

BE INSPIRED!

**Improving the health of
homeless people**

**Research – our
investment in the future**

Events calendar 2015

**Chest
Heart &
Stroke**

Inside Be Inspired!

Meet Sarah Perry	3
Research – our investment in the future	4-5
Health Checks – A barometer of health	6-7
Improving the health of homeless people	8-9
Events Round up	10-11
Community Round Up	12-13
Corporate News	14
Calendar of Events 2015	15

If you would like to update your name, address or other details please contact our Supporter Care Team on **028 9032 0184**.

Cover image: NICHS's Sarah Perry shows John, a Health and Homeless Service User from a Belfast hostel how to prepare a healthy meal.

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Meet Sarah Perry, NICHS Health & Homeless Co-ordinator



Sarah Perry, NICHS Health & Homeless Co-ordinator.

"I have been working at NICHS as the Health and Homeless Co-ordinator for eight years and have enjoyed every minute of this invaluable work. I work in homeless hostels, homeless drop in centres and linked support groups in the Belfast and South Eastern Trust areas. My role involves providing healthy information, support and signposting services to homeless people. Our Health and Homeless Programme delivers a broad range of services with the central focus on the prevention of chest, heart and stroke illnesses.

Many of our homeless service users come from areas of high deprivation or have been marginalised for other reasons. Very often they don't use health services and therefore may not be prioritising their health. This makes them more susceptible to respiratory or cardiac illnesses. Providing a service that comes to them, in a location they feel comfortable in, is crucial. It means we can actually reach people in need; that they have access to and will actively use and benefit from the services we provide.

One of the elements to this job that means a great deal to me is seeing people making healthier choices and passing this information on to others they meet, such as friends and family. I've found that especially rewarding.

Over the years I have seen first hand that many of the people we work with make great use of the information we have provided and have even used it to help others within their groups. A great example of this was the "Cook It" Programme which focused on preparing affordable and healthy food. After we'd finished the sessions, one of the group continued the programme for many weeks. This not only meant there was a continued focus on nutrition and value for money but there were great opportunities for the group to learn from each other and reduced feelings of isolation."

You can read more about our Health & Homeless Programme on pages 8 & 9.



Research – our investment in the future

Over the past 19 years, thanks to the generosity of our donors and gifts made in Wills, we have invested more than £6.6m in research in our hospitals and universities here in Northern Ireland. We have supported 72 research projects, resulting in some notable advances in the prevention, treatment and ultimately better care for people living with chest, heart and stroke conditions.

Here's just a few of our seminal projects:

Leading the way on asthma

We have funded 21 research projects at the Centre of Infection and Immunity at Queens University, Belfast. Much of this research has focused on difficult-to-treat asthma patients. Around 1 in 10 of those affected fell into this category and were in fact at a high risk of dying from this widespread respiratory condition.

Sleep breakthrough

NICHS has funded sleep apnoea research at Belfast City Hospital. Sleep apnoea is characterised by interrupted breathing during sleep. It results in several physical effects, including reduced oxygen in the blood supply to the heart, which increases people's risk of cardiovascular disease. Thanks to this key piece of research, sleep clinics have been implemented and a Regional Lead Consultant in Sleep established.

Unlocking mystery of genetic disorder

Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH) is a genetic condition that condemns generations of families to abnormally high cholesterol in the bloodstream, leading to the premature development of coronary heart disease. An estimated 3,600 people in Northern Ireland live with FH, but not all have been identified or diagnosed. Our research into the disorder, together with our start-up funding for the first ever FH screening service, has led to changes in clinical guidelines and put FH on the health and political agenda. The Northern Ireland-wide FH screening service, launched this year means hundreds of lives will be changed for the better and many lives may be saved.

Biggest ever stroke trial

NICHS is funding the Northern Ireland part of a very early randomised controlled trial (AVERT) which is anticipated to change practice in the treatment of stroke worldwide. It is the largest stroke rehabilitation trial ever conducted. Once completed, it will hopefully provide clear evidence to transform the training of health professionals in dealing with the critical early stages of recovery, resulting in better care for the patient.

And not forgetting...

The Baby Hearts Research Project

This groundbreaking study is currently researching into why some babies are born with congenital heart disease. By discovering the reasons why, doctors will be able to put in place guidelines and treatments to help prevent congenital heart disease. Last year thanks to the generosity of our donors we were able to raise an amazing £172,000 to fully fund this major 3 year research project, which is being carried out at the University of Ulster in conjunction with the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

Many thanks to our very generous supporters who have made this sizeable investment in research possible, for people all across Northern Ireland and even beyond these shores.

Health checks - a barometer of health

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. As part of our prevention programme, we have redefined our health checks to incorporate new technology and the latest clinical knowledge. These comprehensive health checks now measure blood pressure, cholesterol and body composition, including water content, muscle mass, fat mass and visceral fat, which is fat around the vital organs, and lifestyle risks.

Since we launched these new health checks in October 2014, we have delivered them to 558 people across Northern Ireland. Of the people who have attended health checks, we were pleased to see that almost twice the number of men attended our sessions as women. As men are notoriously bad at attending health checks this was a very good result!

With the new health checks, we have identified a sizeable number of people with undiagnosed risk factors such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol.

"A health check with Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke showed me that my blood pressure was dangerously high and I was at risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Thanks to NICHHS I went to my GP and now my blood pressure is under control."



NICHHS's health promotion nurse Maureen McCourt takes Judith Cochrane's blood pressure. July 2014.



A cholesterol measurement being taken.

"I feel it is an invaluable service which reaches out to many people who perceive themselves to be well and don't attend their GP for screening."

31.6% of people who attended our health checks were referred to their GP with high blood pressure and 38% were referred with high cholesterol. Without our health checks, these risks might not have been spotted and a cardiovascular episode may have been suffered.

We have also received some great feedback about our service that we wanted to share with you.

"On behalf of our general practice I would like to thank you for all of your support with our men's health evening. We have had lots of positive feedback."

Northern Ireland Electricity reported that their employees thoroughly enjoyed the talks and the company hopes to run this again in future. They usually find it hard to get employees to engage with health and well-being programmes so we were delighted to be so successful with our service.

It is of course thanks to our committed and generous supporters, who help make these health checks possible.

If you would like to know more about the Health Check Services we offer, please contact us on healthpromotion@nichs.org.uk or call **028 9032 0184**.

Improving the Health of Homeless People



Learning about the benefits of a healthy diet. November 2014.

some of the poorest health outcomes and inequalities in our community. Homeless people who sleep rough have an average life expectancy of 47 years, compared to 77 years for the general population.

Our Health and Homeless Programme works with people living in hostels and assisted living accommodation. It has links to 12 homeless groups and more than 50 hostels with over 500 people benefitting from our health promotion services every year. We provide a range of healthcare services and raise awareness of healthy living to ultimately prevent cardiovascular and respiratory illness.

We use innovative and sensitive ways to improve awareness of healthy living - providing dietary advice, cooking skills training, smoking cessation and employment signposting. We also provide complementary theories and personal grooming sessions. Health fairs at hostels and drop-in centres are also popular. They provide an opportunity for residents to access nurses, pharmacists and health professionals for medical advice and signposting to other medical services. The fact is that homeless people are

more vulnerable to chest, heart and stroke illnesses and are often not registered with a GP.

Our Health and Homeless Services are delivered by Sarah Perry, NICHSS's Health and Homeless Co-ordinator who develops tailored sessions for each group in conjunction with the support of hostel or venue staff. Everyone who works on the programme is fully trained in their field and has a vast amount of experience of working in the area of homelessness.

We regularly receive very positive feedback about our services which is really rewarding. We know how valuable our work is as we see people changing their lifestyles and choosing healthier options following the Health and Homeless Programme.

If you would like to help people who are most vulnerable to chest, heart and stroke illness please support our Health and Homeless Programme by making a donation. Please use the response slip and return envelope enclosed with this newsletter.

"Health and Homeless made a big difference for me because I was at a really low ebb and wasn't looking after myself. They gave me great information and got me involved in the events and told me about other people who could help me with my conditions."

Jim B. Ex Service User

The vast majority of people reading this article will be doing so in the comfort of their own home. But the sad reality for many thousands of people right here in Northern Ireland is they have no home and are living in hostels, 'sofa surfing' or even worse, living on the streets. People may become homeless for many reasons. It may be due to mental health issues, economic problems such as job losses and financial difficulties or sometimes it may be due to family break ups or bereavement.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke has been working with the homeless community for almost 12 years helping over 6,000 people in greatest need. From our experience we know homeless people experience



Sarah leading the group in a healthy walk. November 2014.

Events Round Up



Left to right Jason Maguire, Andrew Hutchinson & David Bowman.



David Rowe receives his certificate after completing his 13,000 feet parachute jump.

Andrew Hutchinson

Andrew Hutchinson, the Managing Director of CP Hire, recently took on his first ever marathon in support of NICHS and in memory of his brother Jonathan and father-in-law Alan. Andrew explained his decision to take on this challenge, "A few months before my brother 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's Jonathan's ten year anniversary this year so I thought I'd give the marathon a go". With the help of his sister Katie, he organised his own marathon from Castlerock to Portstewart and has raised over **£18,000** for both Marie Curie and NICHS, with an incredible total of **£11,000** going towards NICHS - what an achievement!

David Rowe

We would like to say a massive thank you to David Rowe, 71, from the Upperlands, Maghera who recently completed a Skydive in memory of his wife Averil. Averil suffered from COPD and regularly attended the NICHS Respiratory Support Group in Magherafelt Hospital. When Averil passed away last January, David decided to do something positive in her memory and take on a parachute jump. He said "If it helps other people in the same predicament, I'll give them every penny I get". David described the Skydive as, "Absolutely gorgeous, the view was amazing. I could see for miles". He has currently raised over **£7,000** for NICHS. Thank you David!



Horatio Group colleagues help to launch NICHS's Titanic Challenge Walk. July 2014.

NICHS Challenge Walks

NICHS's first ever Challenge Walks at the Titanic Quarter and the Causeway Coast in September were a huge success! They were fantastic days out, with a brilliant atmosphere and we couldn't have asked for better weather. Over 150 brave souls took part across the two walks. Participants included 40 staff members from the Horatio Group who took part in the Titanic Walk in memory of their much-loved

colleague Kevin Dorothy who sadly passed away in December 2013. Thank you to everyone who took part and put the time and effort into fundraising. We are delighted to say that, thanks to you, the marathon walks are on track to raise over **£10,000**. Keep an eye out for our update on NICHS Challenge Walks for 2015.

Community Round Up

Thank you!



Members of the Orchard County Vintage Vehicle Club present a cheque to Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke in October 2014.

Remarkable Rallies

The Orchard County Vintage Vehicle Club presented NICHS with a cheque for £1,125 after their Vintage Rally and Fun Day in May 2014. The Club has been running this annual event for 24 years, raising an incredible **£150,000** towards the work of NICHS and its other two chosen charities!

In June, a Family Fun Day and Vintage Rally was held in Portglenone. The event included a display of vintage vehicles, along with a rally of tractors and cars through the centre of the village. The event was organised by Paul Hill in memory of his father and was successful in raising **£4,300**. Its popularity has ensured it will become a valued annual event for NICHS.

Birthday Celebrations

Ken McVicker and his twin daughters Claire and Karen all share the same birthday. This year they held a celebration in The Hedges Hotel & Restaurant in Ballymoney raising money for NICHS. The concert and ballot on the night raised a grand total of **£4,250**. A big thank you to the McVicker Family!

Good things come in threes and this summer Lurgan triplets, Sean McStay, Aileen McKeever and Mairead McQuillan celebrated their 50th birthday in style. The triplets held a birthday bash and were successful in raising **£550** for NICHS by asking for donations to charities instead of gifts.

NICHS would like to thank everyone who has donated in lieu of gifts this year. Collectively you have already raised an incredible **£25,000** for our work!

Cycle for Sean

Not long after the Giro D'Italia, Brendan Martin, his brother Ryan and friend Michael Crossan organised a series of fundraising events, culminating in their own mammoth cycle from Belfast to London. The events were all organised in memory of their Uncle Sean, who sadly passed away the previous year, following a major heart attack.

The cycle was a great success and 6 months on, a total of **£4,000** has been raised by Brendan, his family and his friends. Well done to everyone who supported the event and the cyclists who went the distance for Sean!

Superb Support Groups

NICHS's dedicated Fundraising Support Groups organise a diverse range of events and activities every year to raise much needed money for our work. Recent successes include Kilkeel's Christmas Fayre and Causeway's Ten Pin Bowling Event.

NICHS also recently received a large donation from our Fermanagh Support Group, raised through activities and events including the annual Erne Hospital Ball. We would like to say a huge thank you to each and every support group member, along with all our other fundraising volunteers - we couldn't manage without you!

Corporate News

Caring Merchant holds tea party for local carers

The Merchant Hotel held a special tea party for 25 carers who look after loved ones with a chest, heart or stroke condition.

Ashu Kumar (pictured), Operations Manager at The Merchant Hotel, welcomed the group and Fiona Greene, (pictured centre) Director of Care and Secondary Prevention for NICHs, commented,

“Carers spend their time looking after others, often putting their own needs second. It is lovely to be able to give them a real treat here today in these beautiful surroundings, plus the opportunity to chat to other people who are also carers.”



Ashu Kumar, Operations Manager at The Merchant Hotel with NICHs staff and carers. November 2014.

We would like to say a huge thank you to The Merchant Hotel for their on-going support of NICHs.

NICHs runs Carers' Groups across Northern Ireland. Anyone who is looking after a loved one with a chest, heart or stroke condition and wants someone to talk to can contact them on **028 9032 0184**.

IOD continues support of designated charity

The recent Institute of Directors Annual Lunch raised a fabulous **£2,000** for NICHs. The event was supported by over 150 business attendees who also heard from guest speaker Nigel Walker, National Director of the English Institute of Sport.



Declan Cunnane (NICHs) pictured with Nigel Walker, National Director of the English Institute of Sport, who recently addressed the Institute of Directors. November 2014.



Calendar of Events

Hell and Back	Sunday 25 January 2015
Hell and Back	Sunday 1 February 2015
Benone Run to Remember	Saturday 14 March 2015
Great Ireland Run	Sunday 5 April 2015
Mud Madness	Sunday 19 April 2015
Belfast City Marathon	Monday 4 May 2015
RunHer Coastal Challenge	Friday 22 May 2015
Walled City Marathon	Sunday 31 May 2015
Ireland Coast to Coast Cycle	10-14 June 2015
Lisburn Half Marathon	Wednesday 17 June 2015
Ards Half Marathon	Friday 26 June 2015
Cookstown Half Marathon	Monday 27 July 2015
Colour Run	Sunday 23 August 2015
Lap the Lough	Sunday 30 August 2015
Great North Run	Sunday 13 September 2015
Waterside Half Marathon	Sunday 13 September 2015
NICHs Causeway Challenge Walk	Saturday 26 September 2015
Dublin Marathon	Monday 26 October 2015
Run in the Dark	Wednesday 11 November 2015
Tollymore Challenge Walk	Saturday 14 November 2015
Slieve Donard Challenge	Set your own date
NICHs Parachute Jump	Set your own date

Calling all runners!

Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon is our biggest Run to Remember fundraiser! Last year over 350 amazing supporters walked, ran and relayed for NICHs and raised a whopping £40,000! It's Northern Ireland's largest and best known event. Every local runner has it on their to do list as it has something for everyone. You can walk 8 miles, fun run 3 miles, take on the biggy 26.2 mile marathon or split it up with friends and be part of our relay team. Join us for this year's Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon and help us beat 2014's total fundraising!

For further information or to sign up to any of our events visit www.nichs.org.uk or call Cheryl on **028 9032 0184**.



Run to
Remember

Chest
Heart &
Stroke

Sunset Run

Benone Strand

10km/5km

14th March 2015

www.nichs.org.uk/benone