

**Age NI**

Web: www.ageni.org

Telephone: 028 9024 5729

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC104640

**Cancer Focus Northern Ireland**

Web: www.cancerfocusni.org

Telephone: 028 9066 3281

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC101307

**CLIC Sargent**

Web: www.clicsargent.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 330 0803

Registered Charity in England and Wales 1107328 & SC039857
Also operating in Northern Ireland.

**Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke**

Web: www.nichs.org.uk

Telephone: 028 9032 0184

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC103593

**NSPCC/Childline**

Web: www.nspcc.org.uk/childline

Telephone: 028 9035 1135

Registered Charity in England and Wales 216401 & SC037717
Also operating in Northern Ireland.

R N I B

Northern
Ireland

See differently

Royal National Institute of Blind People

Web: www.rnib.org.uk/northernireland

Telephone: 0303 123 9999

Registered Charity in England and Wales (no. 226227).
Also operating in Northern Ireland.

If you would like this information in braille, audio tape or large print please contact the Royal National Institute of Blind People on 0303 123 9999 or businesslink@rnib.org.uk



Giving Together Newsletter

Issue: Issue 25 Winter/Spring 2021



Age NI: It's good to Check in and Chat

Many of the support programmes provided by Age NI traditionally involve face to face interaction with older people.

Over the past ten months, we have totally adapted our activities to support older people directly and our age sector network partners across NI are supporting many more.

A central part of our normal work is about connecting with older people, and in particular helping those who live alone, have been bereaved, are living with dementia, or, caring for someone with a long-term condition.

From a scientific perspective, contact with others stimulates our mind and releases feel-good hormones which boost our mood. Human beings are programmed to seek company, reassurance and support from others.

Staying connected is now more important than ever during periods of lockdown and social distancing.



Age NI has developed a 'Check in and chat' telephone service for everyone who is over 60 in Northern Ireland, who may feel isolated or lonely during this time. We have a growing team of volunteers. They have taken to the phones to do a regular Check in and Chat call with some older people; and they have provided practical support with shopping, delivering medicines and ordering oil or making gas payments.

For further information please visit www.ageni.org or call our free advice line 0808 808 7575 for support.

Cancer Focus NI: Working through the pandemic

Cancer Focus Northern Ireland is gradually increasing its care and support services after months of postponements and reduced capacity.

During lockdown we temporarily halted face-to-face appointments but continued with reduced counselling and family support along with some stop smoking support using phone, video calls and private Facebook groups. We were also able to continue our care in the sun cancer prevention work.

We are now slowly resuming services and our Sing for Life choir is practising online, we have face-to-face and zoom bra-fittings, and online art therapy and cancer prevention work in local schools, all within government guidelines.

The charity has also continued its public affairs advocacy to ensure that local cancer patients are a priority for NHS health



Debbie Leslie, Cancer Focus NI bra-fitting coordinator, holds an online consultation with a breast cancer patient.

care services during the pandemic.

For further information please visit www.cancerfocusni.org or email hello@cancerfocusni.org

CLIC Sargent: Cancer Doesn't Stop for Coronavirus

Due to the COVID pandemic young cancer patients and their families need our services now more than ever. Cancer doesn't stop for coronavirus. In Northern Ireland an average of 2 children/young people are diagnosed with cancer per week.

Our **Social Care Team** say "it's flipped everything upside down, "We went from seeing patients across 5 hospitals to adapting to video calls. The goal is to ensure people remained connected and to offer support and guidance as an experienced professional in the world of cancer care. Many families we support were already at financial breaking point before the pandemic and understanding the new benefits & schemes was a huge task.



The outbreak of coronavirus has impacted on our **Homes from Homes** but we are pleased to report that both **Paul's House** and **Amy's House** in Belfast have remained open providing essential accommodation. One young adult stayed 139 days last year due to a 200 mile return journey to receive treatment.

If you or a family member needs support for a young cancer patient, aged 0-24 please contact Simon Darby - Social Worker: 07917 647695 or Kate Burns – Home from Home: 07917 712425

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke: Still caring through COVID

During the COVID pandemic, NICHS have been caring for local people living with, and at risk of chest, heart and stroke conditions, as well as for survivors of the virus itself.

For most of this year we have not been able to run our usual face to face services. Instead we have delivered emotional and practical support programmes and advice via phone, as well as online.

We have also launched a new COVID Recovery Service, the first ever community support service for survivors of COVID who need help in dealing with its long-term side effects. The Service is in its early stages

and the first group of COVID survivors have recently finished a pilot programme and are already seeing a transformation.

If you need our support during these challenging times, please visit www.nichs.org.uk/getsupport or call 028 9032 0184.



Ivan, from Belfast – who is currently supported by NICHS's online Taking control Programme.

NSPCC/Childline: Childline raise concerns about mental health as counselling sessions delivered to children passes 50,000

We have faced our biggest challenges for decades.

Unfortunately, home was not a safe or a happy place for many children so it became more important than ever that we were still here for children. We could never have imagined the huge impact that COVID would have and continues to have on the lives of children and young people both physically and mentally.

It was absolutely crucial that we kept our Childline service operational during the pandemic, with around 700 children and young people contacting us every day for help and advice. Unfortunately, we saw a 40%



increase in email contact, as many children did not have the usual opportunity to reach out without being overheard by a member of their household. Mental health, anxiety, depression and even suicidal thoughts were the most common reasons young people contacted us, with many of them telling us they felt trapped.

For help or advice please contact www.childline.org.uk or call 0800 111 111.

RNIB: Always here to help

The new normal has been extremely challenging for 55,600 blind and partially sighted people in Northern Ireland.

From fears around access to food, medicine and eye appointments; to navigating the perils of social distancing, and the devastating effects the lockdown and restrictions has had on physical and emotional wellbeing.

We worked with supermarkets to educate staff and secure priority access shopping. We increased our Helpline capacity and Emotional Wellbeing services and ensured that people had access to vital eye appointments.

Over the past seven months, RNIB NI's Community Connection Team made 2,235 wellbeing calls to ensure that people with sight loss known to us, could access shopping, healthcare and remain socially connected.

We heard reports of blind and partially sighted people being yelled at and abused for not



Ulster Bank was the first bank in NI to circulate RNIB's Best Practice Guidance on social distancing difficulties for blind and partially sighted people.

keeping a safe distance. So nationally we worked with the Cabinet Office to develop 'Please Give Me Space' wearables, such as masks and badges, to give people with disabilities more confidence when socially distancing.

For help and advice contact RNIB's Helpline on 0303 123 9999 or visit www.rnib.org.uk.