Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
caring supporting improving together

OCTOBER 2026

NEWSLETTER
For Elected Representatives

Supporting Access, Service Developments and Key Updates

Welcome



This month, we are focusing on improving access to services, reducing waiting times, and supporting mental health across all age groups. This reflects the key themes emerging through constituency enquiries, Freedom of Information requests and Assembly Questions.

Inside this issue: CAMHS Update, Belfast Recovery College, New Dementia Support Guide, Virtual Ward Pilot and Trust Savings.

What You Have Been Asking Us?



Recent enquiries highlight a number of recurring themes:

- Access to mental health services, particularly CAMHS waiting times
- Support and referral pathways for dementia services
- Requests for clinical activity data and waiting lists
- Enquiries relating to specific service areas, including:
  - Perinatal mental health
  - Autism services
  - Gender identity services
  - Respite and community support

We continue to work closely with services across the Trust to enable us to provide you with timely responses to your constituency enquiries.

PUBLIC LIAISON SERVICE
Tel: (028) 9504 5888
Email: PublicLiaison@BelfastTrust.hscni.net

Mental Health & Access to Services

Mental health remains a key priority across health and social care services.

It is estimated that one in six people will experience mental ill health during their lifetime, highlighting the importance of early intervention, timely access to services, and ongoing support.

Alongside work to improve access, there is a strong focus on prevention, self-help, and community-based support, ensuring your constituents can access help at the earliest opportunity.



CAMHS and Access to Services

We recognise that waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) continues to be an area of concern for your constituents.

Work is ongoing across the Trust to improve access by:

- Strengthening early intervention and prevention approaches
- Supporting young people and families while awaiting assessment
- Expanding alternative support pathways and resources
- Working collaboratively with regional partners to address demand

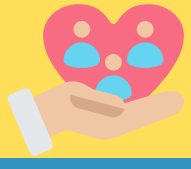
How to access the service

If your constituents need to see or speak to someone from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, they should talk to their:

- GP
- teacher
- school nurse
- family social worker

CAMHS and Access to Services CLICK HERE





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Support Available Now
Self-Help Resources

DID YOU KNOW?

A wide range of self-help resources are available from the Trust to support your constituents. Our guides are:

- Developed by clinical psychologists
- Include input from service users and professionals
- Cover topics such as anxiety, alcohol use, eating disorders and self-harm

SCAN HERE!

Access resources:
Self-Help Resources

Belfast Recovery College

The Belfast Recovery College offers free mental health and wellbeing courses for anyone aged 16+.

Programmes are open to:

- Service users
- Families and carers
- Trust staff
- Members of the public

Courses are co-produced using lived experience and professional expertise, helping people build skills to support their own wellbeing and recovery.

📍 Lanyon Building, 10 North Derby Street, Belfast
📞 028 9504 3059
📧 recoverycollege@belfasttrust.hscni.net

To find out more scan the QR code:

SCAN ME!

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Dementia Information and Support Services

The ‘Dementia Information and Support Services’ booklet, launched on 26 May 2026 at Belfast City Hall, and was coproduced in partnership with people living with dementia, carers, Alzheimer’s Society, Dementia NI and Trust staff. The booklet aims to provide a wide range of information for people living with dementia and their carers about Trust services and the wider support available to your constituents.

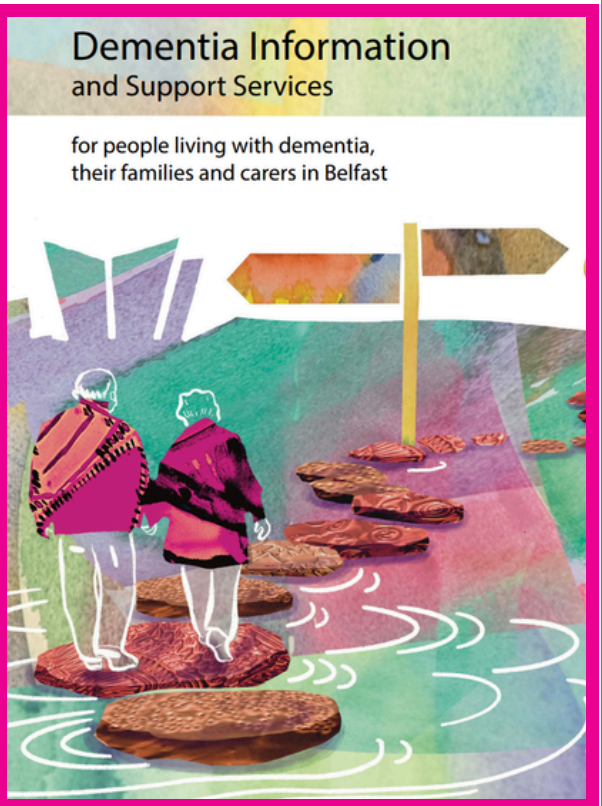
Trust staff have distributed it to patients and their families, ensuring they have access to vital information. Additionally, the booklet is available throughout the community in Belfast, serving as a foundation for a regional approach to dementia care. This comprehensive guide aims to empower your constituents and their families by providing essential insights and resources, fostering a supportive network for those impacted by dementia.

Additional dementia resources are available via Belfast Trust website:
Dementia Resources

You can access a copy of this new guide via the link below:
Dementia Information & Support Services

SCAN HERE!





Left to right: Rhonda Mullan, SPPG Social Care Lead, Debbie Rainey, Belfast Trust Dementia Service Improvement Lead for Hospitals, Jill McPeak, Belfast Trust Involvement and Partnership Officer, Ross Mawhinney, Belfast Trust Service improvement lead dementia – community.

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Virtual Ward Pilot Launches in Belfast Trust



Belfast Trust is the first Trust in Northern Ireland to pilot a Virtual Ward service through the regional encompass digital platform.

The service enables suitable patients to receive hospital-level care safely at home while remaining under consultant-led care, supported by remote monitoring, regular clinical reviews and 24/7 clinical support.

Initially available to selected adult patients from Royal Victoria Hospital medical specialities, the pilot aims to improve patient experience by supporting recovery at home, reducing hospital stays and lowering the risk of hospital-acquired infections.

The development of Virtual Wards across Northern Ireland will be overseen through a multi-disciplinary steering group under the Sensible Care programme.

Further Information:
For more information on Virtual Wards, please scan the QR code below:

Belfast Trust Financial Savings Programme

We are progressing the 2026/27 Savings Plan in response to ongoing financial pressures across the health and social care system.



Further Information:
Read the full Trust Board paper.

CLICK HERE!

Read the full Trust Board presentation.

Get in Touch

We welcome feedback on this newsletter and suggestions for future editions. So if there are emerging issues affecting your constituents, please contact the Public Liaison Service.



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