



HEALTH & GREENSPACE

*Greener Cities,
Healthier Communities*

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme that promotes integrated sustainable urban development. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges. The URBACT programme focuses on Action Planning Networks, which allow groups of cities (between 7 and 10) to work together to find solutions to common urban challenges. Each network is led by a Lead Partner city and is guided by an URBACT-approved Lead Expert.

Limerick is one of 9 partner cities in the URBACT Health and Greenspace Project, long with Lead Partner Budapest (HU), Espoo (FL), Messina(IT), Breda (NL), Santa Pola (ES), Suceava (RO) and Tartu (EE) and Poznan (PL). The object of the URBACT Health and Green Space Project is to support and enhance the provision of quality green infrastructure in urban areas for their health benefits.

Well planned and designed green infrastructure can contribute to healthy urban living and climate change adaptation. Numerous studies have reported that green spaces have positive impacts on health and well-being.

This project will adopt a participatory approach to identifying challenges and solutions in relation to greenspace provision and design in Limerick: a stakeholder group called an URBACT local group (ULG) will be formed with representatives from the social, economic, and environmental sectors (e.g. city staff, NGOs, SMEs, universities, citizens, etc). The ULG will aim to identify solutions to the needs and challenges of Limerick in relation to the role of green infrastructure in healthy urban living. The group will exchange learnings and best practice with the partner cities.



Greenspace can offer opportunities for social interaction and physical activity which can benefit mental and physical Health

The project will focus on 3 main types of green infrastructure:

- Parks and urban green areas;
- Grey infrastructure with green features(tree alleys, street trees, hedges, green verges) and
- External building greens(green roofs, green façade walls),

and will look at these under 4 different themes (in Limerick the focus will be on Themes 3 and 4)

Theme 1: Heat stress

Potential actions include: supporting climate-responsive design of green spaces; establishing plant-covered shade structures; developing of cooling routes, cooling oases; aligning of parks to take advantage of air-flows; increasing greenspace fraction, green roofs, green walls

Theme2: Air quality and noise

Potential actions include: design of green infrastructure in street canyons aiming to reduce pollution (planting trees at ground level, green walls); establishment of extensive and dense vegetation structures, green roofs, green walls functioning as sound barriers

Theme 3: General impacts on physical and mental health

Potential actions include: supporting specific green space design targeting improvement of mental health; establishing therapeutic garden; development of 'health walk' routes; establishing areas for relaxation and reflection

Theme 4: Lifestyles, social function, physical activities

Potential actions include: developing areas for social interaction, developing outdoor places for education and learning; facilitating activities within urban green space, such as family days, markets, guided walks; developing facilities supporting physical activities in green spaces (running tracks, bike paths, outdoor gyms); appointment of physical activity managers.

The output from the project will be an integrated action plan for greenspace in Limerick. This will a policy instrument that will be used to respond in a concrete way to the specific challenge of dealing with the health risks associated with unsustainable urban development. This project runs from May 2020 to August 2022.



Street vegetation can improve air quality, reduce heat stress and provide contact with nature.