



Glen's Healthy Places Programme

Glen's Men Project

Learning Briefing August 2022

This learning brief is part of a series that will reflect on the activities, impacts and learning from the different projects connected to the Glen's Healthy Places programme as they unfold.

Funded by the Community Foundation Northern Ireland, this programme has been developed from a PHA sponsored pilot that was delivered during 2019/2020. Programme activity is co-ordinated by a working group led by Northern Area Community Network that also includes representation from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Fresh Minds Education and Participatory Budgeting Works.

Glen's Men Project Overview

The Glens Men programme builds on the high impact initiative in the pilot, which has enabled the organisation, recruitment and delivery of a range of events in the first quarter of work. This has included the organisation of two events hosted in Cushendall and Armoy which have involved input from RSPB on themes linked to wildlife, nature and outdoor environments. Delivery has been complemented by the completion of a baseline health survey that reviews the impact of the work on some of the most excluded and isolated men in the Glens area. NACN have drew on their local networks to recruit a cohort of men that would potentially benefit from the activities.



Impact of the Activities

The diagram summarises the participant experiences of two events and the evaluation will build this comparative analysis as the programme is delivered. The post-event analysis shows a high degree of satisfaction, which is important given the complex nature of the group as all participants rated the events excellent or good. 82% of the men are over 65, which again reflects effective recruitment, especially when read against the general health of the group (see next page).

	Cushendall Wildlife		Armoy Wildlife	
Assessment	Excellent	14 [82%]	Excellent	12 [100%]
	Good	3 [18%]	Good	0 [0%]
	Poor	0 [0%]	Poor	0 [0%]
Age range	65 and over	14 [82%]	65 and over	14 [82%]
	26-64	3 [18%]	26-64	4 [18%]
	18-25	0 [0%]	18-25	0 [0%]

What is interesting about the focus of these activities is the way in which the content aligned with the interests of the men, how it enabled self-expression, allowing them to interact in an indirect way with their peers which creates unquestionable therapeutic benefits.

“I have always been out and about with my work, now I am unable to work and I find this it helps me to get out and to talk to others - I love it”

“Excellent speaker I enjoyed the presentation about the wildlife habitats and birds”

“Always good to meet people for a chat and a bite to eat and being with other people is something to look forward to”

With isolation and socio-physical disconnectedness becoming a more significant challenge, the everyday nature of encounter cannot itself be diminished. How such experiences are maintained and deepened and how in particular, they lead to more proactive strategies to deal with anxiety and depression is an obvious implication of future work with older men participating in this project.

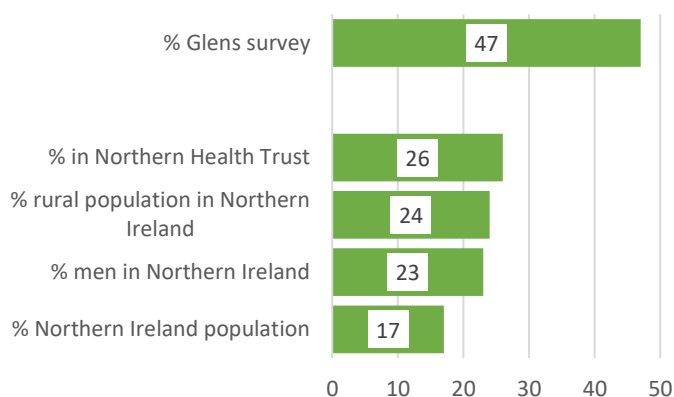
General Health of the Glen's Men

The General Health Questionnaire 12 (GHQ 12) is a psychometric screening tool to identify common psychiatric conditions although it is not a diagnostic instrument. It includes 12 factors that are asked as survey questions at the start of an intervention and at the end to determine distance travelled across a range of participants.

The GHQ is useful as it can help to better understand the prevalence of mental health issues or conditions linked to anxiety, social dysfunction, depression and loss of confidence and it is in this context that it has been used by the Glen's Men project.

At the outset of the project a GHQ survey was answered by 36 of the recruited men at the induction event. The responses can be analysed in numerous ways, that includes aggregating a binary score with 12 being the highest and 0 the lowest. A score of over 4 is a break point in considering the respondent to have a general health concern and data on people with a score of over 4 is available for comparison across Northern Ireland

The diagram shows the proportion of Glens men who completed the survey scoring 4 or over and how this contrasts with the wider population. Around 27% of people in Northern Ireland score 4> but for Glens Men this is 47% indicating a high penetration into the most isolated and marginal groups.



These findings are consistently higher for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, rural areas and for men more broadly and indicates how the Healthy Glens programme have deployed an effective approach to reaching the target group, especially in a rural context. The table below provides a more detailed description of the scores across these categories, and it demonstrates the relative intensity with which the Glens Men are affected by poor mental health.

Score	All NI	Men NI	Glen's survey	Difference
0	29%	35%	31%	-4%
1-3	44%	42%	22%	-20%
4>	27%	23%	47%	+24%
Total	100%	100%	100%	-

These findings show that Glens cohort of men is more than twice as likely to experience poor mental health than all men in Northern Ireland and fewer (31%) have no recorded score on the GHQ 12 compared with all men (31%) although this is slightly better than for the population as a whole (29%).

Through the work of this project, the Healthy Glen's Programme is connecting with harder to reach older men that are in need of support with respect to building their confidence or addressing concerns related to depression or anxiety and social dysfunction. These findings are important as they will help the delivery team design future activities to reflect these needs but also explore what methods might best offer tactful advice and appropriate support.