

The Review

We're your local charity for the care and prevention of chest, heart and stroke illnesses.

Chest
Heart &
Stroke

Farm owner,
Mary Lockhart,
tells us how NICHs's
Post Rehab Exercise
Programme (PREP)
helped her see a
better future for
herself, after
her stroke.

Find out more
on page 8

**WE'RE
ON YOUR
SIDE**



Chairman's Report

Andrew Dougal is stepping down as Chief Executive after 32 years' service.

During his time at the helm, income to NICHHS increased from £70k each year to £3m, an increase of over 14 times, even after discounting for inflation.

The resources directed to helping individuals in the community now exceed £1m. £350k each year is used to fund research in the hospitals and universities of Northern Ireland.

During the last 30 years, campaigning and lobbying, often alongside other organisations, have secured a greater emphasis on prevention of illness, advances in tobacco control, e.g. smoke-free work and public places, reduction in tobacco promotion and advertising, as well as the establishment of stroke units and speedier access to cardiac surgery.

Under Andrew's leadership NICHHS played a critical role in convincing the DHSSPS to run the Change of Heart



Programme. This made local people aware that CHD was preventable & how to take steps to reduce risk. Now we can celebrate the huge decline in coronary deaths in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

reported that the number of coronary deaths in Northern Ireland had declined from 4,800 in 1984 to 1,900 in 2013. This is a huge decline and is in no small way connected to the excellent work which has been done in prevention over the last 30 years. This reduction in deaths was also due to major advances in treatment and access to that treatment. However, 40% of all adult deaths in Northern Ireland are still caused by chest, heart and stroke conditions so the work NICHHS does is still vital.

The Governance Board was delighted to learn that the Minister of Health had appointed Andrew Dougal to be

non-executive Chair of the Public Health Agency.

It is with profound regret that I must report the passing of two men who played a key role in the work of NICHHS over many years.

Dr Dennis Boyle was Consultant Cardiologist at the Ulster Hospital Dundonald and had been a member of our Governance Board from 1978 until 1995. Alan Cecil was a current member of the Governance Board and also served on our Council. (see obituaries, Page 23). I wish to record how much the work of NICHHS was advanced by the skills of both Dennis and Alan.

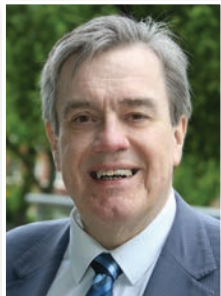
Finally, as always, I wish to thank the staff and volunteers of NICHHS, including my colleagues on the Governance Board, for their contribution to another successful year for the charity. It takes a large and dedicated team to provide the range of services we now offer to the people of Northern Ireland.

Professor MPS Varma
Chairman

Chief Executive's Report

It is essential that we continue to provide services which produce the best results for those affected by or at risk of chest, heart and stroke illnesses. Therefore the Board has approved a strategy which continues to emphasise quality and impact and ensures we are able to compete effectively in the current economic environment.

Income continues at £3m p.a. This figure has been static since the start of the recession. Taking inflation into account this means that purchasing power has reduced by up to 25%. However, staff



and volunteers have worked to ensure there is no reduction in our activities.

It was with a great sense of sadness that we learned of the passing of two former colleagues Joan James and Sam McClelland.

Joan had been Coordinator of Stroke Services in South and East Belfast in the 1980s. Sam had been a key player in ensuring that NICHHS benefited from contract funding for stroke services. Through their steadfast commitment they greatly enhanced the support NICHHS gives to stroke

clients & their carers.

We had the privilege of celebrating the 100th birthday of Mr William Gibson, who founded the Newtownards Stroke Club and the Newtownards Fundraising Support Group and it was with deep regret that we learnt of his passing on 20th July 2015.

Finally, I wish to record my sincere thanks to all the many and diverse volunteers & colleagues for their stalwart support over the decades.

Andrew P Dougal OBE
Chief Executive

Year in figures

Over 4,000 people with chest, heart or stroke illnesses and their families and carers were supported by NICHs in 2014-15.

NICHs Stroke Family Support had **1,442** new referrals, which equates to over a third of the total annual number of strokes, and made **2,721** home visits.

NICHs helped **573** people across Northern Ireland through its **28** Stroke Activity Groups.

416 people benefited from NICHs's **20** Respiratory Schemes

There were **241** referrals to PREP (Post Rehabilitation Exercise Programme) which ran in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust for the whole year and was introduced to the Belfast and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trusts at the start of 2015.

190 people took part in **16**

"Taking Control" Self Management Programmes

We are currently funding **10** research projects in Queen's University Belfast and **6** in Ulster University - 9 cardiac, 2 stroke and 5 respiratory projects.

Our NICHs Health Promotion Team visited businesses and

51

68 community organisations to carry out health checks or deliver talks.

We reached **2,354** pupils by delivering health talks to 6 primary and 4 secondary schools and 3 youth clubs, and through our Chester's Challenge Programme to **33** Primary schools.

We delivered our Health & Homeless Programme in **86** hostels benefiting 778 people, including 30 staff members, with 173 health checks for people who are homeless and 22 referrals to GPs. Out of **748** homeless people, 449 (60%) were male, 299 (40%) were female, 157 were from ethnic minorities, 18 had just left care provision and 25 had left other institutions.

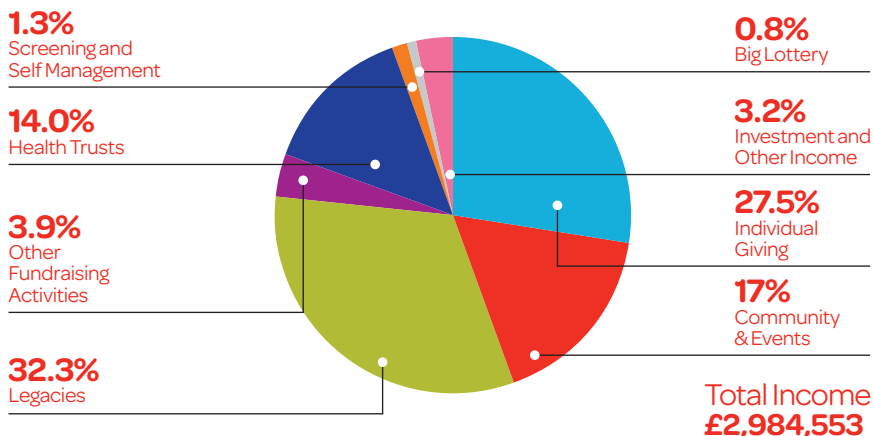
338 blood pressure measurements were taken at the Holiday World Show. **16** health talks delivered in the community.

945 people had a full health check with over **51%**

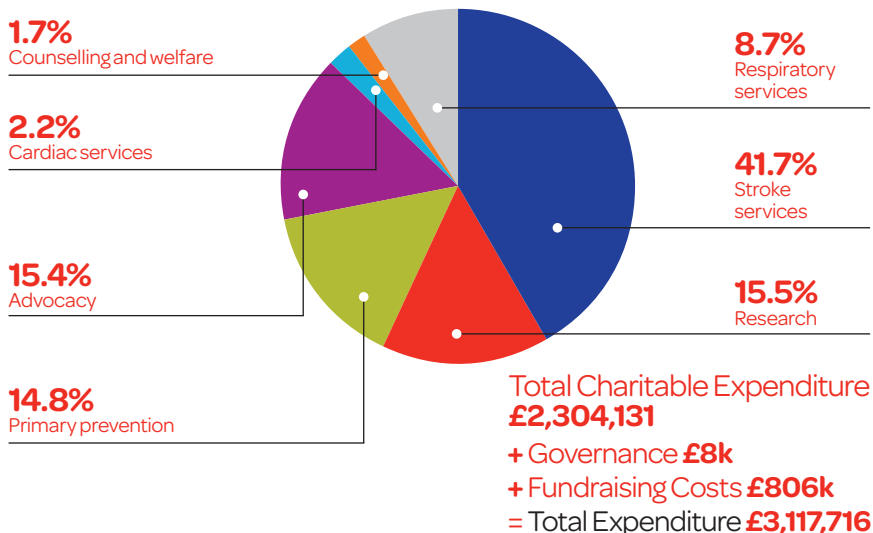
reporting high stress levels and **56%** classified as overweight or obese. **53%** had high blood pressure and **45%** had high cholesterol and were referred to their GP.

Our Accounts 2014-15

Where Our Income Comes From 2014-15



Where Our Income Goes 2014-15



Volunteering Brings Its Own Rewards

"To the world you may be one person but to one person you may be the world." (Unknown)

At NI Chest Heart & Stroke, our volunteers generously give the gift of their time to support us in our work. They fundraise, give encouragement, offer friendship, take time to care, listen, offer a kind word, gentle touch or listening ear which can mean so much to someone who is isolated, worried, frustrated or lonely.

Our volunteers donate their life experiences, skills, abilities, compassion, intellect and humour and ask for nothing in return. They volunteer for many different reasons but to those they help they give hope, strength and sometimes the courage to face another day.

By doing all this they are actively supporting and promoting the work of NICHs. Often when Anne Norrie our Volunteer Development Co-ordinator asks volunteers why they do what they do, they say "to make a difference" or "to give something back." Many tell her about the life-changing experiences volunteering has provided for them – how it has helped them to grow, the respect they have learned for those needing help and how to care for the well-being of others. Others have discovered talents, qualities and skills they didn't know they had.

Volunteers who had considered themselves "team players" tell us that they have learned not only the value of tolerance, but how to embrace diversity. They have learned to listen to others, value other opinions and work together towards our common goal. Some even say they have become better people and have made lasting friendships, developed a social life and, best of all, have had fun along the way.

So we say to all our volunteers: "Keep doing what you are doing because it is



Take action
Try something new
Learn Help people
Meet people Passion
Hobby Give something back
Make a difference
Be involved Skills
Experience
Interest Time to spare
Enjoyment

such vital work. A massive thank you for giving us the gift of your time. It only takes a moment to reach out and give us the commitment to become a volunteer. That simple act of kindness to people you don't know may help change lives and in some cases save a life!"

If you would like to give us the gift of time and in return experience some of the benefits of volunteering, then please sign up today.

Visit our website www.nichs.org.uk/volunteering, email anorrie@nichs.org.uk or phone, Anne Norrie, on 028 9026 6707.

Our Volunteers – In Their Own Words

Marie McGowan was at a low point in her life after experiencing a chest, heart & stroke condition but in 2004 became a NICHS volunteer.



"However bad I feel, even now on my worst day, there are many who are clearly in a worse position. I love being a volunteer because I feel that I am giving something back. There are no freebies in this life and being a volunteer adds an extra dimension to my busy life."
Marie McGowan, Volunteer



John Doherty had a heart attack in 2004 and in 2007 suffered a brain injury. After a programme of rehabilitation, he undertook a volunteer placement with NICHS through the Cedar Foundation. He began by helping at the Brandywell and Foyle Stroke Activity Groups and found that his confidence increased, so he became involved with the local fundraising team. John now helps with street collections, events, sponsored walks, distribution and collection of donation boxes. John's journey continues and his determination to "give something back" for the support he has received is as strong as ever.
John Doherty, Volunteer

Ann McDowell has been a volunteer with NICHS for more than 30 years and has never looked back. She initially volunteered because she had some spare time, when her children had grown up.



"I feel I have something to offer others and find it rewarding. I have made many friends and enjoy the company of the other volunteers."
Ann McDowell, Volunteer

Jim Nash was a "high flyer" travelling the world until he suffered a severe stroke in December 2002. In the early days, he could not speak, had to use a wheelchair and was forced to rely on others. Jim attended the NICHS Foyle Stroke Activity Group and said that with the education and training provided at the group, as well as opportunities to develop new and existing skills, his feelings of self esteem and self confidence improved. As part of his journey towards recovery Jim became a volunteer with us.



"I approach every day with 'my glass always half full'. This is important in everything I do and I thank NICHS for the help, support and opportunities which have helped to make my life better."
Jim Nash, Volunteer

Ann feels that as a group they learn a lot from each other, encourage each other to stay active and that carers appreciate the break they get knowing their loved ones are well looked after by the co-ordinator and volunteers. Ann gets great satisfaction from seeing people develop confidence and skills with the support of the volunteers. Ann encourages others to volunteer, telling them that it is satisfying, worthwhile and enjoyable.

Taking Back Control

Our "Taking Control" Self Management Programme is a six-week programme designed for people with long term chest, heart or stroke conditions. It helps them develop the skills and confidence they need to manage their condition better and help them feel stronger and better equipped to deal with daily life.

Here, three people tell their stories. For more information, go to nichs.org.uk/takingcontrol.

Brad McFarland from Belfast is 66 and was a painter and decorator until his retirement last year.

He says: "I was officially diagnosed with COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) back in 2003. I say officially because I dare say I had it for a while before then. My sister had COPD and as time went on I was watching her and seeing her symptoms and I suspected that I had it too. I had been a smoker, although I'd given up, but I suppose the damage had been done.

"I sometimes wonder how I was able to carry on with my job as a painter but maybe the physical activity was good for me.

"More recently it's definitely been harder to bounce back from things like chest infections and I have had to realise that I can't do all the things that I used to be able to do.

"I was in my local chemist's shop one day and saw a poster for NI Chest Heart & Stroke's Respiratory Services; I thought to myself that I needed to meet other people like me.

"So I rang the number and went on the Taking Control Programme. It was great to mix with other people to hear their stories and to learn from them. I really value the goals, or action plans, that we set each week. The fact that you tell each other what you have planned to

do and then came back the next week to tell everyone how you got on was very motivating. We practised breathing techniques and I have found them to be really important, especially when I start to feel breathless and panicky.

"I continue to attend the NI Chest Heart & Stroke Support Group. We have great camaraderie and craic. I am now going on a Pulmonary Rehabilitation course."

"I Really Value The Goals We Set"

Brad McFarland



Linda Tavares from Belfast says:

"Just before Christmas 2014, my husband Humberto woke up with a numb feeling down his left side. Later that day we headed off to do some grocery shopping but we had to leave our trolley in the shop because Humberto just didn't feel right. We went to our GP surgery and were sent to A&E. The doctor there immediately suspected a stroke. An MRI scan showed that he had, in fact, had two strokes.

"Over the next while we felt so alone. While Humberto had relatively few physical effects, he was extremely emotional and fatigued. We could be watching TV and the next thing he would be crying and not really knowing why. He's a strong man and when I tried to comfort him it would make it worse. Then not knowing how I



"We Are Both So Thankful"

Linda Tavares

could help upset me, and it became a vicious circle.

'It was our neighbour who said 'Why not give NI Chest Heart &

Stroke a ring?' A Stroke Family Support Co-ordinator came out to our house to speak to us and this was like a light turning on. She explained that NICHS had experience in helping people live life after stroke and described some of the services on offer. She described the

Taking Control Programme. We were both quite sceptical about how it could help. We went that first day and haven't looked back. The best word I can use to describe the programme is positivity.

"I went along as Humberto's carer but I have asthma and diabetes myself and I got so much out of the programme too.

"Sometimes people got a little bit emotional but we were all able to comfort each other and there was no negativity.

"I suppose over the six weeks it was a bit of a slow awakening that we needed to start to look at our lives in a different way; that there were some things in our lives that were controlling us and we needed to take control of them.

"We are both so thankful to have come into contact with NICHS. Sometimes I wonder just where we would be now if we hadn't."

Jennifer Crockard, also from Belfast, says:

"I love everything about Christmas and was really looking forward to Christmas 2014 to spend time with my family because my life was busy and at times stressful. To say the 20th December was a bit of day is an understatement; I was in hospital twice on that day and I had a stroke on my second visit. The first visit, in the morning, was because of a ripped muscle from a cough which was a side effect of some medication I was taking.

"Later that evening I was at home watching TV when I started to experience tightness in my chest which was terrifying. I thought I was having a heart attack and so I ended up in an ambulance to the hospital. When I tried to explain things to the doctor I couldn't get the words out at all.

"Later on that night my arm went heavy and my leg actually slipped out of the bed.

"The next morning I was sent for a brain scan which confirmed that I'd had a stroke. I was only 42.



"It Was A Really Emotional Time"

Jennifer Crockard

"When I left hospital I spent a week living at my mother's house. In those early days I needed help with a lot of things, even getting dressed but at the same time I really needed to get back to my own house, my own home and my own independence again. My daughter stayed with me for a couple of weeks and was a great support because things weren't easy.

"Even though I am an independent person and was determined to learn to do things for myself it was a really emotional time when my daughter left to go back to her home. Just as she was leaving the

NICHS Stroke Family Support Co-ordinator arrived. I was a blubbing wreck but she was excellent, she gave me the time I needed and listened to me. She told me about some of the

services within NICHS, including the Taking Control Programme. At that point I was pretty apprehensive about going to any of the services; I was actually in a big hurry to get

myself better. But I did go and I am so glad I did because I think I would be in a much different place today if I hadn't. It's hard to describe how much your confidence is knocked when you have a stroke. In those early days it was even hard for me to leave the 'safety' of my own house. The group was so welcoming that I felt I had been before. I made good friends on the Programme who are part of my support system now, just like I am part of theirs."



Preparing For Life After Stroke

Mary Lockhart suffered a stroke in December 2011. She received the clot busting treatment thrombolysis, but went on to have two further strokes. She spent two months in hospital and received physiotherapy, but she has been left with right-sided weaknesses and walks with a brace on her leg.

As a farm owner Mary tried to keep working, but fell and broke her hip in 2012. Mary found out about the Post Rehab Exercise Programme (PREP) from her local NICHs Stroke Family Support co-ordinator. Until then, she had not been feeling motivated or inclined to concentrate on her health and wellbeing. "After attending PREP," she says, "I could see a better future for myself".

The exercise programme, which consists of a circuit of specific exercises and movements for people with stroke, helped with her fitness. She

says she now feels back to the way she was before she broke her hip. She continues to maintain the exercises, albeit in a novel location – beside a farm gate in the summer and in a barn in the winter! Mary uses the 15 minutes it takes for her beloved cows to eat their feed in order to do the exercises she learned in PREP. This way she is able to view her animals and enjoy the outdoors while looking after herself. She has also invested in a treadmill.

Mary says PREP "answered a lot of questions for her" and "she learned to learn." She was fascinated by the educational aspect of the programme, which covers a range of topics including the harmful chemicals in cigarettes and the dangers of too much salt in food. Mary has drastically cut down on her salt intake. She also appreciated the encouragement and motivation from the NICHs staff and physiotherapist. "I began to listen to my body," she says. "Now I rest when I need to and exercise

when I can. Each time I exercise I feel an immediate response and I feel better for it." Because of the overall confidence and motivation from the programme, Mary is now completing a GCSE in Computing. She urges stroke survivors to take part in the PREP programme as a way of looking after both mind and body.

Our Post Rehab Exercise Programme (PREP)

is a physiotherapist led, community based course which helps rebuild people's lives and confidence following a stroke through exercise and education. The programme was developed with stroke teams in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and is aimed at people who have completed their statutory rehabilitation. It is now being extended to the rest of Northern Ireland.

Charity Helped Me Cope With “Silent World”

At NICHS, we don't just provide services for people affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses – we support carers, too.

When someone suffers a stroke, for example, it can change the whole dynamic of a couple's relationship.

As the following story illustrates, it can be frightening, stressful and claustrophobic for the other partner.

Christine Waring from Dollingstown says she has been living in “a silent world” since her husband Alan suffered a stroke five years ago. One of the main effects was that he lost his speech.

Christine takes up the story: “Alan had a bit of a turn the day before and it's a big regret of mine that I didn't know more about stroke and didn't insist he went to the doctor. But it didn't happen that way. He went to work, on a night shift, and took a stroke. He wasn't found until morning.



“It was a bad one. He was in hospital for six months. The doctors thought he would die but he didn't. However he has lost his speech.

“After Alan got home, Lynn, the Stroke Family Support Co-ordinator phoned me. She later came to the house to see me. I cried my eyes out. Having someone to talk to was so important. I hope this doesn't sound bad, but Alan's loss of speech has been the worst part. Of course it's very frustrating for him and we've had to develop our own sign language. But I've

also found it very difficult as I basically live in a silent world now. Lynn understood how it affected me too.

“For the first year I didn't want to leave Alan by himself in case something happened and sometimes I felt like the house was closing in on me. Having someone who understood that side of it too was just great.

“Lynn also got us both out of the house. Alan goes to one of the charity's Stroke Activity Groups, which he loves, and it gives me time to myself. His mobility is better than it was at first so I feel more confident about leaving him now, but I still value having time to myself. I also go to the Carers' Group where I can talk to other people who are in the same situation as me.

“We both still love it when Lynn comes to the house. She always cheers us up. She's so jolly and so thoughtful.”



Research Grants 2015

Our new research strategy, led by our Scientific Research Committee (Page 23), agreed 5 new research projects and strengthened user involvement.

1 "The eye as a window to the circulatory system."

Professor Tara Moore from Ulster University aims to develop a simple new test to enable opticians to predict the risk of heart disease. It would involve examining tiny blood vessels at the front of the eye. The project was awarded **£51,247**

2 "Modulation of persistent inflammation in asthma by drug repositioning."

Dr Bettina Schock of QUB was allocated **£68,500** to analyse samples from airway cells in children with and without asthma to test the effectiveness of drugs, potentially leading to new treatments.

3 "Determination of the effect of peer support to encourage the adoption and maintenance of a Mediterranean diet."

The Mediterranean diet has been shown to have beneficial effects in preventing cardiovascular disease. Professor Jayne Woodside of QUB has been allocated **£80,018** to evaluate if mutual support among members of established community groups can help people change their diet.

4 "Feasibility study involving a shared decision tool to help patients take their first steps in making lifestyle changes to reduce cardiovascular risk".

Dr Margaret Cupples of QUB was allocated **£43,866** to explore the development of a tool that could be used in general practice to assess patients' physical activity and diet to help them achieve healthy lifestyles.

5 "Investigate microRNAs as serum markers of blood pressure"

Dr Declan McKenna of Ulster University has been allocated **£58,787** to try to



Professor Tara Moore and Dr Sarah Atkinson from Ulster University.

develop a simple blood test that would identify which patients with high blood pressure are most at risk from cardiovascular disease (CVD). It would also differentiate between the different types of CVD – such as stroke, heart failure and acute myocardial infarction.

[Video interviews with these researchers can be found at www.nichs.org.uk/2015researchgrants](http://www.nichs.org.uk/2015researchgrants)

Strengthening user involvement in our research

NICHS has appointed two lay representatives to the Scientific Research Committee (SRC) to ensure its research is relevant and beneficial to the people of Northern Ireland.

Gerry Finnegan

Gerry (pictured right) retired from the United Nations in 2010 and returned home to Belfast. He was looking for a volunteering opportunity but then his wife Patricia

suffered a stroke in 2012. As a result he came into contact with NICHS and joined our Carers' Group. In late 2014, he applied to serve as a lay member of our Scientific Research Committee (SRC). He said: "Although it was initially quite intimidating reviewing 14 medical research proposals, I became very enthusiastic about my involvement with the SRC. The fact that each proposal has a section for "lay readers" and another indicating how the research would contribute to NICHS's objectives makes the projects more accessible to the lay reader. Many of the proposals are based around a logical "cause and effect" approach, and that makes them

interesting and potentially of practical benefit. By way of a follow-up, I hope to visit the implementation phases of some of the successful proposals."

Gareth Neil

Gareth, who is originally from Dungannon, works as a Chartered Surveyor for Land & Property Services in Belfast. He says: "I first came into contact with NICHS after my mum suffered a serious





Gareth Neil Chartered
Surveyor for Land &
Property Services in Belfast.

stroke in July 2013. It left her with severe communication difficulties and necessitated her moving into a care home. The no-warning nature of this event and its devastating results gave me the impetus to get involved in the work of NICHS, initially by undertaking some fundraising but then by agreeing to take up a position as a lay

member of the SRC. By volunteering on this committee and sharing my personal experiences of someone affected by stroke, I hope to represent the views of lay people on the research proposals. I believe strongly that prevention is better than cure and hope that the research the SRC funds can help reduce the terrible effects of stroke."

AVERT (A Very Early Rehabilitation Trial) in Northern Ireland

AVERT is the largest international trial of early physical rehabilitation after stroke, involving 56 hospitals worldwide. This trial is trying to find out if stroke survivors would benefit more and have better outcomes from the provision of very early physical rehabilitation compared to being offered the current statutory rehabilitation practice.

In 2009, NICHS awarded Professor Sheila Lennon **£87,856** to support the implementation of AVERT in Northern Ireland.

Initial findings suggest that very early mobilisation (within 24 hours) after stroke is safe for the vast majority of patients. A small number, however, fared worse after early intensive rehabilitation. Further exploration of the initial results is under way to determine which approach is best for individual patients.

Four Health and Social Care Trusts are involved in the Northern Ireland aspect of the research. Results will be reported in 2016. The worldwide AVERT trial aims to publish its findings in 2017.

AVERT- A Very Early Rehabilitation Trial



2104
participants
over 5
countries



56 hospitals
recruiting

Recruitment in Northern Ireland Hospitals



Cut out and Keep

Symptoms of a Heart Attack

- S** – Something's not right – symptoms can start slowly
- T** – Tightness or pain in the chest, pain in the arm, neck or jaw
- O** – Other symptoms such as shortness of breath, nausea or sweating
- P** – Phone 999 immediately – the ambulance crew will do an ECG.

Symptoms of a Stroke

- F** – Face – has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?
- A** – Arms – can they raise both arms and keep them there?
- S** – Speech – is their speech slurred?
- T** – Time – time to call 999 if you see any single one of these symptoms



**WE'RE
ON YOUR
SIDE**

Reducing the Risk of Heart Attack and Stroke

Having high blood pressure or high cholesterol can increase your risk of having a stroke or heart attack so it's important to get these measured regularly.

There are a number of risk factors that contribute to high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Some you can't control, like your age, gender and family medical history. But there are lifestyle changes you can make which can reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke:



Stop smoking



Watch your weight



Keep physically active



Eat a balanced diet



Moderate your alcohol intake



Manage your stress levels

GET CHECKED!

For more information go to www.nichs.org.uk/choosetobehealthy



Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke – Mission, Vision and Values 2015-2018

Mission Statement

**Prevent chest, heart & stroke illnesses in Northern Ireland and
care for those affected by them**

Vision Statement

A Northern Ireland free from chest, heart & stroke illnesses

Values

**The following values will underpin every aspect
of our culture and activities:**

Caring

We put the needs and rights of all the people of Northern Ireland at the heart of everything we do and show respect and concern for others

Excellence

We ensure that our work is consistently carried out to the highest standards and continuously improved

Integrity

We will operate to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, transparency and accountability

Inclusion

We will treat others fairly, promote equality and work to narrow health inequalities

Promoting Good Health

Our health promotion team work in a variety of places offering people support, advice and encouragement to live healthy lives and reduce their risk of developing chest, heart and stroke illnesses.

Health and Homelessness

Homelessness is a silent killer. On average, homeless men die at 47 and women at 43. Most people in Northern Ireland are only three wage packets away from being homeless.

In 2014 we celebrated our 12th anniversary of working with homeless people to reduce their risk of chest, heart and stroke illnesses. We organised a health and homelessness seminar and

This programme had a big impact on Damien Haughian, Accommodation and Community Support Worker at the Simon Community. He said: "As a staff member I have seen service users make changes to their lifestyles because of information, signposting and events but I never imagined the service would have an effect on me. However since attending both the staff training sessions and getting involved in the other talks as they happened in the hostel I have stopped smoking. It's something I never thought I would or could do. I had been a smoker for six years. I feel better now and I know my pocket feels better too."

We have worked hard to tailor the

service to meet the needs of people who are homeless. Staff and service users from the Simon Community tell us that it "really strikes a great balance between what the service users want and the information that they need to live healthier lives."

NICHS is committed to putting health of the homelessness on the agenda and working with people to bring about positive lifestyle changes.

Health checks

We have been successfully delivering health checks for more than 25 years. Our aim is to keep people healthy by detecting disease or risk factors at an early stage. During 2014, we reviewed

Last year we supported

748 people of all ages and from different backgrounds.

produced a video to highlight their health issues and our service. People described how we had given them new healthy cooking skills and ways of coping with stress. [You can see the video at nichs.org.uk/healthandhomeless.](http://nichs.org.uk/healthandhomeless)

Chelsea, one of our service users who has been homeless for some time, said: "When you are homeless you don't always eat well and lots of people who are homeless smoke, which isn't good for you either. I have had the therapies with the Health and Homeless Service and really enjoyed them. I have met NICHS health staff in this hostel and they are full of good advice about stopping smoking and eating better."

Last year we supported 748 people of all ages and from different backgrounds. We changed our approach by extending our message to whole hostels. We trained around 50 hostel staff to enable them to pass on our health messages and to improve their own health too.



Belfast's former Lord Mayor, **Máirtín Ó Muilleoir**, at the launch of the Colin Highway to Health.



company: "Many organisations have staff who are sitting for long periods of time and who may work hours that mean it is difficult to see a GP. NICHs staff health checks are perfect for these organisations. Staff appreciate that the employer is looking after them and the employer will benefit from potential ill health being addressed before it becomes a major problem."

Community Health Champions

Our pilot project to recruit and support community health champions was a great success. We now have seven. The idea is that the health champions, who live in local communities, spread healthy living messages.

A volunteer development worker from the Colin Neighbourhood Partnership in west Belfast said: "People from the Colin community received training and support through the NICHs programme to build their health skills, capacity and knowledge. This was followed by support and mentoring to deliver a community health project of their choice. Numerous walking groups and cookery projects have been set up in the community and are supporting many families to lead healthier lifestyles. Even Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, the former Lord Mayor of Belfast, joined the launch of the Colin Highway to Health walking route."

Nicole, one of our community health champions, said: "My confidence is greater than it was before and I have done things that I never thought I would do, such as leading a walking group for families to get people interested in physical activity, which also plays a big part in mental health. I now have a recognised qualification that will help me with other opportunities in the community."

Another health champion, Danny, said: "It has raised my confidence levels and shown me that I have so much to offer by using the skills I already have. Even the healthy cooking sessions that I have delivered have helped to make small differences for the groups."

For information on our health promotion work, please visit our website: www.nichs.org.uk/healthpromotion

our health checks to make sure they complied with the latest clinical guidelines and scientific evidence. We now offer a full 30 minute Express Health Check, and a 15 minute Mini Health Check and measure blood pressure or cholesterol at events such as the Balmoral Show.

Last year 945 people received our new Express Health Check (65% men and 35% women). The good news is that only 11% smoked and 40% reported that they were active. But the bad news is that 60% reported high levels of stress at work or at home, with 53% having high blood pressure and 45% raised total cholesterol levels. We referred those affected to their doctors. We also offer follow up advice and support.

Nearly everyone (99.8%) found the health check beneficial and said the information was explained clearly. We now give people a results sheet so they can monitor their progress and we ask for feedback so we can continuously improve our customers' experience.

Translink, one of our corporate customers, has been a long-term investor in the health of its staff and has used the service for many years. We received this feedback from the

Damien Haughian,
Accommodation and
Community Support Worker
at the Simon Community

Promoting Health in Schools

Physical activity and the heart



We found an increase in knowledge of the physical activity recommendation

Pupils' understanding of moderate intensity activity increased from 60% to 77%.

Their understanding of vigorous intensity activity rose from 65% to 77%.

A lot of pupils are taking part in their after schools sports clubs

Chester's Challenge is our health promotion programme for primary schools. It teaches healthy eating, the value of exercise and the dangers of smoking in a fun and interactive way, using Chester, the monkey, and his brother Heartley.

Chester's Challenge

33 schools participated in the 3 week programme, with 1,170 pupils reached
Here are some snippets to show the impact Chester has had.

Eat your way to health



'I only ate one treat a day this week'

'I ate more fruit this week, I got my 5 a day'

A pupil approached her teacher after the session about the contents of her lunch box and has decided she wants to choose healthier alternatives to the chocolate, crisps and doughnuts.

Stamp out smoking



Aprilage always has a visual impact

Pupils take the anti-smoking messages home with them as they are concerned.
Our parents' leaflets give information and signpost to organisations that can assist their quit attempt

We found although the majority of pupils have never smoked, some have tried it:

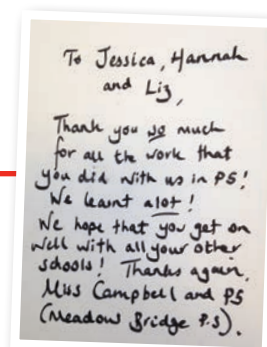
BELB -13%
SEELB - 7%

More Feedback

A pupil from last year's programme had to use the acronym FAST, when her mother had stroke and she was home alone. The girl recognized the signs and called 999 immediately and got her Mum help. Her quick thinking saved her Mum's life.

'I have seen a presentation from NICHs before and it was great. This time round was even better. Great information and important message.'

For information on our school health programme visit www.nichs.org.uk/schools.



Campaigning For Better Health

We lobbied politicians at Stormont and Westminster on a number of health issues this year, with some success. Sadly we will have to wait until 2015-16 to see a ban on smoking in cars carrying children.

Smoking in Cars

Every area of the UK and Ireland with the exception of Northern Ireland now has a ban on smoking in cars carrying children.

The Department of Health is bringing forward a Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to prohibit the sale of nicotine products to those under eighteen – a measure we campaigned for. We see this Bill as a potential way of introducing a ban on smoking in cars carrying children, and we raised the issue directly with the then Health Minister Jim Wells when we met him in January. We came away confident that

an amendment to this Bill is the best way forward.

Despite extensive campaigning and public support standing at 82% in favour, we are still waiting for the Northern Ireland Executive to introduce a ban here.

Plain packaging

NICHS strongly supports the introduction of plain packaging for cigarettes. There is strong evidence that it would reduce the appeal of cigarettes to young people.

We were instrumental in ensuring that the Bill and Regulations introduced by Westminster Health Minister Jane Ellison will be applied to Northern Ireland. Plain tobacco packaging will be introduced in the United Kingdom in May 2016 and in Ireland in May 2017.

Minimum Alcohol Pricing

We have campaigned for a minimum price per unit of alcohol and other curbs on excessive drinking which would save the Health Service money and reduce health problems – including high blood pressure – caused by alcohol.

Alcohol abuse costs Northern Ireland an estimated £900m a year and results in more than 250 deaths. We are not asking for measures that would affect moderate social drinkers, but curbs on very cheap alcohol – often sold in supermarkets – which encourages people to drink to excess on a regular basis.

The Irish Government hopes to have legislation in place by late 2015/early 2016, but so far there is no progress on the issue in Northern Ireland. We will continue to campaign on the subject.



Neil Johnston, NICHS Policy Advisor,
Fidelma Carter, NICHS Public Health
Director, Minister **Jim Wells** and
Andrew Dougal, Chief Executive.

Events Round Up



Run to Remember at Benone Beach

On 14th March 2015, TV presenter Sarah Travers (above) and 200 participants took in a 10km or 5km challenge on Benone Beach. Many were taking part in memory of loved ones, or in support of family and friends living with chest, heart and stroke illnesses. The youngest runner on the day, nine year-old Thomas Devine, was delighted with his finish time of just 35 minutes and 54 seconds! Well done to all who took part on the day, which has raised an amazing £7,000 so far.

NICHS Run to Remember

The number of our supporters taking part in a running event in memory of their loved ones is growing rapidly, with



"Thomas Devine, aged 9"

nearly 1,000 supporters having now 'Run to Remember' in local marathons, half marathons, international marathons, 5k and 10k runs, mud runs, colour runs and many more!

One of our star runners last year was Andrew Hutchinson, Managing Director of CP Hire. In July 2014 Andrew organised his own 'Run to Remember' in memory of his brother Jonathan. He said: 'A few months before Jonathan died we were talking about running and I said I would like to do a marathon. At this point, Jonathan, who was only 29, joked that I could never do it. It is his 10 year anniversary this year so I thought I would give it a go.'

Andrew successfully completed his first full marathon around the north coast and raised an astonishing £11,000 for NICHS.

Left to right: **Jason Maguire, Andrew Hutchinson, David Bowman.**



Altogether last year, our runners raised an incredible £80,000. A large slice of this came from runners sponsored to take on the Belfast City Marathon walk, run or relay. More than 350 runners took part in the 2014 event.

Challenge Walks

The final NICHS Causeway Trek took place in May 2014, with more than 200 walkers taking on the 11-mile challenge. We also introduced our new programme of Challenge Walks, with a further 200 participants taking on the 13 or 26 mile routes along the Causeway Coast and Titanic Quarter in Belfast. Together our walkers succeeded in raising nearly £30,000.

Thank you to all the loyal supporters of the Causeway Trek, which ran for more than a decade. We hope you'll join us at this year's Causeway Challenge Walk, which we promise will be even better!



Alison Campbell, (left) Model Academy owner and partner of golfing legend Darren Clarke taking part in the Causeway Trek.

Community Fundraising



Corran Integrated P.S.

The pupils of Corran Integrated Primary School (above) held a Wear Red Day for NICHHS and raised £200 in memory of their caretaker Patrick Campbell. For more information on how your school can fundraise for NICHHS or to obtain our new schools health pack, please contact us on 028 9032 0184.

Royal Hotel

The Royal Hotel in Cookstown chose NICHHS as its Charity of the Year for 2014, raising an amazing £5,000 towards our local services. The cheque was handed over at the hotel's Gala Ball in March. (below).



McAlister Family

In October 2014, 70 members of the McAlister family (right) from Ballymoney took on the challenge of climbing Knocklayde in memory of the late Eileen McAlister. The group included Eileen's 15 children, together with their partners and families. The family was overwhelmed by the fantastic total raised of £5,078.21. Thank you to everyone who made a donation in Eileen's memory.

Lockhart Family

Elaine Lockhart and family (below) from Bessbrook, Co Armagh handed over a cheque for £2,888.42 to NICHHS this year. Elaine organised a sponsored walk around Loughgall Country Park in memory of her beloved husband Alan.



Christmas at the Cathedral

On 19th December 2014, NICHHS volunteers and supporters from all over Northern Ireland joined together with our Ambassador, Malachi Cush, for an evening of reflection and celebration at St Anne's Cathedral. Our thanks go to the singers and musicians from



Stormont School of Singing and QUB Music Department, without whom this event, which raised £7,450, wouldn't have been possible. We are looking forward to this year's event already!



Samples of our new wedding favours design, available from Autumn 2015.

Beverly Leckey – Fundraising Volunteer

Beverly Leckey is one of our most enthusiastic volunteers and offers her time throughout the year to attend local wedding fairs and promote our Giving in Celebration programme, including our wedding favours range.

"Both my mother and father have suffered from chest, heart and stroke related conditions. The care they received was excellent and both have made great recoveries. It was after their illnesses that I decided I wanted to give something back. I attended an open meeting at NICHHS's office in Belfast and after seeing the local impact of NICHHS's work, I was hooked. I walk away from each wedding fair knowing that I have helped promote a fantastic local charity, plus I get to see the latest wedding fashions, taste the food and meet new people!"

Last year we raised nearly £50,000 through donations from wedding favours, birthdays, anniversaries and other celebrations. Volunteers like Beverly have been vital in raising awareness of this way of supporting NICHHS and helping to raise such fantastic sums of money.

If you'd like to make a difference while having fun and meeting new people, or if you'd like to know a little more about NICHHS's Giving in Celebration programme, please contact us for more information on 028 9032 0184.

Corporate Fundraising



Pictured left to right- Nutritionists Suzanne Chalkley & Jane McClenaghan join Michael Deane, Linda Brown IoD & Sinead Magill Senior Corporate Fundraising Executive NICHs.

Institute of Directors

NICHs and the Institute of Directors (IoD) challenged business leaders to take on Michael Deane in true Masterchef style at Belfast Cookery School. The event was a tasty contribution to the year's fundraising on our behalf by the IoD. Andrew Dougal, NICHs Chief Executive, who competed in the challenge, raised more than £1,000 through sponsorship. The IoD has raised an impressive £11,579 during its year long partnership with NICHs.

Dunbia

More than 300 farmers joined Dunbia staff at the Dunbia Farmers' Ball and Auction in January 2015. Dunbia have raised a tremendous £26,000 in the course of their charity partnership with us.

Henry Group

Henry Group (NI) Ltd have raised £4,713.71 through their livery campaign and a Christmas Jolly Jumper event. They also held a 'Rock the Red' day in June.



Valerie Saunders (left) NICHs Community Coordinator meets Staff of Henry brothers.



Pictured left to right- Sinead Magill Senior Corporate Fundraising Executive NICHs, Janet Dobson Dunbia Charity Committee, Kerry Anderson Director of Fundraising NICHs, Christina Welton Dunbia Charity Committee.



Hospitality Review

A total of £6,230 was raised at the Hospitality Review NI 'Hats and Shades' themed charity barbecue.

Gillian Parker Communications & Marketing Manager NICHs & Nicola Daly Hospitality Review Greer Publications.

The Merchant Hotel

In 2014 The Merchant Hotel raised £7,000 for NICHs and also organised a special tea party for 25 carers whose loved ones are affected by chest, heart or stroke conditions.



Pictured left to right - Kerry Anderson Director of Fundraising NICHs, Gavin Carroll General Manager and Petra Wolsey Marketing Director, both from The Merchant Hotel.

Stormont Central Management

Stormont Central Management Branch team held an annual fundraiser and presented a cheque to NICHs for more than £600. They also helped us share information on our events and services.



Stormont Central Management staff, Debbie McGuire (2nd from right) Corporate, Major Donor & Trust Fundraising Officer NICHs.

How Your Money Makes A Huge Difference

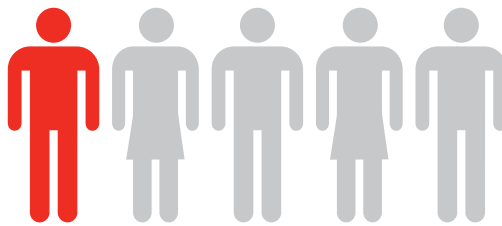
Throughout 2014-2015 our individual supporters have been simply wonderful in their support of a broad range of our life-enhancing services and life-saving research. With the introduction of our Individual Giving Programme in 2013, single donations and regular gift income have more than doubled to almost £350,000. The Individual Giving Fundraising Team has been working closely with our Service Departments to communicate to donors the huge difference they make and how their donations will be used.

Our regular givers continue to be a crucial group of supporters. A fantastic **£167,331** has been received in regular gifts from almost 2,500 committed givers throughout the year. In service terms, this is enough to deliver six months of our Health Promotion work including our Health Programmes for schools and homeless people, and our Community Health Checks. Regular giving has seen a growth of 21%.

Our second Spring Raffle Appeal in support of NICHHS's Medical Research Fund raised nearly **£41,000**. Donations and ticket sales from the raffle will meet more than 10% of our research funding for 2014-2015.

Our Christmas Campaign raised a fantastic total of **£110,893**. The associated appeal letter was supported so generously that it exceeded income targets across the board, securing **£44,979** – an amazing 46% over target. This will support almost one fifth, or 271 of the new referrals to our Stroke Family Support Programme. The mailing focused on stroke survivors' needs specific to the recipient's local area and the life-changing work NICHHS is doing in particular communities. As a result we recruited 639 new individual donors and re-engaged a further 1078.

£44,979



= almost one fifth, or **271** of the new referrals to our Stroke Family Support Programme.

Our 23 Respiratory Support Groups received a significant boost from our August "Be Inspired!" supporter newsletter. The **£11,336** raised will enable 72 people to attend a potentially life-changing NICHHS Respiratory Support Group for a whole year.

Legacy gifts have continued to be the cornerstone of fundraising, making up 40% of all donations 2014-2015. More than **£950,000** was bequeathed by 47 people who so generously remembered those affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses in their wills. These funds make possible a huge proportion of our activity and could fund our Respiratory Support Programme, Research Programme and our Primary Prevention work in their entirety.

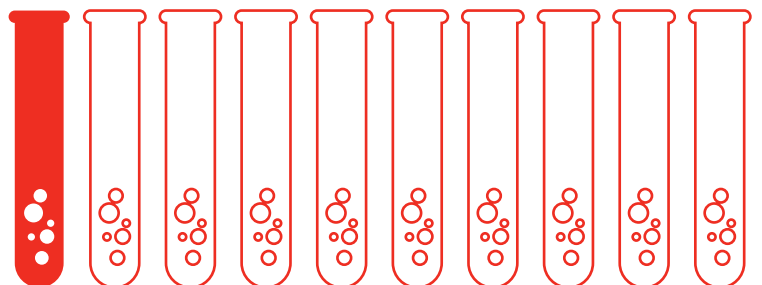
Donations in Lieu of Flowers remain an important source of income, bringing in **£235,000**, which represents almost 10% of all donations. This could completely fund our Advocacy and Campaigns work, speaking out on behalf of the people of Northern Ireland, campaigning for improved treatments and more rapid access to them, as well as prevention measures.

£11,336

= supporting **72** people at a Respiratory Support Group for a whole year

£41,000

= 10% of the complete Research Programme's costs.



New Man At The Helm

In September 2015, Declan Cunnane will become Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke, having been Deputy Chief Executive for the last three years.

Declan qualified as a chartered accountant in 1986 and gained extensive experience working in the commercial and voluntary sectors, including 15 years as managing partner of an accountancy



practice that specialised in advising charities.

Declan has always been interested in health matters, in particular the benefits to health of regular exercise. He practices what he preaches by leading an active lifestyle, formerly as a swimmer, runner and more recently as a cyclist. He feels very much at home working in a health charity.

Declan has paid tribute to the current Chief Executive, Andrew Dougal, and says he has found his advice, based on more than 30 years' experience of working in NICHHS, invaluable. He is also grateful to have a strong Board and management team and such dedicated staff, volunteers and supporters. NICHHS recently developed a new and very ambitious Strategic Plan and Declan is very much looking forward to the challenge of implementing this plan over the next 3 years.

He is Honorary Treasurer and Board Member of a number of other charities.

Meet The Management Team



DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Gareth McGleenon has recently joined NICHHS. He is a qualified Chartered Accountant with extensive experience in both the private and public sectors.

Prior to joining NICHHS, Gareth held senior management positions in PricewaterhouseCoopers, Invest NI, in industry and most recently with First Trust Bank. Gareth has also been on the Board of a number of Not for Profit Organisations.



PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR

Fidelma Carter joined NICHHS in 2012 as the director lead for research, primary prevention, policy, public affairs and communications.

Having spent 14 years working in public health, senior management and later serving on the board for a London NHS organisation, Fidelma has extensive experience of management and working in partnership to improve health and reduce inequalities.



DIRECTOR OF CARE AND SECONDARY PREVENTION

Fiona Greene has worked in the charity sector in Northern Ireland since 1994, holding senior management roles with Gingerbread NI and Victim Support NI.

She also held the voluntary post of Chairperson with the Law Centre NI. Fiona joined NICHHS in 2008 as the Area Manager for the Southern and South Eastern Trust regions.



DIRECTOR OF INCOME GENERATION

Kerry Anderson joined NICHHS as Director of Income Generation in 2014.

Having spent 14 years in the charity sector before joining NICHHS, Kerry has extensive experience in fundraising. Most recently, her nine years at Action Cancer involved developing income from various areas including corporate, events, individual giving and trust and legacy funding.

NICHS Members

Patron

Dorinda, Lady Dunleath

President

Sir William Hastings KB CBE

Governance Board

Chair

Professor MPS Varma

Vice Chair

Mr James Collins

Honorary Treasurer

Mr Ian Lindsay FCA

Board Members

Mr Alan Cecil (to 13/01/15)
Ms Christine Donnelly
Mr Tony Earley (from March 2015)
Mrs Ann Hayes MBE
Dr Enda Kerr
Dr Joe Kidney
Mr Martin Mulholland
Professor Paul Nicholls
Mr James Scholes (from March 2015)

Senior Management Team

Chief Executive

Mr Andrew P Dougal OBE

Deputy Chief Executive

Mr Declan Cunnane

Director of Care Services and Secondary Prevention

Mrs Fiona Greene

Director of Fundraising

Ms Siobhan Hanley (to May 2014)
Mrs Kerry Anderson
(from November 2014)

Public Health Director

Ms Fidelma Carter

Members of Council

Mr Don Allen OBE
Mr James Anderson

Dr Nicola Armstrong
Mr Tony Axon
Mrs Una Bourke
Mr Alan Cecil (to 13/01/15)
Mr James Collins
Mr Harry Doherty
Ms Christine Donnelly
Mr Gerard Duffy
Dorinda, Lady Dunleath
Mrs Ann Dunlop (to 31/03/15)
Mr Tony Earley (from March 2015)
Professor Alun Evans
Ald. Paul Girvan
Mr Gordon Greenfield
Dr Nigel Hart
Sir William Hastings KB CBE
Mrs Ann Hayes MBE
Dr Niall Herity
Dr Enda Kerr
Dr Joe Kidney
Mr Peter Lavery
Mr Ian Lindsay
Mr David Magill MBE
Ms Anne Marie Marley MBE
Dr David McAnaney
Ms Cathy McIlroy
Mr Liam McIvor
Professor Pascal McKeown
Mr John Morrissey
Mr Martin Mulholland
Professor Paul Nicholls
Dr Michael Power
Dr John Purvis
Professor Philip Reilly
Mr Glyn Roberts
Mr James Scholes
(from March 2015)
Professor Michael Shields
Ms Arlene Spiers OBE
Mrs Dorothy Stevenson
Dr Fergal Tracey
Dr Tom Trinick
Professor MPS Varma

Scientific Research Committee (SRC):

Chair

Dame Karen Dunnell DCB,
former Chief Executive of the
The Office of National Statistics

Vice Chairs

Professor Michael Shields,
Queen's University Belfast and
Royal Victoria Hospital

Professor Robert Welch
Ulster University (retired)

Members

Dr Chin-Kuo Chang
King's College London

Professor Cathy Craig
Queen's University Belfast

Professor Madeleine Ennis
Queen's University Belfast

Gerry Finnegan
Lay Representative

Professor Donna Fitzsimons
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
and Ulster University

Professor Anne Forster
University of Leeds

Dr Mark Harbinson
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
and Queen's University Belfast

Professor Nicholas Mays
London School of Hygiene
and Tropical Medicine

Dr Michael McCormick
Craigavon Area Hospital

Dr Lorcan McGarvey
Queen's University Belfast

Gareth Neil
Lay Representative

Professor Philip Reilly
Queen's University Belfast

**WE'RE
ON YOUR
SIDE**

Obituaries

Alan Cecil

It is with the most profound regret that we record the death of our esteemed Governance Board member, Alan Cecil, who died on 13th January 2015, having battled illness since June 2014. Alan had been a member of our Governance Board since October 2012. He had previously served as a member of the NI Coronary Prevention Group which worked for the prevention of Coronary Heart Disease.

Dennis Boyle

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Dr Dennis Boyle (Governance Board 1978-1995), in August 2014. Dennis was Consultant Cardiologist at the Ulster Hospital and served as Vice-Chairman of the NI Health Promotion Agency. He chaired the NI Coronary Prevention Group, established by NICHs to campaign for a programme to reduce coronary heart disease. This group made huge strides in prevention work in N. Ireland.

HELP US CATCH A KILLER

Through your **DONATIONS** and our **HEART RESEARCH**, we can save more lives

WWW.NICHS.ORG.UK/HEART

**WE'RE
ON YOUR
SIDE**



Chest
Heart &
Stroke

Professor Tara Moore, Ulster University

Email is one of the most effective ways for NICHS to keep in touch. To ensure our funds go where they are needed most we would like to send you our Review and other information by email.

If you would like to help us do so, please provide your address in the space provided.

If we don't hear from you, we'll continue to contact you by post.

Alternatively, you can email us at mail@nichs.org.uk
Email address*

*In providing my email address I am happy to receive emails from NICHS

Please return this slip to:
**FREEPOST
RSYK-LUTK-GTKJ
Northern Ireland Chest
Heart & Stroke
21 Dublin Road,
Belfast, BT2 7HB**



Contact

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Northern Ireland Chest
Heart & Stroke
21 Dublin Road
Belfast
BT2 7HB

Tel: 028 9032 0184

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North West Office

Northern Ireland Chest
Heart & Stroke
32 Balliniska Road
Springtown Ind Estate
Derry/Londonderry
BT48 0LY

Tel: 028 7137 7222