



## **Belfast – healthy city**

*European influences on policy*

### **David Stewart**

European policies are important in public health. We have had significant resources put into Northern Ireland as a result of the peace process and that money has been really instrumental in developing a number of community-based projects. But as well, we clearly are affected and influenced by legislation at the European level and so our wider environmental policies are increasingly influenced by what's happening in Europe and health protection in terms of the water quality, air quality are all strongly influenced by what's happening in Europe. We have recently for example developed an air quality action plan. All the district councils in Northern Ireland had to look at their air quality in relation to the European legislation, so the legislation if you like, drove a process to look at air quality. Belfast, being our most urban area, clearly had the most significant issues in relation to air quality and in relation to that then four areas of the city were designated as areas that needed to have action taken on air quality, so that then moves through to the next stage then as really developing an air quality action plan which is to really take action in those particular areas to as far as possible really improve the air quality, so there is really a theme that runs through from European legislation to action on the ground.