

NOW's The Time To Put Best Foot Forward

Trainees from Belfast's NOW Project, which provides training and employment opportunities for adults with learning disabilities, have been getting in some extra practice ahead of European Road Safety Day and Belfast's Week of Walking, which both occur at the end of April.

NOW runs an accredited Independent Travel Training Programme, using both classroom based work and practical training to teach participants how to get about safely by themselves. The NOW Project has been working in partnership with the H.E.A.R.T Project, based at West Belfast's Maureen Sheehan Centre. Trainees are encouraged to join a 'Walkabout Club' and make the most of the health benefits of walking.

Trainer Mairia Cahill says;

"Difficulty in knowing how to travel independently can be a major barrier to employment for people with learning disabilities – be that understanding how public transport works, or how to get around on foot safely. As well as being a life skill, however, walking to work can also be a very beneficial form of exercise."

Meanwhile, it's not just NOW Project trainees who are being encouraged to put their best foot forward. Siobhan Skates at the H.E.A.R.T Project is inviting anyone with access to a pedometer to register in their Step League which will run from Monday to Friday during Belfast's Week of Walking.

She says;

"See how far you can walk during these five days by recording your steps on a daily basis with our central register. There will be three age categories - over 20, over 40 and over 60 years. The league winner in each category will be the person who accumulates the most steps by 4pm on Friday 27 April.

H.E.A.R.T are also hosting a walk in the Falls Park at 2.30pm on Thursday 26th April and eagle eyed walkers who spot all the clues on the walk can win a reflexology session. Anyone interested in taking part should contact Siobhan on 028 9031 0346.