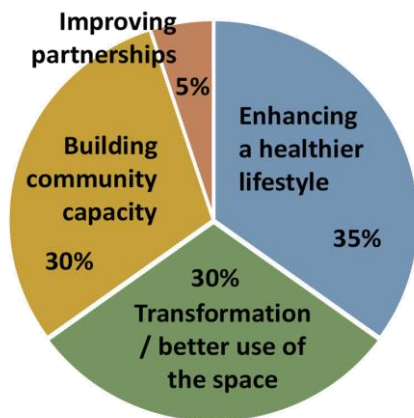


In November 2015, the Space & Place programme partnered on the 'Delivering Health through the Environment' conference, hosted by Space & Place consortium partners NIEL, supported by the Public Health Agency (PHA).

Health and Well-being, along with the Environment, are policy areas that directly relate to the four programme sub-outcomes (see below). 'Enhancing a healthy lifestyle' is the top sub-outcome listed by programme grantees, with 'Transformation/better use of space' a close second.



"Our environment is inextricably linked to our health!"

Mark Durkan, Minister for the Environment.

We protect and enhance our built and natural environment for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone. This is one of the key aims of the Space & Place Programme: **'More people and communities are connected by making use of underused or difficult space'**. Transformation of our spaces and places can enhance a healthier lifestyle and connect people in doing so. The range of case studies presented from the conference show the vast range of grass-root groups doing just this for the benefit of their local communities.

Healthy communities consist of 3 things:

People ~ Place ~ Purpose



How does the environment benefit our health & well-being?

- **Social well-being:** It connects people and gives them a common purpose; helping reduce isolation and loneliness.
- **Mental well-being:** Green space can reduce depression.
- **Physical well-being:** People are more active and physically fit.

Health is no longer white coats and clinics– it is now connecting people to space. The focus is now on social value with the health benefits being a result of this. Connecting people to the environment is the best form of preventative healthcare– *'Prevention is better than cure'*.

Communities leading the way

Health is ultimately shaped by our living conditions. Creating the right environmental conditions for communities will begin to address social and health inequalities. *'Creating the conditions'* is one of the 6 themes in the PHA's Making Life Better Strategy. Communities are increasingly reclaiming space and bringing their local area to life through pop-up allotments, outdoor gyms, community gardens and regenerating dilapidated buildings. Play spaces are important for children as these are often the first spaces where they socialise and gain a sense of community. Community Planning is also providing a vehicle for communities to get involved in developing their local areas to create healthy & sustainable places. The environment is also a common language for all, recognised in the latest *'Together Building a United Community'* framework. Our built and natural environment plays a vital role in enhancing our social environment. Improved environments can nurture better health and well-being, creating better spaces and places to live, work and play.

More information on the [NIEL Health and Environment conference](#) and the 17 associated Case Studies (including the Brain Injury Foundation, a Space & Place funded project), can be found on [Resource Directory](#) of the Space & Place website.