists. The principle emphasis of nutrition sessions will be on eating for good health and improving diet.¹¹ Though it will be important to make sure the nutritional information is accurate and appropriate, it will also need to be delivered through fun, realistic and interactive tasks so that the information can be both meaningful and contextually relevant to each of the young people and their families. Because of the medical and developmental implications of diet and nutrition, the young people on the programme will require the support of the programme nutritionist to make meaningful changes.

In general, the programme will orientate its advice around the following well-established nutritional principles for young people:

- ▶ Don't skip breakfast
- ▶ Base your meals on starchy foods
- ▶ Eat lots of fruit and veg
- ▶ Eat more fish

¹⁰ <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/pages/1126.aspx?categoryid=51>

¹¹ This will be in line with the Eatwell Plate (DH, 2012) and consistent with NICE CG 43 (2006), SIGN guidance (2010) and NICE PH47 (2013).

- ▶ Cut down on saturated fat and sugar
- ▶ Eat less salt
- ▶ Don't get thirsty
- ▶ Get active and be a healthy weight.¹²

Lifestyle

The term lifestyle is widely used with the health and wellbeing literature. In respect to individuals it is a useful term that denotes "the collective representation of a person's attitudes, values and behavioural choices." It is therefore more than a term describing what people habitually do. Lifestyles are powerful social psychological structures with deep resonance to a sense of personal identity. Hence, it needs to be recognised that health orientated lifestyle change is not merely about an objective change in behaviours and activities but a process embedded in changes to what may well be core psychological self-representations.

Not all aspects of a lifestyle should be regarded as voluntary. The individual's social environment and its social, cultural and economic systems pattern the lifestyle choices available to the individual.

There is a well-established body of evidence detailing how lifestyle and its allied health behaviours affect people's health.¹³ Lifestyle is crucial to the maintenance (or lack of) of physical and mental health. Lifestyle-based capacities (economic, social and cultural) enable regular participation in physical activity. The consumption of a healthy diet is essential to the production and reproduction (sustainability) of a healthy lifestyle. The corollary to mental illness is also therefore evident in that limited lifestyle-based capacities correlate to rising levels of stress, anxiety feelings of alienation and depression. The increasing frequency of poor

¹² <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eight-tips-healthy-eating.aspx>

¹³ Buck, D and Frosini, F. (2012) Clustering of Unhealthy Behaviours Over Time: implications for policy and practice. Kings Fund: http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_publication_file/clustering-of-unhealthy-behaviours-over-time-aug-2012.pdf

health habits is not separate from but integral to young people's lifestyle.

While this general trend goes back decades, recently, the lifestyles of young people in Northern Ireland have become highly mediated and based on technologies. This process is now so pervasive that one recent piece of research into this process suggests that young people should be pre-designated as 'screenagers'.¹⁴

What is evident is that technology has changed the nature and structure of young people's social and asocial activities. Although there were initial concerns regarding the impact of an array of technologies (smart phones, gaming consoles, internet, social media etc.), these focused on social isolation and the capacity for asocial lifestyle (e.g. a young person's leisure time being framed around immersive game play on consoles). However, it is also widely accepted that technologically-based lifestyles for young people are more sedentary in nature with significant implications for an unhealthy reduction in physical activity and socially-based physical interactions that are related to the social components (e.g. the formation of social relationships) of mental health and wellbeing.

Health inequalities (social patterns)

Though there are some indications that lifestyle risk factors such as smoking, excessive alcohol use, poor diet, higher suicide rates and low levels of physical activity are decreasing among those in higher socio-economic and educational groups. Indications are that people from vulnerable groupings (very low income, few or no qualifications) are showing increasing levels of engagement in all the above risk areas.

¹⁴ Griffiths, M. (2010) 'Trends in technological advance: Implications for sedentary behaviour and obesity in screenagers'. <http://sheu.org.uk/sites/sheu.org.uk/files/imagepicker/1/eh282mg.pdf>



Appendix 3 - EU Health Related Funding Opportunities

Most competence for action in the field of health is held by Member States, but the EU has the responsibility, set out in the Treaty, to undertake certain actions which complement the work done by Member States and their national health service

Key portal: Public Health Agency – Provides detailed advice on EU Funding Opportunities. HSC R&D Division is promoting opportunities to get involved in EU funding bids and sharing relevant information about other interesting related opportunities.

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/hsc-research-and-development/eu-funding-opportunities>

The European Commission's Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA) have Joint Action No.20122202, which supports Mental Health and Wellbeing initiatives. That noted, the current funding under this release is now closed, and it also requires 'structure collaborative work' – which obviously would take a lot of time and effort to set up. The current funding with a young person and health focus are related to young people and alcohol consumption.

Wider Health EU Programmes that may open funding opportunities:

The EU's **Health Programme** aims to build on the achievements of the previous EU Health Programme and better enable health to contribute to economic growth and the Europe 2020 objectives.

It has four main objectives:

- 1** Promote health, prevent disease and foster supportive environments for healthy lifestyles
- 2** Protect citizens from serious cross-border health threats
- 3** Contribute to innovative, efficient and sustainable health systems
- 4** Facilitate access to better and safer healthcare for EU citizens

It has an increased budget of €449.4m for the seven year period.

The Consumer, Health and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA) have now launched the calls for proposals, with a deadline of 25 September. The EU Health Programme annual work programme for 2014 can be found at (http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/events/adoption_workplan_2014_en.htm).

N.B. The Commission is currently working on the 2015 work programme with the launch of the funding and proposal calls anticipated in May-June and closing in September –October 2015.

Appendix 4 - Health & Wellbeing Strategy - Consultation Process

Event	Group	Contact
Interview	Northern Ireland Executive	Alistair Ross
Interview	Department for Social Development	Jack O'Connor
Interview	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL)	Maura McGreevy
Interview	University of Ulster	Professor Deirdre Brennan
Interview	University of Ulster	Dr. Gavin Breslin
Interview	Sports Institute Northern Ireland	Des Jennings
Interview	Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU)	Scott Walker
Interview	Irish Rugby Union Players Association (IRUPA)	Pam Gilpin
Interview	Fitness Education Manager (Ulster Rugby)	Chris Shields
Interview	Community Rugby Manager (Ulster Rugby)	Barry Willis
Interview	Disability Inclusion Officer (Ulster Rugby)	Tim Craig
Interview	DCAL Coordinator / Funding Manager (Ulster Rugby)	Darryl Petticrew
Interview	Club + Community Development Officer (Ulster Rugby)	David Johnston
Interview	Rugby Operations Coordinator (Ulster Rugby)	Paul Whitten
Interview	Nevin Spence Centre - Education + Heritage Dept.	Clodagh Miskelly + Claire McAuley
Interview	Ballymena Academy	Stephen Black
Interview	Down High School	David Donnan
Interview	Royal School Armagh	Kenny Hooks
Interview	Campbell College	Brian Robinson
Interview	Foyle and Londonderry College	David Barnett
Interview	Omagh Academy	Ross Hunter
Interview	Ballynahinch RFC	Latimer Adair
Interview	Armagh RFC	Shirley-Anne Watson
Interview	Omagh RFC	Alistar Brown
Interview	Malone RFC	Gary Browne
Interview	City of Derry RFC	Moss Dineen
Interview	Ballymena RFC	Ian McIlrath
Schools		
Focus Group	Banbridge Academy	Brian Leslie
Focus Group	Carrickfergus Grammar School	Neal Kennedy
Focus Group	Limavady Grammar School	Chris Nash
Focus Group	Regent House	Peter Lowry
Focus Group	Royal Belfast Academical Institution	Daniel Soper
Focus Group	Methodist College Belfast	Scott Naismith
Focus Group	Royal School Armagh	Kenny Hooks
Focus Group	Ulster School Committee	Barney McGonigle

	Rugby Clubs	
Focus Group	Armagh RFC	Donal Farrell
Focus Group	Ballynahinch RFC	Richard Hart
Focus Group	Ballyshannon RFC	Yvette Morrow
Focus Group	Carrickfergus RFC	Peter Luney
Focus Group	City of Derry RFC	Moss Dineen
Focus Group	CIYMS RFC	David Peden
Focus Group	Newry RFC	Neil Rafferty
Focus Group	Ballynahinch RFC	Latimer Adair
Focus Group	Belfast High School FP RFC	Gareth Adams
Focus Group	Instonians RFC	Owen Lambert
Focus Group	Armagh RFC	Shirly Ann Donaldson
Focus Group	Ballyclare RFC	Teresa Holland
Focus Group	Larne RFC	Ricky Adair
	Ulster Rugby Staff	
Focus Group	Community Rugby Manager	Barry Willis
Focus Group	Rugby Development Officer	Shaun Bloomfield
Focus Group	Rugby Development Officer	Neill Alcorn
Focus Group	Female Rugby Officer	Neal Johnston
Focus Group	Club + Community Development Officer	David Johnston
Focus Group	Visitor Services Manager - Nevin Spence Centre	Ruth Harper
Focus Group	Referee Development Officer	David Wilkinson
Focus Group	Business Development Executive	Phillip Polack
Focus Group	Communications Officer	Richard Finlay
Focus Group	Fitness Education Manager	Chris Shields
Focus Group	DCAL Coordinator / Funding Manager (Ulster Rugby)	Darryl Petticrew
	Government Agencies	
Focus Group	Public Health Agency	Fiona Teague
Focus Group	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure	Rory Miskelly
Focus Group	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure	Stephen McGowan
Focus Group	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure	Tony Murphy
Focus Group	Department for Social Development	Jack O'Connor
Focus Group	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	Hugh McCaughey
Focus Group	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	Rachel Gibbs
Focus Group	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	Paul Carlin
Focus Group	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	Trudy Brown
Focus Group	Sport Institute NI	Des Jennings
Focus Group	Special EU Programme Body	Shaun Henry
Focus Group	National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children	Paul Stephenson



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