

The Review

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

Chest
Heart &
Stroke



**WE'RE
ON YOUR
SIDE**

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



In Northern Ireland, smoking, obesity and alcohol abuse continue to contribute significantly to chest, heart and stroke illnesses. To combat this, we continue to lobby

for change and spearhead initiatives that support a healthy lifestyle.

In 2016, we successfully lobbied for a ban on smoking in cars with children present and we must now ensure that this legislation is enforced. The Government's introduction of the Sugar Levy is welcome but we will continue to campaign for the proceeds to be used to promote physical activity, in particular PE in primary schools. We also continue to lobby for minimum unit pricing of alcohol as we believe

this legislation will help reduce consumption by high risk drinkers.

Health and Social Care has launched a consultation about the future of Stroke Services in Northern Ireland. We look forward to contributing to that consultation and ensuring that the views of everyone are heard.

The Governance Board I chair is responsible for overseeing the work of Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke, including setting its strategy, reviewing its performance and approving its budget. I am very grateful to all my colleagues on the Board for their commitment, insight and expertise.

Ann Hayes MBE, Professor Paul Nichols and Dr Enda Kerr all resigned from the Governance Board during the year and I wish to extend my gratitude for their many years of service to the

organisation. I warmly welcome two new Board members, Dr Monica Monaghan, consultant cardiologist and Dr Brian Gallen, stroke physician and geriatrician. They bring valuable skills and expertise to the Board and I am sure they will find the work both interesting and rewarding. I look forward to working with them.

Congratulations to our Chief Executive Declan Cunnane on winning the Institute of Directors Third Sector Director of the Year and to his team for their many awards including Investors in People.

We are very fortunate to have such a capable and dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Thank you to everyone who lends their support to Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke.

Professor MPS Varma
Chairman

A WORD FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE



My first year as Chief Executive has been a very challenging but rewarding one.

Figures show that life expectancy in Northern Ireland continues to rise.

This is something to celebrate and is a credit to our health and social care system. However, it means that increasing numbers of people are living with long-term conditions. In turn, demand for our services has never been higher and this can only be expected to increase.

We constantly improve and innovate our services to ensure they are focused and of the highest quality. By carefully reallocating resources during the year, we have been able to increase the numbers attending our Care Services programmes by over 20%.

Over 2,000 new people are referred to us each year.

We continue to make people aware of the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle. The risks associated with smoking, poor diet, excess alcohol and lack of exercise are well known. However stress is a significant risk factor that is often overlooked. So last year we initiated our Give Stress a Rest campaign. We received excellent media coverage and our online stress test and short videos advising people how to manage stress, which are still available on our website, proved incredibly popular.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke relies almost entirely on voluntary donations so, as always, I am humbled by the generosity of the public. For the second successive year our income exceeded £4m, helped by legacy income of over £2m.

Our fundraising team works incredibly hard to inspire support so I was delighted to see them named Best Fundraising Team at the Institute of Fundraising Awards.

I am delighted that we now hold both Investing in Volunteers and Investors in People accreditations. These awards recognise that we effectively support, value and develop our staff and volunteers. They also reflect our allegiance to our values of caring, excellence, integrity and inclusion.

Finally, we are pleased our Chairman, Professor MPS Varma, was recently honoured with an OBE in the Queen's birthday honours list for his unwavering commitment to improving health and social care in Northern Ireland throughout his distinguished career.

Declan Cunnane
Chief Executive

A YEAR IN FIGURES

In 2016/17, we supported a total of **3,720** people with chest, heart or stroke illnesses and their families and carers.

There were **2,146** new referrals into our Care Services last year.

450 stroke survivors were referred into our Post Rehab Exercise Programme (PREP) which runs in each of the Trusts.

527 people from across Northern Ireland were supported each week through our Stroke Activity Groups, with a total of **13,114** attendances.

287 people were supported each month by our Respiratory Support Network, with a total of **2,452** attendances.

165 people benefited from our 'Taking Control' Self Management Programmes.

We are currently funding **8 research projects in Queen's University Belfast and 5 in Ulster University** – 2 stroke, 7 cardiac and 4 respiratory projects.

We delivered **3,534 Well Checks** across Northern Ireland. These included **1,906 Express Checks** and **191 Mini Checks**, mainly to businesses, **78 Express Checks** to members of the public at our Dublin Road office and **1,359 blood pressure measurements** at the Holiday World Show and the Balmoral Show.

We gave **123 health talks** to a total of 475 people.

We visited **26 schools** with our three-week Chester's Challenge Programme, teaching a total of 917 children about healthy eating, the importance of physical activity and the dangers of smoking.

We delivered our Health and Homeless Programme in **38 hostels** through 111 visits, including Well Checks for 22 homeless people. 333 people were signposted on to other health and wellbeing services, such as their GP practices for follow up on high cholesterol or blood pressure, pharmacists for support in stopping smoking and other agencies who specialise in mental health.

WHERE OUR INCOME COMES FROM



Total Charitable Expenditure: £2,509,635

+ Governance £8,819

+ Fundraising Costs £827,722

= Total Expenditure: £3,346,176

WHERE OUR INCOME GOES

Care Services



50%

Health Promotion



19%

Campaigning



16%

Research



14%

TO US OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE EVERYTHING!



Volunteers within Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke are immensely important in the delivery of our services. As such they are involved in every aspect of what we do and are crucial to connect us to local communities.

As NICHHS places a high value on the contribution of its volunteers, we strive to ensure that the volunteering experience is the best it can possibly be. Our efforts have not gone unnoticed and we are pleased to have held the 'Investing in Volunteers' (IIV) award, which is the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management, for the past seven years.

As a result of consultation, NICHHS has developed a series of defined roles each with specific responsibilities that not only help the charity deliver its aims and objectives but which also offers real value to those who volunteer.

Roles are diverse and include a wide variety such as Governance board member, care services support and fundraising. NICHHS ambassadors exist

to raise awareness of NICHHS within local communities and office-based volunteers support departments with various administration tasks.

We also offer occasional volunteer opportunities to help us with leaflet drops, events or to count money. NICHHS would like to take this opportunity to thank its amazing volunteer team for their ongoing commitment, dedication, help and support.

If you would like more information on volunteering, please visit our website or contact Anne Norrie at anorrie@nichs.org.uk or call - 028 9026 6707.

IS VOLUNTEERING FOR YOU?

Our volunteers are all kinds of people from all walks of life. Whether you have a specific skill or interest or just want to try something new, working within one of NICHHS's defined volunteering roles is challenging, rewarding and fun.

Here's Laura Mooney's story.

In 2011, I changed jobs and although my new position meant a better work/life balance, I wanted to do something really meaningful with my 'free-time'.

Around the same time an ex-boyfriend died suddenly aged 33 of an undiagnosed heart condition and donations were to be sent to NICHHS. This prompted me to visit the NICHHS website.

I saw that NICHHS was looking for volunteers and thought there was no harm going along to an

information evening. On the night, everyone was very friendly and I found myself immediately fitting in.

As a young professional it was important that volunteering fitted around my working schedule but I was assured that if I decided to help I could say no to any event and that flexibility really helped.

Six years on and I have thoroughly enjoyed the variety of tasks I've been involved in. I've done everything from bag packs to street collections to carol singing, and even wedding fairs. Each month I receive a volunteer newsletter which tells me what is coming up, allowing me to plan my time in advance.

When I was approached to become a Volunteer Ambassador, I jumped at the chance, although it's partly just an excuse to present giant comedy sized cheques!



I feel guilty at times when I get thanked for volunteering because I get so much out of the experience myself.

If anyone is thinking about volunteering I would say just do it! It's a great way to give something back, meet new people, gain self-confidence and feel a real sense of accomplishment.

Simply I'm really proud to work as a volunteer for NICHHS. It's one of the best things I've ever done!



Here's Michelle Chao's story.

In September 2016, while studying at university, I started volunteering with NICHS at the Young Stroke Group in Belfast.

The whole process was very easy and the volunteer co-ordinator was really helpful during the application process and throughout the induction training.

When I first started I felt a bit lost, a common feeling when embarking on something new, but immediately found everyone so welcoming that this quickly dissipated and the stroke group coordinator was always there to provide help and support.

I also volunteered at NICHS's Post Rehab Exercise Programme (PREP). I found the whole experience really great and had the chance to meet other volunteers of all ages as well as witness the life changing progress of stroke survivors going through the programme.

Listening to the stories of other volunteers and service users has been really inspiring and you learn so much that school or university could never teach you. As a student, it has certainly strengthened my communication skills, and working with so many different people has boosted my people skills. I have also learned that there's so much more to life than just studying!

The charity really values its volunteers and is always appreciative of the work that we do. We are always thanked even if it's only with a simple smile and thank you. All the staff, volunteers and service users are so respectful and have made my volunteering experience incredible!

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

As a voluntary sector organisation, one of the most important investments we make is in our people, so we were delighted to achieve Investors in People accreditation in September 2016.

By embracing the new sixth generation of the world-recognised standard, our senior management team and staff have made a commitment to strive towards the very best in people management excellence and to make NICHS a great place to work.

Living to a set of values that is consistent with the philosophies of NICHS has been fundamentally important in supporting and inspiring our people. These values articulate those things that we genuinely believe in – *caring, excellence, integrity and inclusion*. For many, this values-driven culture is a key element of what makes NICHS a special place to work.



People demonstrate how they experience the values personally and strive to act as role models, applying them on a daily basis in their relationships with service users and colleagues; treating people with dignity and respect; supporting people to be involved in their communities; taking responsibility for actions; and being honest, open and accountable. In short, achieving our charitable aims to the highest possible standard.

Our collaborative working style has brought together staff from across departments, and built a strong sense of team identity. We are lucky to have attracted and retained a resilient and talented workforce, and have many long-serving members of staff, some who have been with us for more than 30 years, clear evidence that NICHS is a special place to work, with a climate of positivity, characterised by optimism, mutual supportiveness and good humour.



HOW WE HELPED BELFAST MAN RECLAIM HIS FUTURE

In February 2014, Frank Johnston was diagnosed with COPD. Experiencing exacerbations or crises every six weeks, he had given up on having an ordinary life until NICHS stepped in.

Frank had smoked heavily for most of his life but had actually given up six months before his diagnosis. This is not unusual. Once your lungs are breathing fresh air, the damage sometimes reveals itself and breathing can become more difficult.

Every five or six weeks Frank would have an exacerbation or crisis during which he would be pumped full of antibiotics and steroids, knowing that if they didn't work, he would end up in A&E, unable to breathe. Going through an exacerbation was a terrifying experience and a horrible thing for his family to see.

At the time he couldn't sleep lying down finding it very difficult to breathe and resorted to sleeping upright in a chair. He was forced to give up his passion, golf, and admits to becoming a bit of

a couch potato 'waiting for the end'. He recalls the day that things began to change: "One day, when I was at the doctor's picking up a prescription for my usual haul of inhalers and medicines, I noticed a poster from Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke. I called Pauline Millar, NICHS's Respiratory Support Co-ordinator, and she was at my house the next day, explaining how they could help.

"She suggested their 'Taking Control' Self Management Programme. She said that although COPD can't be cured, it can be managed. I didn't believe her.

"However, it was a remarkable experience. Soon, infected by the boundless enthusiasm of the NICHS team, we were setting bigger and bigger goals, gaining strength from each other, making long term friends... all emerging from the dark.

"I went on the Programme as a complete sceptic, a man waiting to die, and left as a man who goes to the gym six times a week! I have taken up Tai Chi which focuses on abdominal breathing and helps me to use

all of my lungs. COPD is a progressive condition and yet my lung function has improved by 10%. My lungs aren't getting better, but the exercise means that they are better able to use the oxygen in the air I breathe.

"I am also back playing golf. I can't walk the full course and have to use a buggy, but getting back to my favourite hobby has been very important to me.

"It has been a complete transformation. I have not had any exacerbations for two years now, and since completing the Self Management Programme, I have had no problems sleeping in bed, lying down, like normal.

"I have gone from a very dark place to having a future. Two years ago I started what I call my 'death diary' noting all the financial and practical information that my family might need after I am gone. I didn't finish it – I've decided it can wait a while longer!"

"... getting back to my favourite hobby has been very important to me."

STROKE AFTER CARE THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Our Post Rehabilitation Exercise programme, PREP, which began in 2010 in the Southern Trust, now runs across all of Northern Ireland. It offers stroke survivors, who have finished their statutory rehabilitation, the opportunity to continue rehab through weekly exercise classes, which run alongside education sessions designed to help people understand their stroke and make any necessary lifestyle changes to prevent another.

Noelene Hughes, Area Services Manager for Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke, was involved in the development of PREP in the Southern Trust and has managed the subsequent roll out. She explains: "Each PREP is organised by one of our NICHs co-ordinators and sessions are led by a physio, but we also need volunteers for each PREP group and this was one of the challenges as each new location was introduced. However, we soon started to see a trend emerging... PREP attendees who never leave! One by one, across the country, stroke survivors who have completed PREP have stayed on to volunteer. These volunteers bring an extra dimension – not only are they able to practically help stroke survivors taking part in PREP, they can understand what they are going through in a way that the co-ordinators and physios simply can't."

Joe Bannon, from Newry, is one of those volunteers. He had a stroke in February 2013 when



"I was really reluctant at first but it turned out to be the best thing I did."

he was only 56 years old.

"I was alone in the house at the time. I felt unwell and the room was spinning. Thankfully a friend happened to call by, found me talking 'gibberish', and called my son who immediately took me to hospital.

"I didn't know who I was, where I was, even what age I was... in fact when they asked me, I said I was 27! I also couldn't see out of one eye and unfortunately that has never improved."

After Joe was discharged, he met with the Community Stroke Team and NICHs's Stroke Family Support Co-ordinator, Ann McAlinden. It was Ann who first spoke to Joe about attending PREP but he wasn't keen.

"I was really reluctant at first but it turned out to be the best thing I did. However I remember how unsure I felt at first so when a new group is starting, I understand how they are feeling.

"Obviously I benefited from the exercise and education elements. But it was more than that. I also benefited from the fun and banter. I was a very sociable person before my stroke, but I had been through a devastating, life-changing event that had knocked me for six. Being back in a situation where I felt comfortable enough to just have fun was priceless.

"I know first-hand how much PREP helps people, physically and mentally, and so when I completed the course I wanted to give something back and be part of bringing that help to others. I decided to give volunteering a go, and have not looked back since.

"I would really recommend PREP to anyone who has had a stroke but I also really benefit from the weekly support I get from the other volunteers. I have met so many people since I started volunteering and I feel that I have helped others. That means so much to me."



"I never thought I would be able to get back to work."

MUM-TO-BE LISA'S LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY

Busy mum Lisa Lecky was looking forward to having her second child, a little sister or brother for one year old Conor. She had a happy family life and a fulfilling job. She kept herself fit and healthy, jogging most days, playing badminton and practising yoga.

However, on 4 March 2015, while out jogging, Lisa suffered a life-changing brain haemorrhage from a ruptured aneurysm. She underwent initial brain surgery to stop the bleeding and further surgery to remove part of her skull to relieve the swelling in her brain. Unfortunately, following surgery, Lisa suffered a stroke.

She doesn't remember much about those few weeks, but she knows that the Royal Victoria Hospital gave her and her unborn child exceptional care. Lisa explained: "When I came round, I was extremely agitated, not only for my baby, but also for my one year old son at home. I missed him dreadfully and I worried about the effect of suddenly going missing from his young life. It was heartbreaking.

"Because I was pregnant, I presented an extra challenge to the teams in the Royal Victoria Hospital and later the brain injury unit, RABIU, at Musgrave

Park Hospital, at first to keep me and my unborn child as healthy as possible and later in terms of my rehabilitation. As my bump grew, and my centre of gravity moved forwards, my exercises had to be adapted."

Eventually Lisa was discharged from Musgrave and was able to spend the final weeks of her pregnancy at home, before returning to the RVH for the safe delivery of her daughter Orla in September 2015.

Looking after a new baby and a toddler is difficult for anyone, but for Lisa the situation presented additional challenges. "I wasn't able to lift or feed Orla. At what should have been a happy time for my family, I was worrying about how I could build a bond with Orla and also reconnect with Conor. When I got home from hospital, I had been 'away' for half his young life and had to rebuild my relationship with him.

"I put a lot of effort into my rehabilitation as much for my children's sake as my own. I've lost the use of my left arm permanently and I have limited mobility in my leg which means that I can't easily do some things other mums take for granted, such as just getting down on the floor to play with them."

About five months after her stroke, the community stroke team put Lisa in contact with Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke. She now attends the Belfast Young Stroke Activity Group, and has completed PREP – the Post Rehabilitation Exercise Programme. "I got so much out of PREP," Lisa said, "I absolutely loved it. I also loved seeing how much other people came on too, no matter what age they were.

"I've now started a phased return to work, which is something some of my friends at the Young Stroke Activity Group have also done. I never thought I would be able to get back to work and at the moment I'm just building my hours up to see what I'm capable of. But it was very useful to be able to chat about the practicalities with other stroke survivors.

"My next goal for the new year is to get back to driving. Again, my friends at the Young Stroke Activity Group are the ones pushing me to do it. They've told me what a difference that additional freedom and independence has made to their lives. I am a very determined person anyway, but the motivation and encouragement I get from the other group members has played a huge part in my journey."

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

Following two strokes in November 2016, 81 year old Eric spent four months in hospital before returning home to live with his youngest daughter Katherine, as he had done prior to becoming ill. The social workers had suggested he went to live in a care home, but the family agreed this would not be what their Daddy wanted and decided to rearrange their lives so that he could be cared for by them all. A good care package was also put in place.

Mary, the eldest, took a career break to care for him during the day while Katherine was at work. Katherine, who has MS, reduced her working hours to help look after her dad and also to try to minimise the impact of the additional responsibility on her own health.

Mary explains: "Katherine and my three brothers all have mortgages so financially it made sense for me to take a career break to look after Daddy. I look after Daddy during the day. Katherine gets home from work mid-afternoon and takes over. Our brothers take it in turn to come to the house every evening to bathe and shave Daddy. They also look after Daddy on a Sunday so Katherine and I can have some sister time, though we often only get as far as the supermarket!"

What has been the most difficult part of being a carer?

Mary: "It's difficult being by myself during the day, especially if Daddy is refusing to eat or isn't playing ball. I worry about whether I am looking after him properly, especially as I don't like needles but have to give him his insulin injections."

Katherine: "The most difficult thing for me has been letting go and allowing my siblings to help! I feel like I have been done out of a job, as I took on a lot of our Mum's role within the family after she died. However, with my MS, I know I can't take on everything. It is something that Julie McCullins, NICHs's Stroke Family Support Co-ordinator, has spoken to me about! I've been on a Carers Self Management programme run by NICHs and Arthritis Care which helped a lot."

What has been the best part?

Mary: "I appreciate having time to spend with Daddy. When he was younger, if it was good weather we'd have gone for a walk after work but in recent years he didn't have the energy to do that. I missed having that time with him. I also don't think I could have coped emotionally if he had gone into a care home. It would have broken my heart. Not everyone has the options we have and I think we are very fortunate to be able to care for Daddy this way."

Katherine: "I think it is less stressful looking after him at home as we don't have to worry about how other people are treating him. It has brought us all closer. Mary and I still have the odd argument but that's just a sister thing. And we can still have a good laugh with Daddy. It is tough but definitely worth it."



Left to right: Mary, Eric and Katherine

"We can still have a good laugh with Daddy. It is tough but definitely worth it."

NICHS MANAGER SHARES STORY OF HIS OWN STROKE

Tom McElhinney suffered a stroke when on a family holiday. Today, as NICHS's Area Manager for the North West of Northern Ireland, he helps others through the healing process. This is Tom's story...

On 26 June 2006, my family and I landed in Miami at the start of what was to be a memorable family holiday. We picked up our car and after about 90 minutes of driving, the road ahead began to blur, head and tail lights merging into long extended horizontal lines of white and red, just like slow motion photography. The rest of my family had already dozed off, tired after the long flight. I managed to pull off on to a side road and parked the car just before my body 'shut down' and the lights went out.

Sometime later everyone woke up, except me. They tried to wake me but nothing happened. My wife immediately knew it was serious and we needed help. Somehow, my son, who is autistic, managed to flag down a car and ask for emergency medical help.

Slowly I regained consciousness. I remember being aware of my wife beside me but I couldn't see, move or speak. I was paralysed down my left hand side and was drooling at the mouth. Luckily, I regained my faculties relatively quickly and by the time the Emergency Services arrived, I was able to 'shuffle' to the ambulance for tests, which thankfully were sufficiently normal to allow me, with a waiver, to be discharged without admission to hospital. Three weeks of rest and vigilant monitoring from my family followed.

Once home, I became more aware of the deficits brought on by the stroke – problems with short-term memory,

spatial awareness, mental arithmetic, fatigue and depression. I fell downstairs a few times and had to have dual rails fitted. I tried to go back to work several times but failed due to fatigue. I was now taking anti-depressants to help with my mood. I found it hard to talk about what had happened and things did not improve when I lost my job the following year.

My wife gave me a book on depression but I was too depressed to read it. She bought me Nintendo Brain Game and challenged me to use it. When I did it gave me a brain age of 83 – I think! That depressed me even further but it also sparked something in me to say "I'm going to beat you" – and within a few weeks, it told me my brain age was 18. That began the long road back.

In 2011, I had the opportunity to join NICHS as Area Services Manager for the North West of Northern Ireland. By that time I had learned to compensate for my deficits and was now more comfortable with the 'new me' and what I could and could not do. And it has been wonderful to be part of the healing process for others, to hear and share their stories. People just like me who have benefited from the passion and commitment of NICHS colleagues as they strive to make our lives better.

Looking back, my only wish is that my details could just have been passed to NICHS earlier so that I could have taken part in NICHS's Moving On Service and PREP programmes. Like so many, I did not appreciate that my express consent was required by the Data Protection Act to enable this to take place. I'm confident that this would have made a huge difference, and that my first two years post-stroke would have been easier, and my progress better informed and faster.



"...it has been wonderful to be part of the healing process for others."

NICHS CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE LIVES



Encouraging kids to get active for life

Obesity continues to be one of the most important public health challenges facing Northern Ireland. The NI Health Survey showed 25% of our children are either obese or overweight, which increases the risk of life threatening disease. Obesity affects individuals, communities, the economy and society as a whole.

Children in Northern Ireland are the least active in the UK with only 43% getting 60 minutes of daily exercise. Only 8% of schools in NI supply their pupils with two hours of PE a week which, when compared to our Scottish counterparts where the figure is 98%, is totally inadequate. Being active lowers the risk of stroke by 27% and having a first heart attack by 40%.

Evidence shows that levels of physical activity in childhood are related to how active we are as adults. Northern Ireland will soon start to receive funds from the 'Sugar Levy' and NICHS is campaigning for some of this money to fund our primary schools kids getting at least two hours of PE a week to get them active for life.

Call for Minimum Alcohol Pricing (MUP)

No unit of alcohol is without risk. Alcohol causes abnormal heart rhythms, high blood pressure, damage to the heart muscle and can lead to other conditions such as stroke and liver disease.

Its calorie content is also high, possibly leading to obesity.

NICHS fully supports the efforts of government to reduce alcohol consumption in the general population and the introduction of a MUP policy for Northern Ireland.

Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) is a highly targeted measure which focuses on the price of cheap alcohol and aims to improve the health of the heaviest drinkers who experience the most amount of harm. MUP would have a negligible impact on moderate drinkers and the alcohol sold in pubs, bars and restaurants.

NICHS hosted a seminar in March 2017 aimed at raising awareness of alcohol problems and the benefits of Minimum Unit Pricing policy. Neil Johnston, Public Affairs Adviser for NICHS, said: "Opinion polling carried out by Millward Brown shows that 65% of people in Northern Ireland support the idea that the Assembly takes measures to control the sale of very cheap alcohol and we are pleased with this level of public support."

Smoking kills!

Smoking is the main cause of preventable illness and premature death in Northern Ireland. Smoking causes around six deaths per day and one in six of all deaths are due to smoking (2014 data). Smokers are more likely to become unwell and die earlier than non smokers. On average, a smoker is robbed of 10 and 15 years of healthy life and their life span is shortened by about five minutes for each cigarette smoked.

These figures are worse for people living in deprived areas because more people smoke in these areas.

In the UK 15.5% of adults in England smoke; this figure is 16.9% in Wales; in Scotland it is 17.7%. Northern Ireland tops the table, with the highest in the UK at 18.1%, representing 243,000 people.

Scotland has had ten times greater success in cutting smoking than NI. NICHS has lobbied hard to ensure

that tougher retail laws, the Ban on Smoking in Cars carrying children and 'plain packs' have been introduced.

We will continue to campaign for tough enforcement of these measures and for new policies, which we hope will encourage smokers to give up and future generations not to start smoking.



Left to right:
Dr Frank Casey,
Dr Nichola McCullough,
Prof Helen Dolk

BABY HEARTS STUDY RESULTS SHED LIGHT ON HEART DISEASE IN BABIES

Environmental and lifestyle risk factors investigated



In August 2013, aged only six days old, Joe Degnan underwent heart surgery for congenital heart disease (CHD). Joe is one of over 200 babies born annually in Northern Ireland with congenital heart disease, approximately 50 of whom will have heart surgery in the first year of their lives.

Joe's story headlined our Christmas Appeal in 2013 which aimed to raise funds for ground-breaking research, led by Professor Helen Dolk, into the risk factors associated with Congenital Heart Disease (CHD). Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we were able to fund the Baby Hearts Study – a total of £253,801. Professor Dolk explains: "The research looked at the environmental risk factors, including lifestyle factors, rather than genetic causes of congenital heart disease. However, it is rarely one factor alone that causes CHD. Usually a number of factors come into play – genetic predisposition and numerous environmental factors acting together. Our research looked at which environmental factors increase the risk of a baby being born with CHD."

The research study was a partnership between Ulster University and the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. 286 mothers, whose babies had been diagnosed with congenital heart disease, took part in the study, along with 966 mothers, whose babies had not been diagnosed, who were recruited via 17 maternity unit sites across Northern Ireland.

Each mother was asked questions about the three months before and after they became pregnant – questions about their lifestyle and diet, their health and any medication they were taking, home and work environments and any concerns they had during pregnancy. The researchers also used data from their maternity records, prescription records and, for the mothers whose babies had CHD, their hospital records.

Now four years later, Professor Helen Dolk and her colleagues from Ulster University and RBHSC are sharing their findings. Professor Dolk explained: "The strongest associations with the risk of CHD that the Baby Hearts Study found were with:

- Mother having a low level of education
- Stress – experiencing three or more stressful events in the three months before and after conception
- Drinking fizzy or high energy drinks every day
- Poor diet – in particular rarely eating fruits and veg"

The link between stress and CHD was one of the most interesting findings. The team asked the mothers about a number of stressful events and asked if they had experienced these immediately before or in the early months of the pregnancy. Professor Dolk noted: "Individually, the stressors did not show a strong link to CHD, but there is a suggestion of a cumulative effect of many stressors. Also, about a third of women reported pregnancy-related stress and this appeared linked to CHD. This is something we are very interested in exploring further."

Another area that Professor Dolk and her team want to explore is the question of fizzy and high energy drinks. "This research tells us where statistically there are links. It doesn't answer the question 'why'. High energy drinks are becoming more common so we should exercise some caution pending more research. We did not ask women if the drinks were full sugar or diet drinks and this could also be further investigated. Fizzy drinks were found to be more commonly drunk by women with otherwise poor diets, so again, it is difficult to distinguish what the important factors may be."

Women are advised to start taking folic acid supplements before they become pregnant in order to prevent spina bifida – the results showed that 44% did so and that. This also had a very small protective effect for CHD, but this was not a strong finding.

Previous research studies had already shown a link with whether or not the mother had diabetes before she became pregnant. The Baby Hearts Study echoed those earlier findings, emphasising the importance of diabetic women getting help in controlling their diabetes before becoming pregnant.

Professor Dolk also explained how some of the research results were more reassuring than they had expected. "We found no link between obesity and CHD, unlike research elsewhere. There was also no link between CHD and depression or anti-depressants as has been previously suggested. Smoking showed an increased risk of CHD only among the small proportion of women who did not cut down smoking when they found out they were pregnant." The results will be published in clinical journals and the team hopes that they will help form the basis of advice for mothers-to-be.

2017 RESEARCH GRANTS

Each year NICHS awards grants to a variety of research projects that are able to demonstrate clear and measurable benefits for the people of Northern Ireland.

We are currently funding eight research projects at Queen's University Belfast and five at Ulster University including two stroke, seven cardiac and four respiratory projects. In 2017, we awarded £109,104 to the following new research projects:

Using body tracking technology to develop novel movement-based training for stroke patients

Dr Cathy Craig of Queen's University Belfast was awarded £59,104 to use low-cost body-tracking technology and interactive computer games to improve movement performance in stroke survivors.

This research will involve members of the public and healthcare professionals to provide an informed understanding of how movement in computer games can be used effectively to improve treatment outcomes for stroke patients.

Dr Cathy Craig
of Queen's
University Belfast



If you would like to know more about any of our research projects or our other services, please go to nichs.org.uk/research or email us at mail@nichs.org.uk

Cessation in Pregnancy Incentives Trial (CPIT): A phase III Randomised Controlled Trial

Professor Frank Kee of Queen's University Belfast received £50,000 towards the Northern Ireland element of a UK-wide research project that will examine the effectiveness of offering financial vouchers to pregnant smokers as incentives to engage with smoking cessation services and quit during and after pregnancy.

The local Public Health Agency and Cancer Research UK are also funding this research.

In Northern Ireland, around 43% of women give up smoking before or during their pregnancy, while 18% of mothers continue to smoke during their pregnancy. This project will inform policymakers on whether financial voucher incentives work for smoking cessation in pregnancy and for primary prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Professor Frank
Kee of Queen's
University Belfast





Well NI is the name used to describe our health promotion work which seeks to support people in enjoying healthy and active lives that will enhance their overall wellbeing.

Our aim is to raise awareness of personal risk, encourage healthy choices and offer support to make healthy lifestyle changes.

Our work is focused on developing **Well Communities, Well Schools and Well at Work** so that all people in Northern Ireland benefit from a healthier lifestyle.

We have a range of tailored programmes to **improve people's lives by inspiring and supporting** lifestyle changes in a personalised way.

Well Checks assess cardiovascular risk factors such as blood pressure, cholesterol and body composition.

Well Talks are interactive talks on a range of topics including, healthy eating, stress and smoking.

Well You is a 12 week programme, including two Well Checks, which aims to support and encourage people to make lifestyle changes.

Well Mind is a workplace training course which aims to increase knowledge of stress and its impact on health and provide practical tools to manage personal stress levels.

Well Team is a PHA funded programme which supports organisations within the Northern Trust area, to develop an action plan to improve staff health and wellbeing.

WELL CHECKS HELP TO PREVENT FUTURE ILLNESS

During a half hour Well Check appointment, NICHHS's Nurses and Health Promotion representatives can assess an individual's cardiovascular risk factors, such as blood pressure, cholesterol and body composition. These all have an important part to play in any individual's risk of developing heart attack or stroke but are invisible to the naked eye.



Olga, from Newtownabbey, recently discovered she had high blood pressure through one of NICHHS's Well Checks. "As a retired nurse, I knew the theory about how to keep healthy. You think you know it all but it was only when I had a Well Check that I found out I have high blood pressure. I was referred to my GP who gave me medication. Thankfully my blood pressure is now under control."



Joan, from Coleraine, went to her GP to have her blood pressure and cholesterol checked, because her daughter, who works for NICHHS, had made her more aware of it. Her cholesterol was too high so the GP gave her medication. Joan then turned to the charity for further advice. They suggested regular exercise.

Joan explains: "I taught PE and Human Biology so I know how important exercise is. This was a wake-up call. I don't want to become ill, not only for myself, but also because I don't want to upset my family and cause them pain. I now treat the 150 minutes of physical activity per week as part of my medication. I won't lie – sometimes it is a chore. But I try to get 30 minutes brisk walking done five mornings per week. It has worked! As a result of my medication and exercise, my cholesterol is now at an acceptable level."



HEALTHIER STAFF MAKE BETTER EMPLOYEES

NICHS's Well Team Programme is designed for employers who want to invest in their employees' health.

So far 10 companies have completed year one of the three year Well Team programme.

Funded by the Public Health Agency, the Programme is available to small, medium and large organisations operating in the Northern Trust area.

Wincanton, a large distribution company with a depot in Larne, is one of the companies that has participated.

Brian and Adrian, Workplace Health Champions for the Well Team programme at Wincanton in Larne, commented: "The training provided by Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke was very hands-on, with plenty of support, guidance and inspiration.

"Some of the initiatives we have added to Wincanton's Health and Wellbeing Action Plan include:

- Holding a Health Day and health talks
- Increasing use of the on-site gym
- Promoting cycling and walking to work schemes
- Sourcing healthier options for the hot food and snack vending machines
- Holding a summer football tournament
- Organising a 'Biggest Loser' competition

"Our employees are our greatest asset so it makes sense to put measures in place that assist in keeping our workforce happy, healthy and motivated. NICHS's Well Team has helped us create and implement a well-designed and fun wellbeing programme for the company at our site, as well as learning what resources are out there to help."

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES TO ENJOY HEALTHY AND ACTIVE WORKING LIVES

Business in the Community (BITC) partnered with NICHS to develop and pilot Activity Works, an exciting workplace-based campaign to tackle the harmful effects of sustained sedentary behaviour. Research suggests that the average desk-based worker in Northern Ireland sits for an average of 8.9 hours each day.

Sustained sitting for more than four hours each day – irrespective of doing other physical activity – is linked to a range of harmful effects. It increases the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, dementia and cancer. It can increase the risk of obesity and disrupt blood sugar levels. It can also lead to backache and is linked to poorer mental health.

Activity Works challenges employers to support their staff in increasing their Active Minutes during the working day. Aware also of the demands on employees' time – both within and outside of work – our ask of employees was to 'Sweat the Small Stuff' and make simple tweaks to incorporate physical activity into the day through active travel, active breaks and active meetings.



The results of the pilot scheme were very encouraging:

- 93% of individuals changed their daily routine to increase their activity
- 100% incorporated active breaks into their working day
- 67% took part in active meetings
- 63% used some form of active travel

Following the pilot, NICHS is working with BITC to explore how Activity Works can be rolled out in the future.

WELL TALKS DELIVER HEALTH ADVICE AT THE HEART OF HOSTELS

Our Health and Homeless Service delivers Well Talks to service users and staff at hostels and drop in centres.

James Corbett, a staff member at Moyard House, knows just how effective these Well Talks can be in encouraging people to make healthy lifestyle changes.

James, a long time smoker, participated in a number of talks and events around No Smoking Day 2017. He has now quit smoking.

He said: "I always knew that smoking wasn't good for my health but I didn't think I could stop until I got involved

in the NICHS stop smoking sessions. The information and support given to me was brilliant. I learned loads of things, got tips for stopping and heard about other support from places like my pharmacist. My confidence just grew and I knew that I could stop. I know what I've done has made family, friends and people at the hostel realise they can do it too."

Marie McConnell is the Manager of Moyard House and she said: "We really value the work that the NICHS service does here. It provides vital information which allows people to make healthy choices and live healthy lives."



HEALTHY HEART RECIPE BOOKS PROVE HUGE SUCCESS

NICHS's Health and Homeless Service, funded by the health service, delivers cooking and nutrition programmes at hostels in the Belfast and South Eastern Trust areas.

In the past year NICHS has developed its own cookery resource called 'Cook Healthy Stuff' which is proving very popular. Three recipe books have been created with residents and service users at three different locations, each of which had slightly different needs and interests. Each recipe was tested by the residents' groups and each booklet signed off by the Community Dieticians Service and the Senior Cardiac Nurse Specialist.

'Store Cupboard Recipes' was developed with a Simon Community Hostel in Belfast where residents, mostly young men, wanted to learn to cook healthily on tight budgets. This booklet includes tips for creating healthy meals for less money. Mary Walsh, a senior key worker at the Simon hostel, said: "This recipe book gives our residents the skills and confidence to prepare their own meals".

'Mediterranean Recipes' was developed the Mater Dei Hostel residents. This group, mainly young women, were interested in the 'Mediterranean Diet', as promoted in some celebrity blogs. As well as the recipes, the booklet also includes information about what a Mediterranean diet is and

its heart health benefits. Pól Brennan, the manager of the Mater Dei hostel, said: "We are delighted to have been associated with the development of this resource as health and wellbeing are important to us at Depaul."

'Cook Healthy Stuff Recipe Book' was developed with Women's Aid service users at their drop in centre. This resource focuses on healthy versions of family favourites. Kathryn Schreuder, a co-ordinator for Women's Aid, said: "All of the work NICHS delivers is fantastic but this resource is amazing as it gives the women renewed interest in cookery and health."



NEW RESEARCH LEADS TO NEW 'GIVE STRESS A REST' CAMPAIGN



In July 2016, an international research study, involving 27,000 people across 32 different countries, published its findings highlighting the 10 main risk factors for stroke.

At number ten, alongside the risk factors we more commonly associate with stroke, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, poor diet and lack of exercise, was stress.

Extended periods of stress can lead to high blood pressure that increases risk of blood clots and stroke. In addition to this, many people turn to drinking alcohol, smoking and comfort eating to cope with stress and these in themselves can increase risk of stroke.

In August 2016, NICHs commissioned its own survey which showed that two-fifths of people in Northern Ireland habitually feel stressed, with almost half of 35 to 64 year olds reporting "considerable stress levels on a regular basis".

In October 2016, NICHs ran a month long campaign called Give Stress a Rest to highlight this risk factor. The campaign received excellent coverage on radio and across the daily papers and local online news websites, and went on to be nominated for an award at the Chartered Institute of PR Awards to be held in October 2017.

Our online 'stress test', which can be found at www.nichs.org.uk/stresstest, was extremely popular, with almost 5,000 people completing it. The results showed that 13% of people had assessed themselves as having high levels of stress, and 56% with medium levels. Only 31% had low stress.

Armed with this information and the results of a further survey on how people cope with stress, we repeated the campaign from April to June 2017. We developed six short videos, equipping people with the tools to manage their stress. The videos, each showcasing a different stress management technique, have proved very popular on social media. They have also been integrated into Well Mind, our workplace training course focusing on the impact of stress and practical ways to manage it. You can view them at www.nichs.org.uk/managestressvideos

CHESTER'S CHALLENGE REACHES HOME

Chester's Challenge is a three- week school programme which raises awareness and knowledge about food, exercise, smoking and alcohol for P5 children. It is offered to extended schools that are based in deprived areas in the Belfast and South Eastern Trust areas.

It is our hope that the lessons learned through this fun, interactive programme will stay with children as they grow older.

We are pleased that the lessons don't just stay in the classroom. Callum (bottom row, right), from Elmgrove Primary School in Belfast, took Chester's Challenge one step further.

He went home and shared what he had learned with his family. He challenged his uncle on his consumption of high energy and fizzy drinks. He told his family about how much sugar is hidden in foods and how to read the food labels. And now when he goes to the shops with his granny, he checks the food labels for sugar, salt and fat.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Each year we need more than £3m to fund our work. Around 80% of this comes from people who make individual donations or take part in fundraising events, as well as companies with whom we have charity partnerships. We only have room to mention a few of our supporters here, but would like to send a huge thank you to everyone who makes our work possible.

RUNNERS SEE RED IN BID TO COMBAT HEART DISEASE

NICH'S's inaugural Red Dress Run took place at Stormont Estate on Saturday 11 February and was a great success. The 5/10k run had a wonderful atmosphere despite the rain, cold and even snow, with 335 people taking part to raise awareness of heart disease. The fun event had a very serious message – almost three times as many women in Northern Ireland are dying of heart disease than breast cancer.

The Red Dress Run, which was timed to coincide with Valentine's Day, really captured the imagination of the public with everyone donning a brilliant red outfit for the run. For one of NICH'S's supporters Julie McAllister, pictured below with local firefighters, the day held special significance as it took place on the fifth anniversary of her having a heart attack when she was just 39. And it wasn't just women in dresses who joined the challenge; lots of men wearing their best red dresses pitched in too, adding to the fun!

Red tutus, leg warmers, onesies and even wacky red costumes, made for a fantastic sea of colour at Stormont!

Together we successfully raised awareness about women's heart disease in Northern Ireland, along with more than £17k of funds which will be used to support our Heart Care Fund.

NICH'S's Heart Care Fund pays for research into heart disease as well as providing education and support to those affected. While there has been huge progress in the area of heart care, too many lives are needlessly lost and we are delighted to have been able to raise awareness of the symptoms of heart disease and encourage healthier lifestyle choices through this campaign. A huge thank you to everyone who got involved, either through taking part in the run or helping on the day – your support made the event a roaring success! It's set to be back next year – so put Saturday 10 February 2018 in your diary!

Top 10 symptoms of a heart attack (men and women)

1. Very tired/unusual fatigue
2. Sleep disturbances
3. Anxiety
4. Frequent indigestion
5. Heart racing
6. Arm ache
7. Chest pain
8. Arm weak/heavy
9. Hand/arms tingling
10. Coughing



CAUSEWAY CYCLING SPORTIVE ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO PEDAL TO RAISE POUNDS

A huge thanks to everyone who took part in our inaugural cycle sportive on 1 October 2016. Cyclists from all over NI joined us for the challenging 70km and 100km routes, taking in the best of the beautiful North Coast on what turned out to be a stunningly sunny day! An extra special thank you goes to Jeremy Gardiner, stroke survivor and Grand Fondo finalist, and David McCann, Olympian and Track Cyclist, for supporting the event and helping NICHS reach over 20,000 people by producing a special awareness raising video.



5 PEAKS CHALLENGE RAISES CASH

On the weekend of 10-11 September 2016, teams of walkers took on the highest peak in each county in NI in a non-stop timed race against the clock.

The event, which was designed to be inclusive, was unique as only two members of each team had to conquer each mountain, which meant it was open to people of all physical abilities. Teams were made up of family, friends and colleagues and even a troop of scouts!

The ultimate winners were the incredible Walkie Talkies, below, who blitzed the five peaks in an awe-inspiring time of just 22 hours 26 minutes! Congratulations to everyone who took part in this special event and a huge thank you to those who sponsored them.



FUNDRAISING IN THE COMMUNITY

It was another busy year for our Community Fundraising Team and Volunteer Ambassadors who attended a wide range of successful events and represented us at countless community presentations. A huge thank you goes out to everyone who organised an event for NICHHS and a special mention to the following special supporters:



Tracey Nixon

Tracey and her dad organised a disco and raffle night in the Portadown British Legion in memory of her beloved sister Sharlene who died from a stroke at the age of just 39. The event raised a remarkable £4,659.89 which was presented to NICHHS by Tracey along with Sharlene's two little girls, Abby and Ellie.



Linda Nugent

Linda organised a rock concert, Eugefest, in memory of her husband Eugene Nugent who died from a massive heart attack. The concert raised an incredible £5,322.62 and was so well supported that it will now become an annual event.



Sean Fitzsimmons

Sean suffered a heart attack in February 2016 at the Fairy House Race Course in Dublin. Fortunately there was an off-duty paramedic present and also Sean's own niece, who is a nurse. Together they both worked on Sean before a defibrillator arrived which ultimately saved his life. Sean, pictured with his wife Anne, organised a night in the Portaferry Hotel and raised an amazing £4,948.02.



Jack McCrea

Jack organised a successful sponsored cycle, along with a disco and raffle, raising a fabulous £7,861.86 for NICHHS. The events were all in memory of Brian McCrea, his dad, who sadly passed away from a heart attack while out cycling in August 2015. Thank you to everyone who supported them!

Mount Oriel Support Group

Over the past 33 years the Mount Oriel Support Group has raised a tremendous £136,000 for NICHHS. Recently the group made the decision to retire and we would like to thank them all for their efforts

over this length of time. In particular we would like to thank the group's chairperson, Dorothy Stevenson, who has organised and volunteered at hundreds of fundraising events during her time with Mount Oriel Support Group.

Her passion and dedication has been truly inspiring. We wish Dorothy, Sadie, Susan and Dennis the very best in their retirement – they truly deserve it. We cannot thank you enough for your dedication to NICHHS.

THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS

NICHS receives support from many companies and organisations across Northern Ireland. These are just a small selection of the people we would like to thank.



Musgrave Retail Partners NI, which incorporates Mace and MarketPlace, raised a staggering £56,000 in year one of a three-year partnership through various fundraising activities: skydive, static cycle challenge, nail bar day and coffee mornings. They are planning more activities to include various marathons, a darts competition and Red Days in store in 2017.



Todd's Leap activity centre held its first ever 'Get to Muck' Mud Run in aid of NICHS and raised a wonderful £3,000. The course was an off road 5k run over various terrain and obstacles.



NICHS held a lunchtime walk to launch its 'Activity Works' Pilot Programme with **Business in the Community** which attracted over 100 walkers from local businesses in Belfast City Centre.



Balloch Hire announced a new Charity of the Year partnership with NICHS with plans to raise £20,000. Activities are planned throughout the year starting with an abseil!

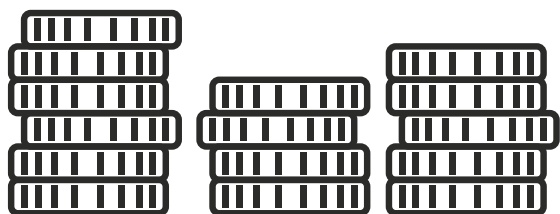


Randex Health sponsored the 2017 Healthcare Awards which took place at Stormont Hotel. A fantastic £1,205 was raised for NICHS as the chosen charity for the event.

THANKS TO OUR SPECIAL SUPPORTERS

The generosity of individuals across Northern Ireland continues to be the cornerstone of fundraising at NICHHS.

We would like to thank each and every one of our supporters. Your commitment to supporting our life enhancing services and life-saving research is inspirational.



Contributions via direct debit continue to increase amounting to almost £216k a year, enough to pay for eight months of our vital life enhancing Stroke Activity Groups. Payroll giving has also grown by over 8%, generating a significant £237k in income.

60 kind supporters

left a legacy of hope and care by donating gifts in their wills to NICHHS with income reaching a phenomenal £1.968m, which represents half its income. Without legacy gifts, NICHHS would not be able to support as many people as today.

We are exceedingly grateful to everyone who has already pledged or intends to leave their very own legacy of hope and care through a gift in their will to NICHHS.



CARE FUNDS: SUPPORTING WHAT'S CLOSE TO YOUR HEART

Generous supporters have given over £120k to a cause close to their hearts through NICHHS's Care Funds initiative launched in 2016.

Our Respiratory Care Fund has enabled 78 people affected by respiratory illnesses to learn how to manage their long-term health conditions better by taking part in our 'Taking Control' Self Management Programme.

£61k

Our Heart Care Fund has brought in almost £61k, a significant amount which could fund a complete Heart Research Project, such as research into the development of a supportive intervention for carers of people with advanced heart failure at Ulster University.

Our Stroke Care Fund has helped 92 people devastated by stroke attend our Stroke Activity Groups which provide specialist and peer support.

We're proud that 83p of every **£1** donated by supporters goes directly to help those devastated by respiratory, heart or stroke conditions and **17p** is spent sustaining the infrastructure that allows those support services to run smoothly and effectively.





WOULD YOU CONSIDER LEAVING A LEGACY GIFT?

Legacy gifts are hugely important and enable NICHS to continue its important work. After you've remembered those close to you, we hope you might consider leaving NICHS a gift in your will. Any amount, no matter how small, will be used to help us deliver our services into the heart of communities in Northern Ireland and will make sure we're always here for people who need us now and in the future.

In 2016, NICHS received a generous gift of £1,000 from Gloria Mullan for Bessbrook Stroke Activity Group. Gloria, a stroke survivor, had attended the group for several years, before sadly passing away in December 2015.

It is believed that Gloria's appreciation of her time within the group and the support she received, alongside her desire to help fellow stroke survivors, led her to make such a special and enduring gift.

Ann McAlinden, NICHS's Bessbrook Group Co-ordinator, says: "Bessbrook Stroke Activity Group has been coming together for 15 years. Group sessions radiate positivity and the fun participants have is palpable. Sessions are split into two parts; music sessions and chair-based exercises and ball games.

"Such activity is incredibly important with post-stroke recovery and help with co-ordination and movement, and although people sometimes find sessions tough, they always tell us they feel brilliant afterwards. There's always laughter.

"We are delighted to have been able to help Gloria and are grateful that her provision will allow us to help others in the future."

If you are interested in receiving information regarding making a Will or leaving a gift in your Will to NICHS, please contact Alison at NICHS on avidamour@nichs.org.uk

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Director of Care Services and Secondary Prevention

Mrs Fiona Greene

Public Health Director

Ms Fidelma Carter

Director of Fundraising

Mrs Kerry Anderson (to 09/06/17)

Mrs Jackie Trainor (from 21/08/17)

A full list of NICHS's members can be found at www.nichs.org.uk/whoweare

NICHs RECOGNISES THE LIFE OF FRANCES WILLEY

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Mrs Frances Willey in June 2016. Frances, along with many in her family, had the Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH) gene, which meant that she had an abnormally high level of cholesterol. Despite suffering a high instance of

ill health and loss within her family, Frances was always positive and determined. She joined NICHS in lobbying for cascade screening for families affected by Familial Hypercholesterolaemia. In November 2013, she went to Stormont and addressed the All Party Group on Heart Disease and Stroke. Her story and family tree, showing how FH affected her family, had a profound effect on the MLAs there, who wrote

to the then Health Minister, Edwin Poots, supporting the campaign. With her support, the campaign was successful and the Health and Social Care Board and the Trusts agreed that a Familial Hypercholesterolemia service should be launched. We convey our deepest sympathies to her family and pay tribute to her work.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke

Your Legacy Of Hope And Care - a gift in your Will to Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke

A gift in your Will to NICHHS could not only help your loved ones, but leave a legacy of hope for generations to come.

In Northern Ireland almost half of all adult deaths are caused by chest, heart and stroke illnesses. NICHHS are working to change this through funding research and caring for those who are affected by devastating health conditions every day.

A gift to us in your Will could be invested in critical local research that will change the future for families at risk from our biggest killers.

The smallest investment can lead to the biggest breakthrough.

Please visit our website to see how our Medical Research Programme has already supported groundbreaking projects and is committed to many more over the coming years. www.nichs.org.uk

For a leaflet or further information on leaving a legacy to NICHHS, please call us on: 028 9032 0184, or write to NICHHS Gifts in Wills, 21 Dublin Road, Belfast, BT2 7HB

Charity Reg No. NIC103593



CONTACT

Belfast
Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke
21 Dublin Road
Belfast
BT2 7HB
Tel: 028 9032 0184

mail@nichs.org.uk
www.nichs.org.uk

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