



Belfast Health and  
Social Care Trust

caring supporting improving together

**CARERS**

Newsletter

## CARING TOGETHER IN BELFAST

SUMMER/AUTUMN 2023

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### Carer Support Service

T: 028 9504 2126

E: [CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

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



# WELCOME

## Dear Carers

Welcome to the latest edition of the Carer Newsletter, to keep carers up-to-date with information and carer supports available across Belfast. In this edition, we share 'Caring Together in Belfast 2023 Onwards'. This is a five-year plan to support carers which has been shaped by carers. We are asking you to give us feedback by 8th September to shape the Trust's work to support carers.

The Carer Support Service welcomes a new Carer Information and Support Officer, Stephanie Flood. Stephanie will work with Susan Campbell to raise awareness and share information on caring and carer supports available.

The Trust participated in the annual Carers Week campaign in June. Carers Week seeks to recognise the role that Carers play in our society. This year's theme was 'recognising and supporting carers in the community'. During the week 16 events/activities were hosted for carers across Belfast. This featured a wide range of activities; including health and wellbeing events such as yoga, tai chi, set dancing and a Bog Meadows walk hosted by Ulster Wildlife.

Information stands were held in hospitals and there were also craft sessions and therapies in local communities. Throughout the week 153 people attended the events providing 463 short break hours.

We hope you enjoy this edition and if you have any queries regarding caring, please contact the Carer Support Service.

The pictures and comments below capture carers feedback from carers week activities.



Information stand at Belfast City Hospital



It promotes mental health well being, and we are not alone in this journey.



Hilarious and we all came home elated and exhilarated.



I feel seen, understood, less isolated.



## Draft Carer Strategy - Caring Together in Belfast 2023 Onwards - have your say

Belfast Trust has developed 'Caring Together in Belfast 2023 Onwards'. This sets out the Trust's 5 year plan to support unpaid and family carers. Carers have been at the centre of this work. In early 2023, we asked carers:

- What is good about the support you receive from the Belfast Trust?
- What could the Belfast Trust do better to support you?
- One thing that could make a difference to carers?

Over 250 people responded and thank you to everyone who provided feedback. The Trust worked with the Carer Network to review all the feedback and has developed four priority areas for action.



**1** Reach all Carers  
Raise awareness and identify carers within families and communities



**2** Navigate Carer Support  
Identify the support that carers require at different stages



**3** Support Carer Health and Wellbeing  
Supporting carers to protect their health and wellbeing



**4** Connect with and Involve Carers  
Connect with and empower carers to get involved

To implement the priority areas, for each, we have set out actions to be undertaken, how we will measure if we have made a difference and who we will work with. The following documents provide further information.

[Easy read link](#)

[Executive summary link](#)

[Draft carer strategy](#)

The draft strategy was launched at an event held during Carers Week. Click here <https://youtu.be/OD5tnalxflI> to listen to Jackie a Carer Network member and Claire Fordyce, Senior Manager - Carers Support Service, who outline why this work is so important to you as a carer and to encourage you to have your say and input into the consultation.

The Trust is consulting on the draft strategy until Friday 8 September 2023. We encourage carers to share your views on the 5 year plan by using the QR code or click here <https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/hsc/caring-together-in-belfast-onwards-2023-consultati/> to complete the questionnaire.



## CARER SUPPORT

The Carer Support Service's monthly activity programme enables carers to get involved in a range of activities. Check out the current support available and hear from carers who have participated in sessions.

### IMPORTANT MESSAGE

In the newsletter, we share details of the Carer support activity programme which is up-dated monthly.

Please telephone and ask for a programme to be sent out to you if you're not online.

**For all activities advertised you MUST pre-book your place.**

#### **How to register:**

You can register for all activities online at

<https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/service/carers-activities/> or contact the team at

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

#### **Please note:**

The Carer support activity programme is for carers only unless otherwise specified. Unfortunately we are unable to accommodate the cared for person or children at events unless they are Carer Family Days. We are also unable to accommodate pets, as some carers are afraid of animals. This includes outdoor events.

### Introduction to the Carer Support Service

The Carer Support Service is a signposting service and we aim to support carers' physical and mental health and wellbeing. We hold a monthly 'Introduction to the Carer Support Service' information session, for those carers who are new to the service.

- Thursday 7th September, 11-12pm - The Maureen Sheehan Centre, 106 Albert Street, Belfast, BT12 4HL
- Wednesday 18th October, 11 – 12pm - Lisburn Road Library, 440 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6GR
- Tuesday 7th November, 11-12pm – online
- Tuesday 5th December, 11-12pm – online

These sessions cover a carer's right to a carers assessment, what it is and how it could benefit a carer. They will also cover the range of therapeutic supports currently available through the Carer Support Service. If you would be interested in attending a session please get in touch via our usual contact details.

**If you require welfare or benefits advice please contact - Make the Call: 0800 232 1271**

### Carers Support Service - Listening Support

Carers, if you are presented with new issues and not sure where to turn to for help or you want to check what else is available to support you - you can book a telephone appointment with a Carer Information and Support Officer.



What other sources of help are available for me

## Carer Connect Cafe City Centre

**Am I the only one  
going through this?**

**Who's there  
to help?**

**What will I do  
in an emergency?**

**I feel isolated**

**I feel stressed**

**How can I look  
after myself?**

**I feel anxious  
and guilty**

**I'm so tired**

**Who will  
help me?**

**I don't like to admit it,  
but I'm struggling**

**I have so many  
questions**

Meet up with other carers for a  
cuppa, cake and chat, join us –  
a warm welcome awaits you



**Where:** 2 Royal Avenue,  
Belfast BT1 1DA

**When:** Last Friday of every  
month

**Time:** 10.30am to 12pm

This session is hosted by the Trust  
Carer Information and Support  
Officers.

## Carer Connect Cafes

As part of our plan to reach out and support carers in local communities, we are piloting carer cafes in different parts of the city. The carer cafes are for carers of any caring background and provide an opportunity to meet other carers for peer support, a bit of craic and a much needed break from caring.

### East Belfast

Monday 4th September @ 2pm – Arches Wellbeing and Treatment Centre, 1 Westminster Avenue North, Belfast, BT4 1NS

### West Belfast

Thursday 7th September @ 11am – The Maureen Sheehan Centre, 106 Albert Street, Belfast, BT12 4HL

### South Belfast

Wednesday 18th October @ 11am – Lisburn Road Library, 440 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6GR

## Bereavement Cafe

The Northern Ireland Hospice has developed a new drop-in service for local people to come together to support each other while grieving the loss of a loved one. Carers are invited to the free service to talk about how you are feeling or simply listen to the experiences of others over a cuppa and biscuit. No appointment is needed.

**Where:** Old School House Cafe, Northern Ireland Hospice, 74 Somerton Road, Belfast, BT15 3LH

**When:** First Wednesday of each month

**Time:** 6pm - 7.30pm

For more information, contact T: 028 9078 1836.

## Carers Restorative Retreat

Carer retreats to Drumalis in Larne are held every 2 months. The Centre is set in a stunning and peaceful location and offers the opportunity for carers to have some time out and participate in relaxation activities.

Numbers are restricted and firstly reserved for carers who are new to our service, have not accessed on-line activity or previously attended.

### Dates for 2023:

Thursday 26th October

Wednesday 6th December





## CARER SUPPORT

To inform carers and share support available, we host a monthly on-line 'Information Session'.

Check out the upcoming on-line sessions.

### Praxis Care

Thursday 21st September,  
11-12pm



Praxis Care supports people with mental illness and their families and carers. At the September session, we will learn about support services which are provided by the organisation and hear about their Carer Support Groups, which you may like to access.

### Engage with Age

Thursday 5th October,  
11-12pm



Engage with Age works in partnership with a range of organisations throughout Greater Belfast to combat social isolation and loneliness amongst older people and to promote health and wellbeing. Carers are invited to join this session which is being held in October as part of Positive Ageing month. The session will enable carers to find out more information about the 'Age Friendly Plan' for Belfast and hear about the range of activities and events which carers may wish to get involved with.

### Carers Rights Day

Thursday 23rd  
November, 11-12pm



This session will take place on Carers Rights Day. The session will be delivered by Carers NI and will focus on Carers Rights. Carers will learn about your rights and entitlements as a carer.

## Dementia Cafes

Dementia Cafes are for carers who specifically care for someone with Dementia. They are an opportunity to take time for yourself, share experiences and find out what support is available for you. Check out the cafes taking place in different communities across Belfast.



### South Belfast

Carers living in South Belfast are invited to attend the Dementia Cafe on the last Tuesday of every month in Ormeau Rd Library, 247 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 3GG.

Tues 26th September @ 10am

Tues 31st October @ 10am

Tues 28th November @ 10am

This session is facilitated by Forward South. To book contact Emily at T: 07394 569153 or E: [emily.brown@forwardsouth.org](mailto:emily.brown@forwardsouth.org)

### East Belfast

The East Belfast Dementia Cafe meets on the first Thursday of every month in the Holywood Arches Library, 12 Holywood Rd, Belfast BT4 INT.

Thurs 7th September @ 1.30pm

Thurs 5th October @ 1.30pm

Thurs 2nd November @ 1.30pm

The session is facilitated by the East Belfast Community Development Association. Please book by T: 028 9045 1512 or E: [eleanor@ebcda.org](mailto:eleanor@ebcda.org)

## Regional Emergency Social Work Service

For Information -  
Regional Emergency  
Social Work Service -  
**number change**

A purple poster for the Regional Emergency Social Work Service. At the top left is the HSC Health and Social Care logo. The main text reads "Regional Emergency Social Work Service" in white, followed by "Our number will change on the 1st of July to" and the large number "08001979995" in white. Below this, it says "The service is available outside normal office hours including weekends and Public holidays". At the bottom, it lists the hours: "5pm to 9am Monday to Thursday and 5pm on Friday to 9am on Monday" and "There is 24 hour cover over public holidays".

HSC Health and Social Care  
**Regional Emergency Social Work Service**  
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### Day Centres for Older People and Adults with Physical Disabilities

Belfast Trust has a number of Day Centres which support adults and enable them to spend time together during the week. The centres offer a range of activities and supports, such as therapeutic activities, meals, personal care, hairdressing and nail care. Most of all, it is an environment which provides friendship and companionship.

Day Centres have been described by carers as a “life saver” for them. They provide respite for the carers and they also provide service users with variety in their life, which makes them feel they have something to contribute to conversations within the home. It provides reassurance for families that their loved one is safe and that they are making friends. Day Centres are also a communication link for families to be updated on any changes in the health or wellbeing of their relative.

The Carer Support Service has been working with the Trust Day Centres to develop a plan to ensure:

- Carers are identified and communicated with more effectively
- Carers are engaged to identify their support needs
- Staff are engaged to co-design carer supports
- Carer programmes of support are established for all Day Centres

The first stage of this plan has been developing a questionnaire with carers to ask how and when they would like to be supported by their Day Centre. To date over 100 carers have responded. This will help each Day Centre to tailor their plan to support carers.

Carers shared their feedback about activities that they attended through the Day Centre.



It was excellent. I met others dealing with similar issues and had some time out for myself. I also learned new crafts.

Another carer who hadn't attended activities said

Carer supports would enable me to get the chance to meet with other carers in a social and relaxed environment. I would possibly benefit from information sessions e.g. safe handling, dealing with anxiety and other issues related to old age.

Belfast Trust has 14 Day Centres across Belfast.

- 3 Day Centres for people with dementia.
- 3 Day Centres for people who have a physical and/or sensory disability.
- 1 Day Centre for people with brain injury.
- 7 Day Centres for older people.

The next stage of the plan will be to share the findings of the questionnaire and for Day Centres to establish Carer Supports. If the person you care for attends a Day Centre, we encourage you to get involved to check out the support available. We also look forward to providing an up-date in future Newsletters.



## CARER EVENTS

Gardening and being in nature, surrounded by plants and animals, is calming and soothing as well as being enjoyable and fun, providing a boost for your mental health. Our 'Gardening for Wildlife' programme has been running from April with the support of Ulster Wildlife, together with Belfast City Council.

Summer plants have been grown from seed and in May, carers were treated to a nature walk around Ormeau Park, led by Ulster Wildlife Ornithologist, Benjamin Jamieson, who expertly pointed out the calls of various birds. June saw us planting beautiful hanging baskets.

The group is very friendly and warm and we would love for you to join us at our sessions on Thursday's. The feedback has been great from the carers who have participated. Future sessions for the Autumn/Winter will be advertised via the monthly activity programme.



### Carers Choir

Carers expressed their interest in setting up a choir and we responded. Working with Belfast Trust Arts project and Belfast City Council, the Carer Support Service delivered a series of weekly singing sessions in May and June. These sessions were delivered in The Rainbow Factory School of Performing Arts (Youth Action NI) and facilitated by the excellent, Anne McCambridge.

Thank you to all who took part in making the pilot project such a success. Many carers who joined the sessions did not describe themselves as 'singers', however they gained much joy and experience from having taken part.

We hope to continue the choir and the more voices the better. Check out the feedback from carers here- [https://bhsct.sharepoint.com/sites/GRP-CorporateCommunications/\\_layouts/15/stream.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FGRP%2DCorporateCommunications%2FShared%20Documents%2FGeneral%2FVideos%2FCarers%2FCarers%20Choir%20%2Emp4&ga=1](https://bhsct.sharepoint.com/sites/GRP-CorporateCommunications/_layouts/15/stream.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FGRP%2DCorporateCommunications%2FShared%20Documents%2FGeneral%2FVideos%2FCarers%2FCarers%20Choir%20%2Emp4&ga=1). We are currently working to source funding to be able to offer a 'Carers Choir' for the Autumn/Winter. If you would be interested in joining the 'Carers Choir', register your interest with us and we will be in touch.

### Family Fun Day – Saturday 2nd December at Ulster Folk Park, Cultra.

Carers and their families are invited to the Carers Family Fun Day for a Christmas treat. At the Folk Park, families can wander around Ballycultra to explore the skills, customs and traditions which have been passed down the generations. Christmas craft demonstrations will be on display and you can have a go at making your own Christmas decorations. Register your interest in attending by contacting the Carer Support Service.

