



Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust

caring supporting improving together

CARERS

Newsletter

CARING TOGETHER IN BELFAST

AUTUMN 2021

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Welcome
- Current Carer Support
- Carer Events
- Carer Supports in Physical Disability and Sensory Services
- Focus on Young Carers
- Opportunities for carers to get involved



Carer Support Service

T: 028 9504 2126

E: CarerSuppSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Web: <http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/carers-services>



WELCOME

Dear Carers

Welcome to the latest edition of the Carers Newsletter.

Since our last newsletter, we have been working to continue to support carers and share information to keep you up-dated. During this time, we hosted Carer Family Days in the Ulster Folk Museum and also participated in the regional Carers Week initiative to raise awareness of carers within our communities.

In this edition, we share a range of carer supports available which includes the monthly programme of events and activities, alongside more tailored support, for you as a carer. We encourage you to check out the support available. We also continue to encourage you to ask for a Carers Assessment to ensure you receive support in your caring role. Should you need assistance in relation to requesting a Carer Assessment or to find out further information on the carers supports available, please get in contact with the Carers Support Service.

We are also working to improve how we communicate and share information with carers. We are asking for your input to help us improve how we communicate with carers and invite you to complete a questionnaire to give us your feedback and suggestions.

We hope you enjoy this edition and welcome your feedback. Should you require any information in relation to help and support available, please get in touch with the Carer Support Service.



Left to right: Claire Fordyce – Senior Manager,
Niamh Murphy – Team Secretary,
Margaret McDonald – Carers Co-ordinator.

Meet the team

The Carer Support Service is growing and we are delighted to welcome Niamh to the team as the new administrator. We also look forward to welcoming 2 new Carer Information and Support Officers to the team, who will take up post shortly.

CURRENT CARER SUPPORT

The Carer Support Service offers a range of support services for carers and a monthly programme of activities. Most of these sessions are currently online due to social distancing. Below are examples of face to face and telephone support as well as the ongoing sessions offered to carers each month. Alongside these we also offer emotional support programmes, physical activities e.g. Boxercise and Information sessions on a range of subjects that would interest carers. We encourage you to check out the monthly programme and join a session.

Carer Walking Group

The Carer Support Service has been organising weekly Carer Walks in Belfast Parks across the city. Walking regularly, whatever the speed, is good for the mind, body and soul and is an ideal opportunity to meet other carers. Barbara Redmond from the Trust Health Improvement Team is our Walk Leader. She has been leading walks in Victoria Park, Ormeau Park, Falls Park and the Waterworks. If you would like to join us on our weekly walk, please ring the Carer Support Service on T: 028 9504 2126 or E: CarerSuppSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net. Walks take place every Thursday and start at 11am and when you register, the location and walk group meeting point will be sent to you.



Counselling for Carers

The Carers Support Service know that Carer's mental health was being particularly impacted during the pandemic. As a result of restrictions, carers were providing more care, often without their usual or any support. There was clear evidence that the additional stress carers were experiencing with greater caring responsibilities, increased the need for counselling support. The Carers Support Service has set up a counselling project specifically for carers, as generic counselling services can have long waiting lists.



Alongside our Mental Health Services and the Carer Service from the South Eastern Trust we developed a Carer Counselling Pilot which started in February. At the end of September 68 carers have been referred to the service and 238 counselling sessions delivered. One carer described that counselling as "amazing, learnt how to get past difficult situations and say no". If you would like to be referred to a key worker or contact the Carer Support Service on T: 028 9504 2126 or E: Carer SuppSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net
To hear about the benefits, check out <https://youtu.be/IZkuW7MlcHA>.

CURRENT CARER SUPPORT

Gentle Yoga with Collette

On Monday mornings we host a gentle yoga session for an hour with Collette. This session is suitable for beginners and can help carers build strength and flexibility very gently. We can supply a yoga mat for those who wish to attend.



Relaxation with Sarah

We have a number of sessions during the month where carers can drop into a guided relaxation session with Sarah. These sessions are designed to encourage carers to take time out and focus on themselves for an hour.

Each month the programme is sent out by email to carers on our Carer Information list who can then register online. If you are not, currently receiving the programme by email, the monthly programme can be found on our website <https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/service/carers-services/carers-activities/> or you can ring the Carer Support Service on T: 029 9504 2126 for details. If you are a member of the Carer Information list and have an email address, please share this with us.



Craft with Ciaran

Our monthly craft sessions with Ciaran are an opportunity for carers to create a craft and learn new skills. These are held on Saturday afternoons and are always very popular. Over the next few months Ciaran will be showing carers how to make Christmas cards and luxury crackers. All materials are provided and delivered to the carer's home.

Cooking with Chef Jeffers

We host monthly cooking sessions with Chef Jeffers. All ingredients are provided and delivered to the carers home the day before the session. Sessions are at a mixture of times including evenings to be accessible to carers with commitments during the day. Priority is given to carers who haven't participated before.



CURRENT CARERS SUPPORT

We recognise that carers can face significant stress. To help you take time out and relax, the following are available by contacting the Carers Support Service. A Pamper Hamper has been put together to help you take time out. The hampers are available to carers who may not be able to access the on-line programmes and have not previously received one. The 'Calm your Mind' CD is also a helpful way to help you relax and de-stress. You can request one of these by contacting the Carer Support Service on T: 9504 2126 E: CarerSupSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Carers Relaxation CD

A new Carers Relaxation CD has just been developed in partnership with the Carer Support Service, Mental Health Services staff and Artscare musician, Brendan Popplestone. Carers are encouraged to use the CD to take time out each day, complete the Shape Breathing Exercise, and listen to the relaxation music in order to calm the mind.



Women's Pamper Hamper

Some of the beautiful items include: Pure bliss body lotion, relaxing bath oil, body firming massage oil, organic rose water, frankincense and rose face cream, a coconut shampoo bar and much more.



Men's Pamper Hamper

Some of the items in this beautiful hamper are: rosemary and sage shower and bath gel, cedarwood and peppermint shampoo, peppermint and ginger liquid soap, a basil and lime reed diffuser and a loofah.

CARERS EVENTS

Over the last few months, carers support has included a number of events. These have included Family Days and a crafting event. We also had our annual Carers Week.

Carers Week is the annual campaign to recognise the role that Carers play in our society. Each year the Belfast Trust hosts a programme of events to acknowledge Carers. During this year's Carers Week, 13 events and activities were hosted for carers including four regional events. There were a wide range of activities including health and wellbeing events like yoga, a walking group and a skincare session. Carers also had the opportunity to meet the Carer Team and also put their views across to the Belfast Trust Chairman and Trust's Autism Service. Other popular events included cooking with Chef Jeffers, a Carer Quiz and a craft session making memory boxes.



CARERS EVENTS

As part of our Carers Week celebrations, carers from Belfast joined the South Eastern Trust at a Carer Family Day at Delamont Country Park. Everyone had a great day with free ice-creams and train rides. Here are some of the Dads enjoying family time in the park.



CARER CRAFTING

To make the most of the summer, the Carer Support Service hosted outdoor socially distanced Carer events. One of the most popular sessions has been our "Craft sessions with Ciaran". Inspired by the beauty of a local walled garden Ciaran designed a simple and creative Embroidery Workshop where carers could sew taking inspiration from the beauty of the surroundings.



"It was really nice meeting with other carers and doing a craft I really enjoy"



"It was lovely and relaxing and in a beautiful setting. Ciaran is fabulous and everyone so welcoming".



ETHNIC MINORITY CARERS GROUP

The Belfast Trust Ethnic Minority Carer Support Group supports carers from diverse backgrounds. Events are organised bi-monthly and have included family days and craft and pamper days.

With the relaxation of restrictions a Family Day was organised for Carers in Victoria Park where they went for a walk and had a picnic. The carers, who had not met in person for over a year were delighted to catch up and enjoy the sunny weather together.

If you would like to join the bi-monthly group or for further information about activities organised in partnership with the Ethnic Minority Carers group, please contact Jennifer.yu@belfasttrust.hscni.net



ULSTER FOLK MUSEUM CARERS DAYS

On the 21st and 22nd August, 182 adults and children attended our Summer Carer Family Days at the Ulster Folk Museum. Over the weekend the families were able to see the skills and customs from over 100 years ago. They could stroll through the rolling hills of the countryside and the town of Ballycultra filled with authentic shops and buildings and met the costumed guides bringing it all to life. They also saw a variety of folk activities and traditional crafts demonstrated, from tweed weaving to black smithing and printing.



“Loved getting out in the outdoors the space was great”.



“I had a wonderful day with my family walking around in a beautiful place”.

“It was a very welcoming break, just to have time with my family and have a day out together”.



Physical Disability & Sensory Services Supporting Carers

The main objective of this service is to help people aged between 18 and 64 who have a physical disability or sensory impairment to maintain their independence and continue living in their own homes and communities. The service also manages day centres for Older People as well as those for individuals under 65.

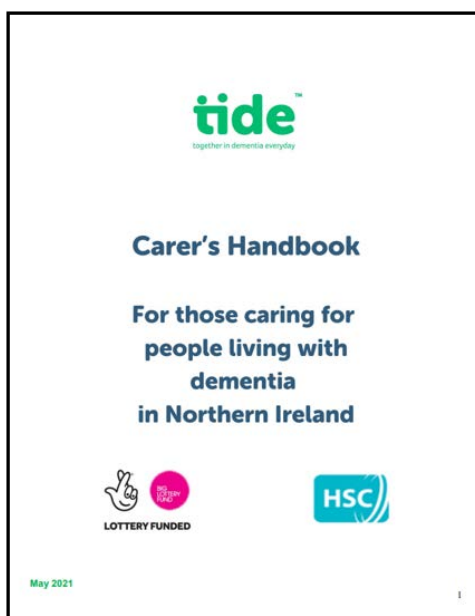
Community Access Team supporting Young Carers

Amna and Mohammed are young Carers for their mother Nasik. After coming to live in Belfast in December in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic they found it difficult to integrate into their local community and access support for their learning. With support from the Community Access Team within the Physical & Sensory Disability Service they have been attending Conway Education Centre. Staff at Conway Education Centre have supported them to access online Zoom sessions with study buddies, they have also attended social activities at The Mill. Through a carers grant, Amna was able to purchase a laptop to assist with her online



studies. This has provided both children support for their learning, the opportunity to build new friendships, and as a result reduced their social isolation and encouraged their social inclusion.

Recently they have been engaging with alternatives and local children in the area to identify common interests and goals for the future. We look forward to watching these young people grow and build friendships with support from our services helping them in their caring role.



Supporting Carers of people with Dementia in Day Centres

tide Carers Handbook

Across Day Centres and Dementia Day Centres **tide** Carer's Handbook has been distributed to carers and families who care for those living with dementia. This resource provides carers with useful information to signpost them to relevant support networks in their local area. Physical and Sensory Disability Services have received positive feedback in relation to this resource, with families and carers referring to the handbook as 'extremely useful'. You can access the handbook through the following [Link](#)

FOCUS ON YOUNG CARERS

Action for Children Young Carers have been excited to re-join the outdoor activities over the summer months. Virtual activities have been the basis of a lot of their fun activities since lockdown began in March 2020. These have included Bake offs, Escape rooms, Storytelling, Quizzes, drop in centres for anyone who just wanted a chat and a laugh. This page shares some of the activities organised by Action for Children.

Pizza and Pottery Night

To complement the online sessions, a pizza and pottery night was held where the Young Carers Team met families in designated areas and delivered Pizza ingredients and pottery clay so families could participate in these activities on line. These were two very popular events and not only young carers participated but siblings and parents were involved also, and created lovely family time.

Film Club

The Film Club was also a very successful collaboration with Into Film, where 12 films over 12 weeks were watched and discussed. Into Film provided hoodies, tablets, popcorn, and chocolate so young carers could enjoy the full cinema experience from their home. This event proved very successful, and the Young Carers will be provided with a shortened version of this over the summer months so young carers can continue to learn about other countries and their cultures through film.

For further information, families and professionals can contact



Aisling Reynolds at T: 028 9046 0500 or
E: niyoungcarers@actionforchildren.org.uk
Also check out the
facebook page Niyongcarers

Carers Week

Carers week began with a family festival on line with a disco, a quiz and a personal trainer taking a fitness class and ended with Health Minister, Robin Swann introducing our Tutorial video for professionals in the community. The aim of this video is to share tips in identifying young carers in the community and this has been positively received. WATCH OUT for more young carers being recognised for their work.

Storytelling Competition

We held a storytelling competition where we picked 3 winners, who all received a £100 voucher to spend on a family outing/activity. Robin Swann, Health Minister, also sent the winners individual letters congratulating coming first and for sharing their stories. One of our young winners was also congratulated at their primary school where teachers and classmates recognised his achievements.



Young Carers go Snowtubing

A group of 12 Young Carers went snowtubing in Craigavon where 'a great day was had by all'. Transport to the event was funded by the Belfast Trust.

CARERS OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED



The Carer Support Service would like to improve how we communicate and share information with unpaid/ family carers. This includes information that we share via the regular emails and the Carers Newsletter.

We have designed a questionnaire with carers to get your input on how we can better communicate with carers across Belfast.

Please help us to shape this work by completing a questionnaire. You can request a hard copy of the questionnaire before Monday 6th December by telephoning 028 9504 2126.

We will share the feedback in the next Carers Newsletter.

Carers Network – get involved

The Belfast Trust has committed to establish a Carer Network for unpaid/family carers. The focus of the Network is to actively influence communication between the Trust and carers, to shape corporate priorities through the Carers strategy and actively identify areas of concern for carers.

If you would like to find out further information or get involved, please register your interest by completing the form [Link](#) here or by telephoning 028 9504 2126. or email CarerSuppSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net

LEARNING DISABILITY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Learning Disability Services have just engaged a new Involvement Lead. Elizabeth Stevenson has taken up post and shares her role.

My experience has been in Social Work, working across children's and adult services, the majority of which has been with individuals with a learning disability.

Through my role I will be working with management to make sure carers have the best opportunity to meaningfully engage in the development of Learning Disability services. Over the next few months I hope to create opportunities to engage with you as carers, whether that is attending information sessions on topics of interest, or being on a work stream with management to progress priority issues for learning disability. A Learning Disability Forum has been set up to provide opportunities for carers and people with an interest in Learning Disability services to share

their thoughts on priority issues. The Learning Disability Forum will oversee focus groups on the agreed priority areas to work with management to progress positive changes. If you would like to be become involved, please contact Elizabeth at yourvoiceinld@belfasttrust.hscni.net or telephone 028 9504 3312.

Supporting carers to access support via Day Centres

As part of Carers week, carers had the opportunity to meet with the Trust chairman to raise and discuss current issues. A major issue raised, was the impact of social distancing requirements on access to Day Centres. Since June, work has been undertaken to explore how Day Centres could resume services to comparable pre-covid levels. Belfast Trust has been involved in these discussions alongside the other Trusts, the Public Health Agency and also carers. To support this work, the Patient and Client Council also facilitated a consultation process with service users and carers around this issue which involved a regional survey to hear from a wide range of people. This work has been progressing and it is anticipated that recommendations to resume services will be shared shortly. We will provide an up-date with carers when available, via the Carer Information List.



ARE YOU A CARER THINKING ABOUT RETURNING TO WORK?

WE CAN HELP YOU...

- Identify your skills & goals
- Restore confidence
- Explain gaps in employment
- Search & apply for suitable jobs
- Update or develop your CV
- Reclaim your personal identity
- Get ready for interviews
- Overcome anxiety, depression, stress, etc.
- Navigate volunteering opportunities to gain any missing work experience
- Obtain qualifications from free online & in-person training

If you've been caring for someone, the idea of finding employment can be **daunting.**

Our Employability Programme can help you by providing accessible sessions via phone, video call & face to face with our Employment Mentors, Parallel Support Mentors & Employer Liaison Officers

FOR FURTHER INFO:

Call or text:
07955 528220

Visit our website:
www.ebm.org.uk/employability

Find us on Facebook:
Employability East Belfast



The LEMIS+ Project is part funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014 – 2020 and the Department for the Economy Led by Ashton Community Trust in partnership with East Belfast Mission, GEMS NI, Job Assist Centre Greater Shankill and Job Assist Centre West Belfast

