



CARING TOGETHER IN BELFAST



Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Carers' Newsletter November 2020



Look at what Carers made during our online sessions!

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Carer Support Service

Hollywood Arches Health & Wellbeing Centre,
1 Westminster Avenue North, Belfast, BT4 1NS

T: 028 9504 2126 E: CarerSuppSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Dear Carers

Welcome to the latest edition of the Belfast Trust Carer Support Newsletter.

The past seven months have been an incredibly difficult time for everyone but it has been especially difficult for you as Carers. The latest Carers UK report – “Caring behind Closed Doors: 6 months on” showed the continued impact of the pandemic on Family Carers. Over 98,000 people in Northern Ireland have taken up a caring role as a direct result of the pandemic. Carers are providing more care now than before and a significant number haven't had a break during the pandemic. It is therefore more important than ever that you as a carer take care of yourself, physically, mentally and emotionally.

This Newsletter has information on a range of supports to keep you connected and well informed. Currently all of our face-to-face events have been postponed but we have a wide range of online sessions that will provide support for you. If you need help to access these online sessions please let us know.

We would encourage you to contact us at the Carer Support Service for information, support and guidance. Our telephone number is **T: 9504 2126** and we can be contacted by email on **E: CarerSuppSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net**

As well as making contact with the Carer Support Service, I would recommend that all Carers avail of their right to a Carers Assessment. Having a conversation with a Trust member of staff about your needs as a Carer is of paramount importance at this time. It is a key opportunity to reflect how your caring role is affecting you, what support you have, what support you may need and what needs you have as a carer and how these needs may be met. Speak to your key worker about having a Carers Assessment. If you do not have a key worker and would like to have a Carers Assessment please contact us at the Carer Support Service and we will organise this for you.

If you are a carer on our postal list and have an email address, please let us know as it helps us send regular updates to you. However if you no longer wish to receive information from the Carer Support Service please let us know and we will remove your name straight away.

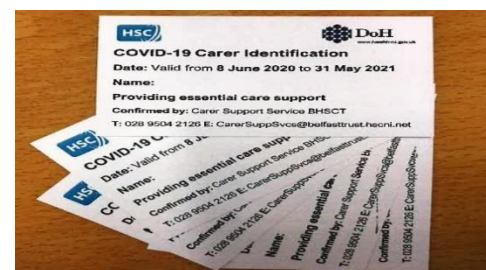
Margaret & Demi



Current Carer Support

Carer ID Cards

The Carer ID cards are for Carers of people who have an ongoing caring role for someone who lives in the Belfast area. When supermarkets are operating priority shopping hours the cards give carers access to them. The following NI retailers have agreed to grant access to unpaid/family carers. These include Asda, Sainsbury's, Iceland, Marks & Spencer, Lidl and the Co-op. **Carers will be asked to provide their Carers ID Card along with photographic ID in order to avail of the priority shopping hours.**



The Carer ID also recognises the role that carers have and identify them as needing additional exercise hours and travel as a result of their caring role.

To get your ID card contact the Carer Support Service on:

T: 9504 2126 or email us on **E: CarerSuppSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net**

Listening Ear Service



The Listening Ear Service has provided a confidential Listening Service to over 100 Carers since the beginning of the pandemic.

They have received weekly calls providing them with reassurance and comfort as well as relaxation and mindfulness advice.

If you would like to receive this listening support, you can refer yourself by contacting the Carer Support Service on:

T: 9504 2126 or email us on

E: CarerSuppSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Free BEE BOMBS

Bee bombs are little balls of seeds. Simply put the balls in some earth and come Spring you will have gorgeous wildflowers including poppies and Cornflowers.

These have been provided free to Carers by Recharge Community Interest Company



Request one of the following free KITS



Cookie Kit

The warm and welcoming sweet smell of just baked Cookies, filling your home is what this kit is all about. Indulgent quality white chocolate, dried cranberry pieces, mixed with oats & scrumptious malty brown sugar packed especially for you – to bake your own Cookies at home.

Mindfulness Kit

Take a deep breath and find inner peace. This gift set contains the tools and tips you need to fully embrace mindfulness & breath led relaxation. It is the perfect kit to get you started. The kit contains: essential oils infused soy wax Namaste Candles; Spearmint, Sweet Orange & Lime Uplifting Room Spray, Mindfulness tips, a breathing guide, your own unique little piece of sea glass keepsake & related card.





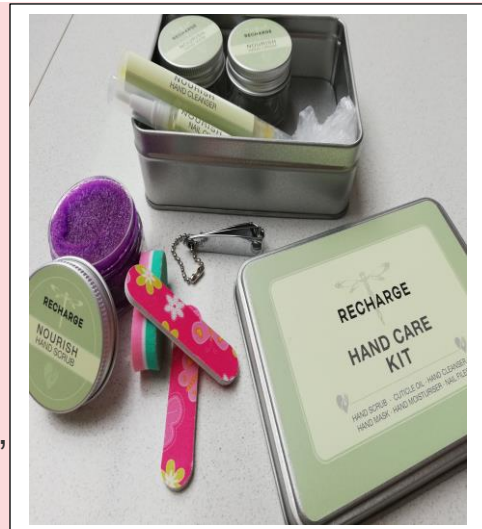
Deep Sleep Kit

Encourage a good night's sleep with the Deep Sleep Kit from Recharge CIC. The set includes the tranquil blend of Patchouli & Bergamot in a Temple Rub; French Lavender Bath Soak; Chamomile & Lavender scented Pillow Spray all of which are hand blended using premium, natural ingredients; in addition, a sleep mask will help you to block out the world. This Kit contains: Bath Oil (50ml), Lavender Pillow Spray, and Eye Mask.

Happy Hands Mini Handcare Kit

Are your hands dry, rough, or sore with harsh hand sanitizers? Our mini manicure kit is the perfect time out/self-care answer. This portable set of manicure essentials has everything you need for a self-relaxing hand massage, helping to improve blood circulation and joint mobility.

The petite, travel-friendly set includes Hand Spritzer, Hand Exfoliator, Hand Mask, Hand Cream, nail clippers, mini files, mini buffer & cuticle oil.



HANDSOME HANDS

CUTICLE CLIPPERS, NAIL CLIPPERS, NAIL FILE,
NAIL CLEANER, HAND CREAM, SCISSORS
HANDMADE IN ENGLAND



Handsome Hands Men's Hand Kit

Who says men can't have a manicure?

This kit is everything needed to keep fingers and nails pristine. From nail files to cuticle trimmers, this is a professional quality manicure kit for men.

This kit contains: Sanitizing hand spritzer, moisturising Hand Cream, stainless steel nail clippers, stainless steel nail scissors for precision trimming, two nail files, cuticle oil to keep cuticles looking their best & cuticle trimmer.

**Contact the Carer Support Service to request a free kit.
Kits and Bee Bombs are limited and priority will be given to
Carers on the Carer Mailing List.**

T: 95042126 E: CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Carer Online Programme Nov / Dec 2020

Gentle Yoga with Colette
Mondays until 14th December
10.30am – 11.30am



Carers Rights Day Session
Thursday 26th November
11am – 12.30pm



Making Xmas Crackers with Ciaran
Sunday 6th December
2.00 – 5pm
Materials will be provided



First Aid Course
Tuesday 8th December
11.00am – 12.30pm



Mini Manicure Workshop
Tuesday 8th December
7pm – 8pm
Materials will be provided



Christmas Cook-along
Friday 4th December
11am – 12.30pm
Ingredients will be provided



BHSCT staff who have a family caring role
can also access these online sessions

To book your place contact the Carer Support Service
on T: 9504 2126 E: CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net

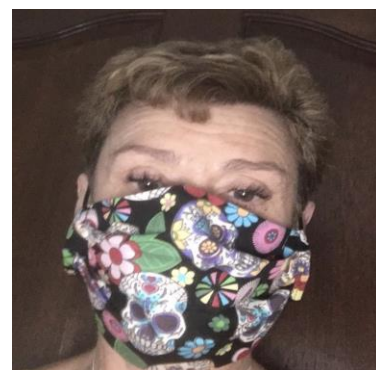
What's Been Happening in the Carer Support Service

Since our July Newsletter, we have held numerous online activities. A growing number of Carers are participating in these sessions. We have found that once a Carer tries an online session they don't look back and start participating in lots of sessions. To give you a flavour of what's been happening we have focused on sessions to promote carer health including weekly yoga and movement and dance sessions including relaxation and an 8-week mindfulness course. We also have had 4-week cooking courses including a specific course for male carers. Craft courses have proved popular and we have had a mask and card making session. At the start of autumn, we asked carers what they were interested in participating in. As a result of this feedback we have recently held baking and gardening sessions.

Don't Forget Your Mask



As part of our Autumn Programme, Ciaran hosted a session showing carers how to hand sew their own masks. Each of the 20 carers, who participated, received a box of materials, enough to make six masks. Not only did carers help keep themselves and others safe and follow Government advice, they also were helping the environment by making and using reusable masks.



***'Really enjoyed this class and the end produce is being well used'
'It was a brilliant afternoon. Really enjoyed it!'***

Man Made Meals



During August and September two, 4-week cookery courses were hosted by the Urban Community Chef. 24 carers took part including 13 male carers. There was a different theme each week with dishes from Mexico, China, India and Italy. Each week boxes of fresh ingredients were delivered to the Carers.



Bake Your Afternoon Tea

As requested by Carers we hosted online baking sessions facilitated by Forestside Cookery School. Twenty-four Carers got their own box of ingredients and were shown how to make a fabulous afternoon tea. See the results below.



Seasonal Gardening

Gardening has proved very popular and twenty Carers received expert advice on what they should be doing in their gardens at this time of year. Each Carer was given a pot and bulbs to plant to come up in the spring. They also received a window box with plants and shown how the best way to create a colourful display.



Keeping Well in Times of Isolation

A 4-week course on Building Resilience took place in August, never more relevant than now. The pandemic has been a challenge for us all in terms of our resiliency skills and it was good to be able to review and renew some of those skills during the sessions. So, what did we do? – well here is a pick of the top tips from each week.

Resilient people



Have

- **Goals**
- **A sense of purpose**
- **A positive mindset**

Know their triggers
Can manage stress
Have good coping strategies

Have a healthy diet
Sleep well
Exercise regularly

Have good

- **Social connections**
- **Support networks**

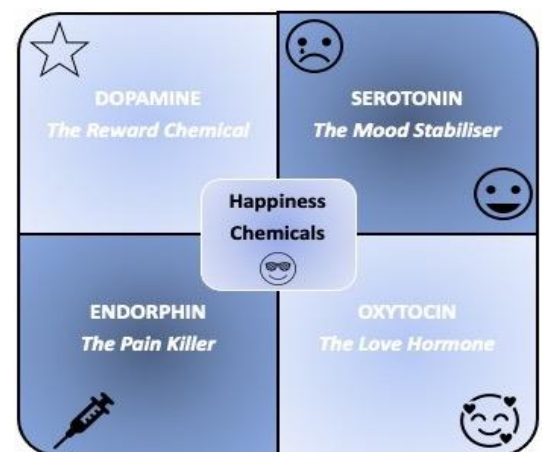


Week 1 set the scene by looking at how resiliency encompasses our mental, social, physical and emotional wellbeing and each session focused on one of those areas. In week one we looked at our mental wellbeing and on how having a positive mind-set is a key factor in being resilient.

Our emotional centre, the primitive 'caveman' part of our brain is primed to keep us safe. It is always on the lookout for danger, so it is wired for negativity, however we can turn that around if we focus on the positive things in our lives.

We were invited to get a notebook and write down a few good things that happened each day. It's funny how we only remember the problems we encounter isn't it!? This simple exercise helps to retrain our brain to look for positives and it's also good to have those notes to look back on to remind us that things aren't all bad!

We were encouraged to set a small goal each week, something important to us, perhaps something that we have been putting off as we let other things or other people take priority. Why? Well the big focus throughout the weeks was on activating our 'Happy Chemicals' that lovely group of neurotransmitters that keep us functioning well.



Week 2 looked at emotional well-being and some simple coping strategies to help us manage stress. We learned how the fight, flight and freeze response can be triggered, often without us being aware that it is happening, filling our 'stress buckets' and causing us to react to situations in an unhelpful way. Negative thinking - brooding over the past or thinking about what could go wrong in the future can set us off on that stress cycle and we practiced some simple relaxation and mindfulness techniques to keep us balanced and 'in the moment'.

Try this one! Saying the word 'CALM' to yourself, scan each of the four areas for muscle tension and then just let that tension go.

The CALM Exercise

- Chest:** Relax your chest/torso – let it sink back into the chair
- Arms:** Let your arms and shoulders relax, rest your hands in your lap
- Legs:** Uncross your legs, let them relax, have your feet on the floor
- Mouth:** Relax your jaw, allow your mouth to open slightly

Week 3 was about our physical wellbeing and we looked at the importance of keeping active and having a healthy diet. We learned about some simple techniques to change those habits that may see us piling on a few pounds – like the biscuit (or 2!) with our cup of coffee.

Sleep plays a key part in our physical and mental wellbeing; we looked at the stages of sleep and how the REM (Rapid Eye Movement) stage of our sleep cycle is so important to us for laying down memories and sorting out some of the stresses of the day. Check out www.sleepcouncil.org.uk for tips on a better night's sleep.

Week 4 looked at the importance of our social connections and support networks for our overall social wellbeing. The World Health Organisation defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' and during this pandemic, it is that social contact with friends and family members that we are all missing so much. We have all had to learn new skills like Zoom and FaceTime etc. and while online contact may not be the same and we may miss that element of human touch (remember oxytocin – one of our happiness chemicals) try to get over any discomfort you may have and keep connected!

Relaxation – listen to each evening at bedtime

<https://www.willowtherapies.co.uk/relaxation-mp3/>

Password: Float20

Services Supporting Carers

Children with Disabilities Service



In response to the COVID pandemic, the Children with Disabilities Service within Belfast Health & Social Care Trust worked in partnership with colleagues to develop our Page Tiger website. This went live on 16 April 2020 and to date has had over 4000 'hits'.

Our Page Tiger website is an online resource for children & young people with disabilities and their families & carers to access information, advice and support which has been collated in one place. This includes leaflets about understanding behaviour, communication, toileting, play & activity resources and videos as well as supports for carers and siblings.

The Page tiger link is: <https://view.pagetiger.com/CWD/cwd>

We are currently updating our website but hope you will find it a useful source of readily available information.

Belfast Adult Autism Advice Service

The **Belfast Adult Autism Advice Service (BAAAS)** will resume face to face delivery from **29th September, 1.30-4.30pm.**

The service will be facilitated from Cedar's Ravenhill Reach Office In line with Covid 19 guidance, Cedar will operate an appointment system - you can arrange an appointment via email or telephone; **d.bradley@cedar-foundation.org** or mobile **07587884088 / 07725051120.**

The BAAAS is for people aged 16 years and over who have a diagnosis of autism and for those who support them, who live in the Belfast Trust Area. The key aims are to, provide a safe and friendly place for you to speak to someone who understands autism and provide you with on-the-day information to access a range of appropriate services. This service is funded by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

Location

Cedar's
Ravenhill Reach office
1 Ravenhill Reach Close
Belfast
BT6 8RB

Time:

Tuesdays
1.30 - 4.30pm



Focus on Young Carers

Young Adult Carers Support Service NI

Established in October 2019, Action for Children Young Adult Carers Service aims to provide support for carers aged 18-25, living across NI.

Our service offers young adult carers a break from their caring role, opportunities to relax, have fun and meet other Young Adult Carers. We provide group activities as well as one to one support tailored to individual's needs, signposting to other services where appropriate.

We accept self-referrals as well as referrals from family members, social workers, health professionals, teachers, tutors and other community and voluntary sector services.



Carers Journey

Holly's mum has only recently received a diagnosis of ADHD, anxiety and depression, in spite of living most of her life with these conditions. Holly shared with us what it has been like for her as a carer.

What does a typical day in your caring role look like?

Checking in on mum, making sure she has everything she needs, making sure she's up, washed, dressed and ready for the day ahead. I give her a rota to try and fill her days with things to do. I work full time so can't be with her all the time, but when I have days off I am with her.

Do you recall when you first realised you were in a caring role?

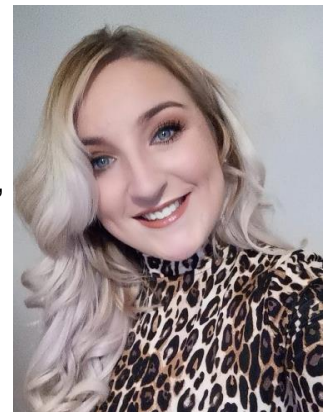
I've probably always been a carer for her, but I definitely didn't care for her in the right way, because I didn't know how to deal with it, so if I don't know, how am I going to help her to deal with it, I can't support her in the way she needs supported.

Has your education been impacted by your caring role?

As a young carer it did affect me in school, in terms of going into school not washed, not performing in your work as you weren't going home and doing your homework because mum wasn't checking it and didn't really care whether you did it or not. I am thinking about going back to school to study social work or mental health nursing.

What support have you received from the Young Adult Carers service?

I have been put on to so many different people who have been able to help me, inform me and give me better advice. Whether its leaflets, websites, different groups that are available for you to go and talk to someone. I think the most important thing is that there is a direct line of contact, you are able to pick up the phone and speak to someone, or just go for a coffee and talk about how you're feeling, how you're coping, if there's anything you're struggling with.



To make a referral or get more information, contact us:

T: 02890460500 E: youngadultcarers@actionforchildren.org.uk

www.actionforchildren.org.uk

Excitement as Young Carers return to Outdoor Activities and our Young Carers meet MLA's to share their concerns

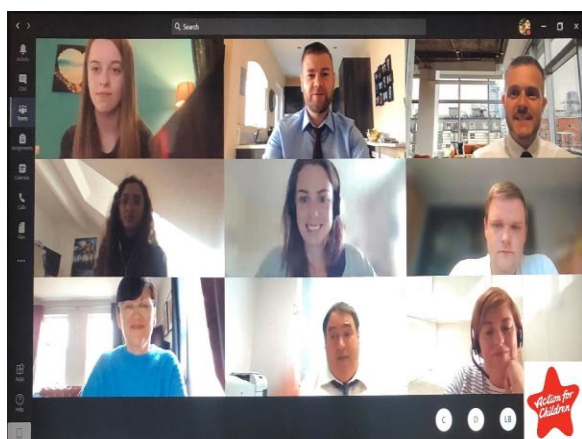
As Covid 19 came knocking on our doors, everyone struggled, and our young carers were left with many long hours in the home. This was a stressful time for all concerned but our young carers rose to every challenge that was thrown at them. To assist young carers managing their circumstances at home, Action For Children, young carers team, invited young people to attend many varied interventions on line. These included games of Bingo, Quizzes, The Bake off, Scavenger hunts and the Great Sunflower growing competition. These were all well received initiatives and many young carers found these activities a distraction from their day to day life and were greatly appreciated by all whom attended.

Small groups of young carers meeting outside commenced in August and the excitement and motivation to meet each other was palpable. The group chatted, caught up with each other and evidenced clearly, the benefits of meeting up together and reconnecting. In September we began inviting larger groups to out-door activities. These events are fully subscribed, and our young carers value the effort put in place for the out-door activities to take place. Many of our carers managed to attend the activities by using public transport and asking family members to transport them. Activities included Snow tubing and Crazy golf. One young carer who started with us in August was delighted to meet other young carers with similar experiences and his Mum commended how welcomed her son felt attending the activity and she described the benefits for him attending.



“Mark can be quite anxious about meeting new people and new activities but he felt really comfortable with everyone and has not stopped talking about how much fun he had”.

At Action for Children, young Carers voices are really important and on the 7th of September, our YCIG (Young Carers Inclusive Group) met with MLAs to discuss how they feel their representatives are responding to their needs and what else can be done to support young carers in the political field. This was very successful and the MLA's that attended were deeply touched by the personal stories shared by the young carers and were furnished with information and actions to follow through with. We plan to expand and encourage other young carers to join YCIG so their voices will be heard and we can become a larger voice.



If you would like further information families or professionals can contact Aisling Reynolds on directly on 02890460500, or email niyoungcarers@actionforchildren.org.uk. The service can also be contacted via Facebook Niyoungcarers.



TIDE (together in dementia everyday) is a network of present and former carers of people with dementia. We are working towards a world where our society reflects and responds to their rights. Like many others, we've been pretty busy over the past few months. A lot of our support, at the moment, is online but we also talk on the phone and can mail out information. We can offer you the following:

Information

The tide website provides up to date information. There is information on the different activities we are offering: <https://www.tide.uk.net/activities/> There is also a range of resources that may be useful: <https://www.tide.uk.net/resources/>. Information is also emailed or mailed regularly to tide network members about what is being offered to carers in Northern Ireland.

Connection

Our Facebook page provides information on loads of different areas:

<https://www.facebook.com/tidecarers/>

We've also a closed Facebook page so carers can contact directly each other. This means only the people in this group can see what is written. All topics are welcome in this group and this group isn't only here for coronavirus advice. Please feel free to talk about what is concerning you now. You can request access here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tidecarerssupport>

We have a range of zoom sessions to offer:

Weekly we've a chat with Northern Irish carers and a wider group of carers from the 4 nations.

Monthly we have more focused session for those caring for someone with young on set dementia, for someone in residential care, receiving support through home care and for those who are former carers.

Well-being

We also have regular webinars on well-being and self-care; how to get your voice heard and on living grief and bereavement. We also have one off sessions on a range of different issues.

Influence

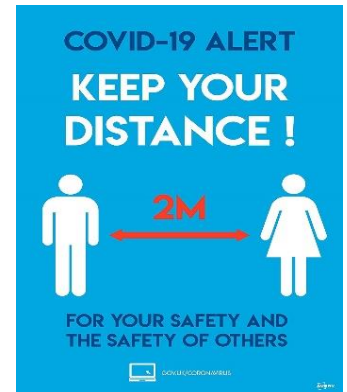
We are working with different partners to ensure that the rights of carers of people with dementia are heard. This includes work on the impact of COVID19, experiences of care homes, of home care, legislative changes and of grief and loss.

Finally

The term unprecedented has been well used. What was difficult for carers before this pandemic has become even more difficult. We all need to put in place the small but significant things that we can to keep us going. If you fancy chatting and listening with other carers – please join us. If you like to get involved and want to make a difference – please join us. If you want to learn more about your rights – please join us... So, if you are a present or past carer of someone with dementia; whether you care at home, support someone in their own home; your loved one is in residential care or whether you used to care for someone – consider the tide network has a place for you.

To join or for more information you can go to the website www.tide.uk.net or contact Fiona on Fiona@tide.org.uk / 07841 457596

Updated COVID-19 Guidance



Everyone has their part to play in stopping the spread of the virus in the community by

- Limiting contact with others
- Regular hand washing
- Wearing of face coverings
- Good social distancing

In line with advice from the World Health Organisation, when you do wear a face covering it is important that you:

- Do not get a false sense of security about the level of protection they may offer
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it
- Make sure the face covering covers your mouth, nose and chin without any gaps at the side
- Avoid touching the face covering when wearing it
- Take the face covering off by the straps
- Wash the face covering after use, if washable. If it's not washable, dispose of covering in general waste.

COVID-19 Helpline

A Freephone Helpline is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm on 0808 802 0020 for vulnerable groups to access information, advice and support in relation to COVID.

Please make sure that any information about COVID is from a reputable source.

For up-to-date NI information, please go to:

www.pha.site/coronavirus or

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

Carers Rights Day 2020

Carer Rights Day is Thursday 26th November 2020



Carers Rights Day aims to raise awareness of carer issues and to highlight carers' rights. The theme this year is 'Know Your Rights'. An online information session on Carers Rights is being facilitated by Carers NI.

You are invited to an online session:

Carers Rights, Entitlements and Assessments

Date: Thursday 26th November

Time: 11.00am

To book a place T: 95042126 or E: CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net



carers NI

**Our Helpline is open 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri
on 028 9043 9843
or email advice@carersni.org at any time**