

# Heart of Our City initiative improves health for D8 residents

Aug 11, 2022

In 2021, Novartis partnered with the Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) and Smart D8 to launch Heart of Our City- a programme designed to improve awareness around and management of heart health, with an emphasis on social prescribing. Heart of Our City was rolled out in Dublin 8, specifically, in response to community needs and partners worked alongside the Dublin 8 community, St James' Hospital, ExWell Medical and Fatima Groups United. This project drew on the principles of the HSE Social Prescribing Framework<sup>1</sup>.

The Heart of City brochure provided lifestyle advice and created clear referral pathways through which the local population and healthcare workers could access IHF support services and the Fatima Groups United Social Prescribing service. Dublin 8 residents had the opportunity to attend exercise classes run by ExWell Medical, and free health checks were provided by the IHF at a number of locations earlier this year. Finally, community webinars were held to provide information on heart health, and Novartis also worked with local GPs to identify high-risk cardiovascular patients.

This multifaceted project saw a number of positive outcomes for the local community, including:

- 833 people engaging directly with some aspect of the Heart of Our City programme
- 35% of people attending the IHF Mobile Health Unit for a health check were identified as having high blood pressure and given advice as to next steps
- 80% of those who visited the IHF Mobile Health Unit for a health-check reported having made positive lifestyle changes since the health check
- 40 people were referred into ExWell Medical exercise classes for heart health
- Statistically significant improvements were seen in all outcome measures assessed at the ExWell Medical exercise classes, including aerobic fitness, lower body strength, co-ordination and balance and self-related health.

Heart of Our City concluded in March 2022. We would like to thank all of our partners for their significant contribution to this project.

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