

NEWSLETTER

For Elected Representatives

Understanding Community Care & Discharge Support

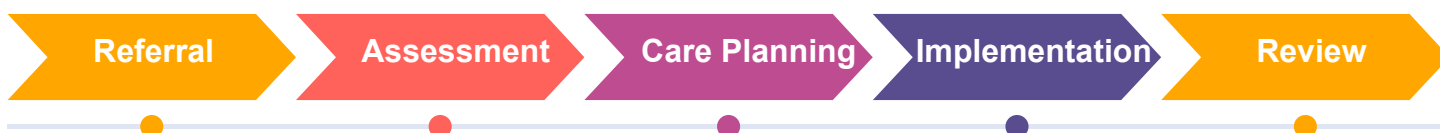
Understanding Community Care

You contact us on behalf of your constituents regarding care packages, discharge planning, occupational therapy (OT) assessments and home adaptations. These services are essential in supporting your constituents to live safely and independently at home, particularly following illness or a hospital stay.

These processes can be complex, involving multiple teams across hospital and community settings and often alongside external partners. In this Newsletter, we aim to provide a clear overview of how these services operate, what can impact timescales, and how your enquiries can be progressed as effectively as possible.

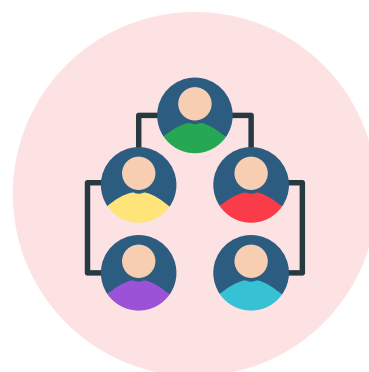
How Community Care Works

Community care is designed around individual needs and follows a structured pathway:



Referrals come from hospital teams, GPs, or directly from individuals and families. Following referral:

- A social worker or healthcare professional assesses the needs
- Supports are identified to promote independence and safety
- Services are tailored to the individual's circumstances
- Support may include:
 - Care packages (domiciliary care)
 - Occupational therapy assessments
 - Equipment and home adaptations
 - Support for carers
- Discharge planning begins early during a hospital stay, ensuring that where support is needed at home, arrangements can be put in place as safely and quickly as possible.



Care Packages Supporting People at Home

Care packages provide personalised support to help individuals remain at home safely. This may include assistance with:

- Social care support
- Personal care



Occupational Therapy Promoting Independence

Occupational Therapists support individuals to carry out everyday activities safely and independently. They assess people in their home environment and may recommend:

- Mobility aids
- Equipment for daily tasks
- Adaptations to improve safety
- OT is often a key step before equipment provision or home adaptations can proceed

Discharge Planning A Coordinated Approach

Discharge from hospital is carefully planned from an early stage and involves multiple professionals working together with the patient and their family.

Where additional support is required:

- Community teams assess ongoing needs
- Interim placements or care packages may be arranged
- Rehabilitation and reablement services may be introduced
- The focus is always on supporting a safe and sustainable return home.



Home Adaptations Supporting Safer Living

Home adaptations can range from small changes such as handrails, to major works like bathroom adaptations or extensions.

Minor adaptations may be arranged following OT assessment.

Major adaptations are typically delivered in partnership with the Housing Executive or social landlords.

These processes often involve multiple stages and organisations and can take time to complete.

Why Delays Can Occur

While we understand delays are frustrating, factors affecting timescales include:

- High demand across community services
- Workforce pressures
- Waiting lists for assessments and services
- Dependencies on external partners
- Clinical prioritisation based on risk and need
- Importantly, services are prioritised based on level of need rather than strictly in date order.

Common Misunderstandings

We frequently receive enquiries based on the following assumptions:

- ✗ A care package is automatically in place on discharge
- ✗ Home adaptations can be completed immediately
- ✗ Services operate on a first-come, first-served basis

In practice:

- All services are assessment-led
- Timescales vary depending on complexity and need
- Multiple agencies may be involved
- Providing this clarity can help support more informed conversations with constituents.



Supporting Carers Carers Week 2026

CARERS WEEK 2026

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

MON 08 JUN	Carers Week Launch Event 10am - 1pm The MAC	
TUES 09 JUN	Wellbeing Session with Ulster Wildlife 7pm - 8:30pm Bog Meadows	
WED 10 JUN	Sightseeing Bus Tour & Treasure Hunt 11am - 1pm Belfast City Centre	Thanksgiving and Celebration Evening 7pm - 8:30pm Knockbracken Hall
THUR 11 JUN	Belfast Tool Library (Men's Woodwork Session) 10am - 1pm Shankill Mission Building	Information Session: Carers Rights 7pm - 8pm Online
FRI 12 JUN	Quiz Night 7pm - 10pm Duncairn Centre for Arts and Culture	
SAT 13 JUN	Craft with Ciaran 11am - 2 pm 2 Royal Avenue	
SUN 14 JUN	Release and Relax: Yoga with Colette 1pm - 2:30 pm Belvoir Activity Centre	
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Carer Support Service  Sign Up Here: https://forms.office.com/e/q8DC3qHFR6  02895 042126  CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net		

Carers Week: 8–14 June 2026

Unpaid carers play a vital role in supporting individuals across our communities, often working alongside formal services. Carers Week highlights the theme “Building Carer Friendly Communities”, recognising both the contribution of carers and the challenges they may face.

A range of events are taking place across Belfast to support carers’ wellbeing and help connect them with services and support, including a launch event at the MAC and activities such as wellbeing sessions, a bus tour, yoga, crafts and a quiz night.

All carers are welcome.

To book, visit: [Carers Week June 2026](#).

Or contact the Carers Support Service via:

CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Tel: (028) 9504 2126



We encourage you to share this programme with your constituents who may benefit from this support.



Have Your Say – “This is Our Health Campaign”

The Department of Health has launched a new public engagement campaign, “This is Our Health,” encouraging people across Northern Ireland to have their say on the future of health and social care.

The initiative aims to build a stronger partnership between the public and health services, highlighting the important role we all play in looking after our own health and wellbeing.

Over the coming weeks, teams from the Public Health Agency and Health Trusts will be engaging with communities at events across Northern Ireland, listening to what matters most to people and how services can be improved.

You can also get involved by completing a short online questionnaire, open until 31 July 2026, sharing your views on what helps you stay well and what matters most to you in healthcare.

To find out more or take part, visit: thisisourhealth.org.uk



**YOUR OPINION
MATTERS**

10,000 MORE Voices Survey Share Your Experience – Your Voice Matters!



Have your constituents used equipment that helps them live more independently with a disability? If so, we want to hear from them.

The 10,000 More Voices survey is gathering feedback on people’s experiences of using equipment to support daily living. By sharing views, your constituents can help shape and improve services across Northern Ireland. All responses are private and confidential.

To take part, scan the QR code or visit: tinyurl.com/10KMOVATE

The survey is short and straightforward, and contribution will have a significant impact in helping us shape how we deliver services in the future.

If you would like a printed copy or support to complete the survey, please contact the team on Tel: (028) 9536 1124 or email 10000morevoices@hscni.net

SCAN ME



How We Manage Constituency Enquiries?

We recognise the importance of constituency enquiries and your role as Elected Representatives in advocating for constituents.

When enquiries are received:

- Logged and triaged by the Public Liaison Service
- Directed to the appropriate service
- Clinical input sought where needed

Consent:

Signed patient consent is essential for individual cases. Without it, we cannot access or share personal information, which may delay our response.

To help us respond quickly, please include:

- Signed consent
- Clear summary of the issue
- Relevant dates
- Current circumstances and risks

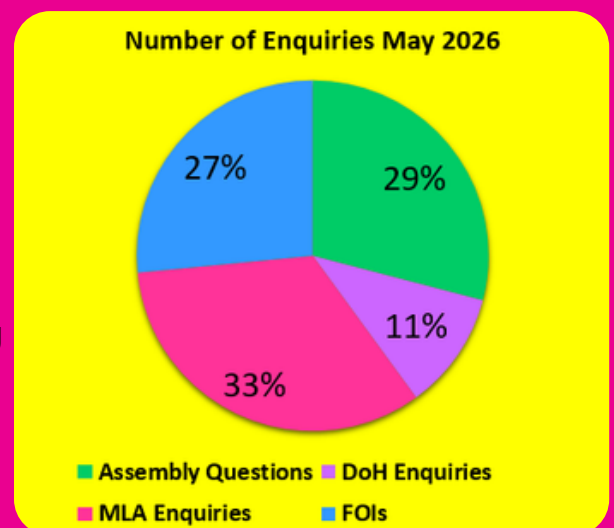
Providing full information at the outset enables a more efficient response.



Did you know?

The total number of enquiries received by the Public Liaison Service in May 2026 was **275**.

The top three enquiry themes received from Elected Representatives in May 2026 were in relation to **Waiting Lists, Community Care and Discharge and Mental Health Services**.



Continuing our Working Together

We remain committed to working collaboratively with Elected Representatives to support constituents through what can often be complex and sensitive processes.

By understanding how community care services operate and ensuring enquiries are submitted with complete information, we can work together to:

- Improve response times
- Reduce duplication
- Support better outcomes for those who rely on our services.

