

The Review

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

Chest
Heart &
Stroke



Chairman's Statement



I would like to welcome Declan Cunnane to his new role as Chief Executive. I am confident that Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke is well

placed to face the challenges that lie ahead under his leadership.

We are now in Year 2 of our three-year Strategic Plan, carrying out our mission to prevent chest, heart and stroke illnesses in Northern Ireland and caring for those affected by them. We have a clear vision of the way forward and how we intend to extend our services across Northern Ireland.

I am pleased that we have successfully registered with

the independent regulator for charities, the Charity Commission for NI. The Commission will ensure that we continue to meet public expectations and fulfil our obligations in an open and transparent way.

There are many challenges facing the new Health Minister and the Health Service in Northern Ireland. We will ensure that the voice of the people we support is heard in any reform of services arising out of the forthcoming review.

2016 is a very special year for us, as it marks our 70th anniversary. From an organisation started by 16 volunteers on 14th June 1946 to help eradicate tuberculosis and support those suffering from it, Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke has grown into the largest carer for

people living with chest, heart and stroke conditions in Northern Ireland.

It is with profound regret that I report the passing of Sam McClelland. After he retired as Director of Nursing in the Eastern Health and Social Services Board, Sam came to Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke, firstly as an employee for nine years and then for many years thereafter as a volunteer.

Finally I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to my colleagues on the Board and the volunteers and staff for their hard work, commitment and belief in the work of Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke. 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 Statement



I am delighted to have been appointed as Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke.

Like all charities we face some major challenges. We are conscious that we are operating in an era of increased scrutiny, major changes to the health service, reduced public funding, new technology and of course a challenging economic environment.

We are meeting these challenges head on by working to the highest standards possible. We successfully renewed our Investors in Volunteers accreditation during the year. We were also delighted to receive a certificate of best practice

in medical research from the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC).

We continue to roll out our Post Rehabilitation Exercise Programme (PREP) and it is now available in all Health and Social Care Trust areas. It is a testament to the value of this programme that so many people who have been through the service now volunteer for us.

We ran a very successful STOP Campaign during 2015 to raise awareness of the symptoms of a heart attack and to highlight the importance of ringing 999 as soon as a heart attack is suspected. Such was the positive coverage, we have rerun it in 2016.

We also campaigned for a ban on smoking in cars with children. Our

campaign had significant cross-party support and the ban became law.

We remain extremely grateful for the continuing generosity of the public. Our income continues to grow and in particular our legacy income exceeded £2 million, the highest amount in our history.

When I took up my new role I cycled 300km around Northern Ireland visiting our support groups where I met so many inspirational people; our service users, volunteers and fundraisers. I witnessed firsthand the great work that we do. But I was also struck by the genuine affection the people of Northern Ireland have for their local charity, Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke.

Declan Cunnane
Chief Executive

WHEELY HEALTHY PLAN TO MEET STAFF

Our newly-appointed Chief Executive visited staff, volunteers and service users around Northern Ireland – using only pedal power!



The Omagh Wheelers give Declan's bike the once over

Declan Cunnane, who became Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke in October 2015, covered 300 kilometres by bike over the course of a week in what's been dubbed by colleagues as Declan's B-Spoke Tour.

He said: "NICHS has 48 support services helping over 500 people every week – so what better way for me to fully appreciate the value of what the charity does, keep up my fitness levels and raise vital funds at the same time? The 300km cycle was a great opportunity to engage with the people involved in our research, those who support our campaigns, fundraisers and local businesses."

The trip started with a visit to NICHS's Respiratory Support Group at Belfast City Hospital. This group has 15 weekly members including Paddy Lynas from west Belfast who hit his lowest point after being diagnosed with the lung disease COPD and being affected by the deaths of close family members. His life has been transformed by regular walking after being encouraged by the group to take it up.

After Belfast, Declan headed north to Antrim and Coleraine and continued his journey to Limavady, Derry~Londonderry, Omagh, Craigavon, Lisburn and Bessbrook before his return to head office.

Declan's verdict on the week? "This has been an amazing, rewarding, humbling and tiring week. I have cycled nearly 300 kilometres and have met almost 300 people – people who use our support services, staff, volunteers, people who raise money for us, researchers, mayors, MLAs and the general public. I have learnt so much about how chest, heart and stroke conditions affect people's lives and it has made me more determined to ensure that NICHS cares for them in the future and works to prevent others becoming ill. That is one of the reasons I did the cycle to tell people that by regular physical activity they can reduce their risk of becoming ill."

"The 300km cycle was a great opportunity to engage with the people involved in our research, those who support our campaigns, fundraisers and local businesses."

70 Chest Heart & Stroke YEARS ON YOUR SIDE

SEVEN DECADES OF CARE

This year we celebrate our 70th anniversary. We began life as the local branch of the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, but quickly expanded our work.

Our work was started by 16 volunteers who were concerned that local deaths from tuberculosis were the highest in the UK.

In June 1946 Northern Ireland had just enjoyed one year of peace following the end of the Second World War.



Rationing was still in place. Rations were well balanced in terms of nutrition and the smaller, but adequate, portion sizes meant that in general people were fit and healthy. Some families who had gardens or lived in rural areas were able to supplement their rations by growing vegetables. However, families who lived in built-up inner-city areas could not grow their own vegetables, and so found it harder to have a healthy balanced diet.

Many parts of Belfast were still to be rebuilt after the 1941 Blitz and homelessness was a growing issue. Servicemen who returned from the War with physical disabilities or battle fatigue, as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder was then known, found it difficult to get employment. The stress on families meant that the number of divorces spiked immediately after the war, which put additional pressure on families' incomes and increased poverty.

Even before the War, Northern Ireland was seen by the Government as an area of deprivation, with more poverty than other areas of the United Kingdom. The evacuation that followed the Blitz in 1941 meant that some families, and especially children, from the most deprived inner-city areas of Belfast were moved to the country. The host families that they went to stay with were often shocked by the state of the children – the only foods they knew were bread and tea, they had no spare clothes or no shoes, they had never seen a knife or fork, or even a table before. Many children were not used to having an indoor toilet. For the first time the deprivation that existed in some areas of Northern Ireland became apparent to the general public.

Tuberculosis had been in Ireland since the 1600s. The disease reached its peak in England and Wales in 1850 and in Scotland by 1870. However, by 1901 it was still on the increase in Ireland. Northern Ireland had the highest death rate from TB of any region of the United Kingdom.



TB is caused by a mycobacterium and spreads between people by coughing, breathing and breastfeeding. The disease was able to spread more easily in poorer areas, where whole families might be suffering from malnutrition, living in one room and sharing one bed.

It was in this post-war Northern Ireland that 16 volunteers decided to set up a local branch of the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. They held their first meeting at 5.30pm on Friday 14th June 1946 in a borrowed room on William Street South in Belfast, and so the organisation that we know today as Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke began.

Their first act was to organise a public meeting to educate people about TB. Within three months they had agreed that as well as disseminating information about the disease, the organisation should also become involved in the welfare of people already suffering from TB. The aims have stayed remarkably unchanged over the past 70 years. Nowadays our mission is to prevent chest, heart and stroke illnesses in Northern Ireland and care for those affected by them. Today, the charity has 65 staff and 450 volunteers and tackles the illnesses that claim nearly half of all lives in Northern Ireland.

We became the NI Chest and Heart Association in 1959 and the NI Chest, Heart and Stroke Association in 1976. In seven decades we have:

- Contributed to a 60% decrease in coronary heart deaths
- Been instrumental in the establishment of dedicated stroke units in hospitals
- Funded ground-breaking research in our universities, which has included the discovery of genes for high cholesterol that are unique to County Tyrone
- Created a comprehensive network of support groups for stroke survivors, including a pioneering programme for stroke survivors who have completed their statutory rehabilitation, which has been rolled out across all five Trusts
- Developed an innovative "Health and Homeless" programme to reach some of the most vulnerable in our community
- Established our "Chester's Challenge" schools programme that teaches primary aged children about nutrition, physical activity and the dangers of smoking
- Funded the establishment of the first screening service for Familial Hypercholesterolaemia, or FH, identifying people at risk of developing heart disease in their teens and 20s

"We have been at the forefront of the battle against the biggest health risks Northern Ireland



has faced in the last 70 years," said the charity's Chief Executive, Declan Cunnane. **"But the battle is far from over. The fact that many more people are surviving heart attack and stroke, and living with respiratory conditions, means that our support services for families are in more demand than ever before."**

"We pride ourselves on being the only local charity tackling heart disease, stroke and lung disease. In seven decades, every penny we have raised has been spent in Northern Ireland for the benefit of local people."

NI Chest Heart & Stroke currently spends £350,000 a year on research in local hospitals and universities. Our programme of health checks will reach 2,000 people this year. Our figures show that half of the people we assess are at risk of developing chest, heart or stroke illnesses. We also lobby for health legislation. We were instrumental in the passage of the Tobacco Retailers Bill, which prevents the sale of cigarettes to under 18s. We successfully campaigned for a ban on smoking in cars carrying children and continue to push for other health measures, such as using money raised from the sugar tax to tackle childhood obesity.

Said Declan Cunnane: "If our 16 founding volunteers could see what we've achieved in seven decades, they would be very proud. They started with a vision to eradicate TB but their work expanded to include other killer illnesses. They changed Northern Ireland for the better – a job we intend to continue in the next 70 years."

Who knows what the next 70 years will bring? Our vision is a Northern Ireland free from chest, heart and stroke illnesses. We want to prevent these conditions through research, health promotion and calling on government for healthy policies, but in the meantime, we will care for those already living with these conditions. Our promise to the people of Northern Ireland is that we will continue to be on your side.

1940s & 50s

1946



Started as the Northern Ireland Branch of the National Association for Prevention of Tuberculosis on 14th June 1946 with 16 volunteers.

We now have around 450 volunteers and 65 members of staff.

Organised public meetings to spread health messages regarding TB.

Today we organise health promotion campaigns about stroke, heart disease and COPD.



First Christmas Appeal selling Christmas seals (stickers).

Nowadays we need to raise £3m per year to do our work. 80% of this comes from the general public so our Christmas Appeal is still very important.

1947

Set up an Advice Bureau to give support to TB patients.

Our co-ordinators still give support and advice to people living with long-term health conditions, supporting over 4,000 people each year.

1948

Sent a deputation to the Minister of Labour and National Insurance about issues affecting TB patients.

Campaigning at Assembly level for new laws and policies is still a key part of our work.



1951

Organised handicrafts as therapy for patients in the TB sanatoria.



Art, crafts, music, drama, reading and exercises are still an important part of therapy in our support groups.

1955

Started working in partnership with the Northern Ireland Tuberculosis Authority on after-care for people leaving sanatoria.

Still working closely with today's health professionals and the Trusts to develop and deliver new programmes.

1957

Distributed 10,000 anti-smoking blotters to schools in Belfast.

We still inform children about the dangers of smoking through our Chester's Challenge Schools Programme.



1958

First research grant given – £35 to Dr Knox for equipment to use in research into Chronic Bronchitis.

We now spend £300,000 per annum on research projects carried out at Queen's or Ulster University and our local hospitals.



1959

Name changed to The Northern Ireland Chest and Heart Association.

1960s, 70s & 80s



1963

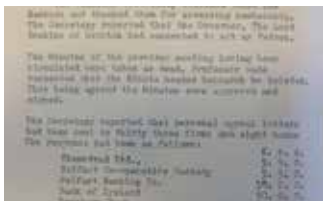
Started to look at expanding fundraising to be more than the Christmas Appeal.

Across Northern Ireland people raise thousands of pounds for us through a wide range of events, including our Step Up events, new for 2016.



1965

First appeal letters sent to large industrial firms and banks in NI – £210 received from six companies, almost £4,000 in today's money.



We now have around 30 local companies supporting us and raising over £150,000 each year.

1966

First mention of donations in lieu of flowers in the records – £87 in memory of the late John Galbraith.

Nowadays families and friends across Northern Ireland donate around £230,000 per year in lieu of flowers.

1969

Scholarship scheme for specialised training for nurses.

Pharmacy and social work students now meet with members of our support groups to understand what it is like living with a health condition.

1971

Ireland and British Lions rugby star, Willie John McBride, took part in a BBC broadcast.



We still have support from local sports stars and celebrities, such as rugby player Chris Henry, singer Malachi Cush and Miss Ireland 2015, Sacha Livingstone.

1973

First Stroke Club set up in East Belfast.

We now have 28 Stroke and Young Stroke Activity Groups all across Northern Ireland.

More than £14,000 (over £120,000 today) was left to the organisation in people's wills during 1973.

In 2015/16 we received over £2,000,000 from people who remembered us in their wills.

1976

Name changed to The Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Association.

1978

First fundraising support groups established.

We now have eight fundraising support groups, organising local events and raising money for us.

1984

NICHS was the first ever Charity of the Year for Belfast City Marathon.

Nowadays around 1,000 people take part in the Belfast City Marathon and other running events to raise money for us each year.

NI Coronary Prevention Group set up under the auspices of NICHS.

NICHS helps organise the All Party Group on Heart Disease and Stroke at Stormont.

1985

Building on Dublin Road purchased.

The building was destroyed after a break in and fire in 2003. It was rebuilt and reopened in 2006.



1987

First Cardiac Support Group established.

NICHS offers support to the Cardiac Support Groups in Northern Ireland.

We offered cholesterol measurements to people attending the Ideal Home Exhibition.

We carry out around 2,000 health and blood pressure checks each year, offering advice and information.

1990s TO NOW

1994

First dedicated Stroke Family Support Co-ordinator is employed.



The original Stroke Family Support Co-ordinator is still with us and is now part of a team of 12 who cover all of Northern Ireland.

1997

Young Stroke Scheme established.

We now have seven Young Stroke Activity Groups dotted around Northern Ireland.



1998

First Highway to Health established in Strabane.



There are now 67 routes across Northern Ireland.

2001

First Carers' Group set up.

We now have six Carers' Groups across Northern Ireland.



2002

Health and Homeless Programme developed alongside the Simon Community.

The average life expectancy is 47 for a homeless man and 43 for a homeless woman. Our Health and Homeless Programme works with around 800 people each year.



2004

Schools Work began with Chester's Playground Games.

We now reach over 2,000 pupils each year with health talks and our Chester's Challenge programme for primary schools.



2006

North West Office opened.

2007

"Taking Control" Self Management Programme first delivered by NICHs.

Over 1,100 people have taken part in around 100 programmes since 2007.



NICHs extended its work to include Respiratory Support Groups.

There are now 20 groups in the Respiratory Support Network.

2010

Post-Rehab Exercise Programme (PREP) for stroke survivors developed alongside the Southern Trust.



PREP now rolled out across all five Health and Social Care Trusts.

2013

Community Health Champions trained in two areas of Belfast.

Community Health Champions continue to work in their own communities spreading health messages.

2016

Each year we need to raise £3m – and most of that comes from people like you. With your help we can make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of local people.

MAP OF SERVICES

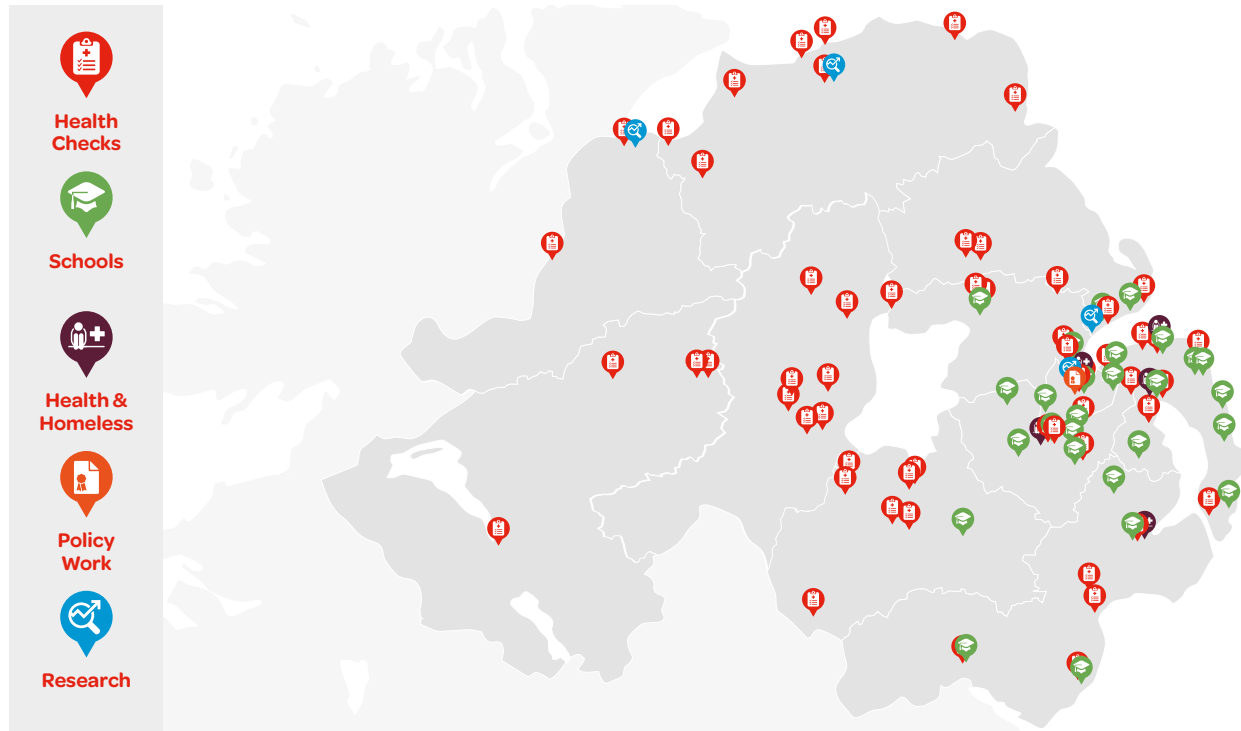
Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke works to prevent chest, heart and stroke illnesses in Northern Ireland and care for those affected by them. These maps show the extent of the services we offer.

In these maps:

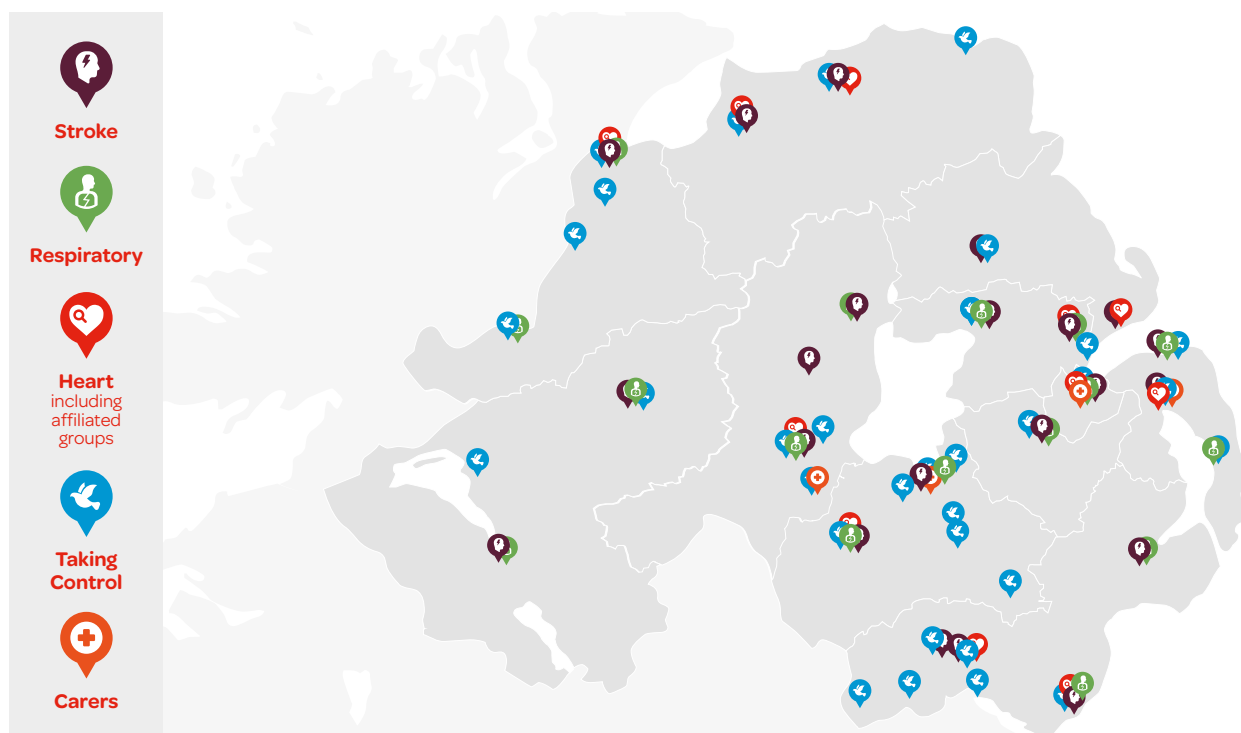
Prevention – health promotion work in schools, business and in the community, research.

Care – support groups and programmes for people living with chest, heart and stroke conditions.

Prevention Services



Care Services





THREE DECADES OF ACHIEVEMENT

Andrew Dougal stepped down as Chief Executive of NICHHS in October 2015 after more than 30 years in the job. Here is a brief rundown of the milestones the charity reached under his leadership.

Within six years of Andrew Dougal's appointment, the charity's income had increased tenfold. By the time of his departure to become Chairman of the Public Health Agency, income had increased by 42 times in absolute terms and by 14 times after inflation.

Despite much scepticism among some health service personnel, Andrew managed to persuade our then Chairman Dr Roger Lowry that we should accept nutrition as a possible risk factor for coronary heart disease. This set the direction for much of our prevention work in the 1980s and 90s.

In Co. Fermanagh in 1985, consultant cardiologist and future Chairman Prof Mahen Varma established a mobile screening unit each Thursday outside the mart. This identified many people at high risk of heart attack and stroke.

Prof Alun Evans had the vision to establish a group within the charity to draw up a strategy for prevention. This was led by the late Dr Dennis Boyle.

After much lobbying, in 1987 Health Minister Sir Richard Needham, along with the Secretary of State, launched the Northern Ireland Change of Heart programme. This led to huge investment in prevention and to the establishment of the NI Health Promotion Agency.

That same year, NICHHS launched health assessments to identify people with risk factors for heart disease.

In 1989, Andrew Dougal organised a consensus conference on the treatment of stroke. Some staff in hospitals, without any additional resources, established stroke units, led by Dr Ken Fullerton in Lurgan and Dr Jim Kelly in Enniskillen. In the early 1990s, Northern Ireland had the highest density of stroke units in the UK.

Dr Michael Power established a working group which drew up a stroke strategy. A stroke strategy was finally approved by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland in 2008.

One of our biggest successes under Andrew Dougal's leadership was in 1991, when we undertook a campaign to increase greatly the number of heart operations available in Northern Ireland. People were dying on the waiting list and the condition of many patients deteriorated greatly. After a series of meetings with Ministers of Health, the number of cardiac surgical teams was increased from three to seven, drastically reducing the waiting list.

In July 2014 it was announced that the number of premature deaths from coronary heart disease in Northern Ireland had declined by 59% in the previous 30 years.

JENNY ARCHER

THE ORIGINAL STROKE CO-ORDINATOR

In 1971, the Executive Committee of NICHHS had a meeting with Dr George Adams, a consultant in geriatric medicine at Belfast City Hospital and Professor of Geriatric medicine at Queen's University. Dr Adams, a pioneer in stroke medicine, felt that there were many ways in which the statutory and voluntary sectors could assist stroke survivors for whom there was little continuing rehabilitation after they left hospital.

This meeting led to the development of one of the core parts of NICHHS's Care Services, its Stroke Support Groups, and Jenny Archer was the first Stroke Group Organiser.

Jenny was a Senior Physiotherapist and had experience of working in stroke units. She was the first clinician employed by the organisation as a member of staff. Previous health care professionals had been volunteers. Her task was to work with the small number of Stroke Clubs which had already been formed by volunteers and to lay the foundations of new ones across Northern Ireland. She also continued with her clinical work.

The two main Belfast meetings were held in the Joss Cardwell Centre on the Holywood Road and in Malone Presbyterian Church. There was also a large group meeting in Larne. The Joss Cardwell meeting was held on Sunday afternoons and 100 people with chest, heart and stroke conditions attended. The weekend timing suited Jenny because her husband could look after their children. She also enlisted her father and mother to help out, as well as the husbands and wives of the people attending the group.

Jenny organised a wide range of activities for the group. As a physiotherapist, physical exercises were top of the list, as were breathing exercises, because many of the clients had respiratory conditions. Different speakers visited the groups – clinical experts, dieticians, chiropodists and beauticians.

Bands came to play and artists came to encourage clients to paint and draw. Jenny's mother organised an art competition and presented a cup for the winner each year. Many of the stroke survivors practised their art using their unaffected hand even if it was not the dominant hand, so it was a real effort but much enjoyed and very important to the recovery process.



The groups also went on holidays, with Social Services providing the buses and drivers. Making sure everyone was collected and transported safely to the holiday destination, perhaps as far away as Butlin's Holiday Camp in Dublin, was a challenge.

On one occasion, they arrived at their accommodation to find there were not enough beds, so Jenny and her father had to drive around collecting borrowed beds and mattresses, transporting them to Carnfunnock outside Larne strapped to the roof of her Cortina car.

In the five years Jenny was with the organisation, she founded new groups in Ballymena, Coleraine, Larne and Newtownabbey. As a clinician, she also gave lectures to doctors and nurses on rehabilitation and what stroke survivors needed to help them adapt to life at home.

More than 40 years later, Jenny is still a practising physiotherapist with her own practice in Bangor. In addition to studying for a Master of Art degree at Queen's University in Medical Ethics and Law, specifically on the subject of Primary Stroke Prevention, she cares for her mother who is now 97 and lives with her. She looks back very fondly on her time with the stroke clubs and still has a keen interest in stroke care and prevention. She hopes to make use of her research into stroke prevention to benefit the increasing numbers of stroke survivors in the world today.

TIME TO CARE

Volunteers are the lifeblood of many charities – we simply could not provide our range of services without them. However, as our Volunteer Development Co-ordinator Anne Norrie explains, there are also benefits and rewards for volunteers in what they do.



"As Volunteer Development Co-ordinator I have the privilege of seeing first hand how essential volunteers are to supporting the work of Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke (NICHS) either by fundraising, assisting with office work or at our care services groups.

"At our care services groups, volunteers help people with their communication skills, social interaction and to participate in the various organised activities.

"I have seen the impact this assistance and encouragement has had on the people we support and have also seen volunteers emotionally moved by the feedback they have received about the difference they have made to the lives of these people and their carers.

"Many of those who have benefited from our work want to "give something back" and recently we have seen an increase in them moving on from our services to become volunteers themselves.

"Within NICHS we have many varied and flexible volunteer roles, with one that has been very popular in the last year being office work."

If you are interested in volunteering, contact Anne Norrie on 028 9026 6707 or email anorrie@nichs.org.uk. Talk to us to find out if we have a role matching your particular skills or abilities. If you are in education, remember that volunteering also looks impressive on your CV!

This poem has been written by Lyn Bulgin, who has been a volunteer for over 20 years, about why she began volunteering and what it means to her.

THE CHEST HEART & STROKE VOLUNTEER

Chest Heart & Stroke, did I hear you say
I remember it clearly as though t'were yesterday
In lieu of flowers, Dad said as Mum had just died
They'll help others like her, it was then my Daddy cried.

My life was very busy, 25 years just flown
Sit at home, read, be only a wife, my dreams were all blown
Then one day a friend I met, I asked her where she'd been
A club for Chest Heart & Stroke, "The best I've ever seen!"

I thought at last an answer to my every prayer
A place to go to volunteer, my very time to share
I could help just making tea, teach first aid or do PE
This was what I needed, someone to need me.

But o'er the years I realise, the help has come for me
They've taught me how to face my fears, to look and to see
Without people I am naught but an empty shell
So happy 70th birthday, you've done it oh so well.



Poem by Lyn Bulgin MBE
Armagh Stroke Activity Group Volunteer



Sian Williamson volunteers in our Fundraising department, helping to organise events.

"I started volunteering as part of my college course but decided to stay on because I saw how much good work the charity was doing. My grandparents have had heart attacks and strokes and they were supported

by the charity. I wanted to give something back.

"Through volunteering I have gained lots of new skills and became more confident within myself. I have been able to gain experience of working with other companies in the build up to fundraising events, which has been invaluable.

"I have worked on the behind-the-scenes organisation of all of NICHHS's events this year but in particular Benone Run to Remember and Belfast City Marathon.

"I want to work in events management so this volunteering placement has given me lots of valuable, relevant experience for my CV. The staff make you feel welcome and take the time to show you new things. Everyone really appreciates you volunteering your time!"



Martin McCaul's Story

Martin is someone who has benefited from our work following a stroke and now volunteers in several care services groups including PREP.

Martin says he benefited greatly from attending the PREP programme but when he completed the programme was "in the pits" because he didn't know what the future would hold.

Beth Vance, who is the Care Services Co-ordinator in his area, spoke to Martin about how he was feeling and suggested volunteering but he was hesitant.

After some thought, he decided to give it a go.

Martin says he finds it uplifting to see people in NICHHS care services groups improve and reach their goals with the support of staff and volunteers.

He feels he now has a purpose in life and would encourage anyone considering volunteering to "give it a go, as I've never looked back and can honestly say volunteering saved my life!"



John Ross is a part-time teacher who is nearing retirement and has completed a foundation course in Events Management. He volunteered with NICHHS last year as part of his course and enjoyed it so much, he has stayed with us.

"A combination of factors motivated me to volunteer. My nephew died very suddenly of a heart attack in 2013 and my brother and sister-in-law have been involved in raising funds for NICHHS since then. Volunteering is my way of showing some solidarity with others impacted by heart disease.

"Volunteering gives me a sense of doing something worthwhile. I enjoy the very convivial working environment and supportive team. It is also an opportunity to learn new skills and gain new knowledge which contrast with my experience as a teacher.

"The need for volunteers is great and all sorts of talents and skills are needed. The charity supports and encourages its volunteers, and you can volunteer on a flexible basis which fits around your other commitments."

Colleen McKernan, Cora Glass and Timothy Hutchinson are Northern Regional College students volunteering for us in Magherafelt's PREP Programme.

Colleen: "Volunteering has given me more knowledge and enjoyment in working with other people. I would say to anyone thinking of volunteering that it is very rewarding and a great opportunity to get to know other people."

Cora: "Volunteering has given me a sense of enjoyment from helping others. My advice to anyone with time to spare is: Do it – it's very worthwhile and rewarding."

Timothy: "I enjoy helping others and I enjoy coaching and this is a mix of the two. If you're interested, go for it – it's good fun and a good learning experience."



PIONEERING PROGRAMME AIDS STROKE RECOVERY

Every stroke is different. Stroke rehabilitation tends to be individualised with the biggest improvements happening usually in the first weeks and months after the stroke.

But people can continue to recover in the months and years after their structured rehabilitation is finished, especially if they continue to be physically active, make healthy lifestyle choices and maintain social relationships.

With this in mind, in 2010 NICHs, along with the support of health professionals in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, began to develop a new service – one which combines education, exercise and peer support.

The Post Rehabilitation Education Programme (PREP) started its roll out with a research study to determine both its impact and feasibility. Thirty-six people agreed to take part in the study with 17 taking part in the first PREP and 19 people being in a second “control” group for comparison.

PREP then became a pilot study in the Southern HSCT, and in the year 2011/12 there were 42 participants. By 2012/13, PREP was a core service in the area and in the year just past, 2015/16, 103 people took part in the Southern Trust area.

The research found that those who had attended PREP reported

increased improvements in physical and emotional wellbeing compared to the control group. Anecdotal evidence from participants was also incredibly positive. They valued meeting other stroke survivors and felt re-motivated to continue with rehabilitation exercises. One participant commented: “After attending I could see a better future for myself.”

The original study showed that PREP had a positive impact for people and could be delivered within the community. That, along with the learning from the Southern Trust, meant that in 2014/15 PREP was rolled out in the Belfast and South Eastern HSCTs, meaning that 241 people attended the Programme.

January 2016 brought PREP to the Northern Trust, increasing the number of programmes to eight with a total attendance of 399 in the year 2015/16.

The most recent programme began in Enniskillen in the Western Trust in April 2016, which means that PREP is now running in all five Health Trusts in NI. Foyle will be up and running by September 2016.

If you would like to know more about PREP or our other stroke services, please go to www.nichs.org.uk/prep

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke's Post Rehab Exercise Programme (PREP) is a physiotherapy-led, community-based course which has helped build people's lives after stroke, through exercise and education.

It is designed for stroke survivors who have completed the statutory rehabilitation that the health service offers to meet their longer term care needs.

The May Mailing of 2015 highlighted how stroke survivors were benefiting from PREP. The Mailing raised £12,417 which covers the entire cost of seven PREP Programmes, boosting our ability to roll PREP out across all the Trusts. We would like to thank all our supporters whose generosity has helped us to transform lives through this programme.



HOW WE HELPED STROKE SURVIVOR BACK TO WORK

In September 2015, Laurence Carleton had a stroke which resulted in him being in hospital for six weeks. He was just 45.

Four days of his hospital stay were spent in Intensive Care fighting pneumonia. Today he is back at work and, in his own words, "getting on with life."

In the couple of weeks before the stroke, Laurence had noticed some pain in his neck and head but put it down to being busy at work. But after having a blackout while playing football, he went to his GP and was prescribed medication to help with muscle spasms.

Less than 24 hours later, Laurence felt that his head was spinning, but he initially put it down to a side effect of the new medication. He went to bed but when he woke his balance was severely affected. His eyesight began to deteriorate. He phoned his brother to ask him to take him to the doctor but by the time he arrived Laurence had to crawl to the door to let him in. He wondered fleetingly if he was having a stroke, but dismissed the idea because of his age.

Laurence finds it hard to believe when his friends and family tell him how ill he was in hospital in those early days after his stroke, possibly because he made quick progress with his rehabilitation after he recovered from the pneumonia.

The NICHs Stroke Family Support Co-ordinator visited Laurence at his house. She told him about PREP, our physical activity and education programme for stroke survivors. Laurence says he was keen to attend, to enable him to get out of the house and to meet other people who had similar experiences. One of the big anxieties of

life after stroke is that the smallest headache creates the fear that another stroke is about to happen, but talking to other people and hearing their experiences has helped allay some of those concerns.

Laurence says it was particularly beneficial being able to talk to another man of a similar age with a similar goal to get back to work. Towards the end of PREP, he was able to do just that. Fatigue is an issue, but a phased return means he has been able to manage it.

Laurence now has a different outlook on life, particularly where work is concerned. Before, he felt stressed. Now he knows what is manageable in a day's work and no longer gets as overwhelmed about the things that are out of his control.

"I would definitely recommend people make time to find out what support there is out there for them or take every opportunity offered. Getting out of the house and talking to other people is so important for your recovery," he says.

"Getting out of the house and talking to other people is so important for your recovery."



VITAL LESSONS FROM STROKE RECOVERY

The first thought Tommy Coffey had when he was having a stroke was that he wanted to see his grandchildren grow up.

He had just fallen and had weakness down one side of his body. By the time he reached his doctor's surgery he had no feeling on his left side.

Tommy had been an active man all his life, playing rugby for Malone for 22 years, so it was a major shock to be told he'd had a stroke.

In the early days after the stroke the hardest things for Tommy to deal with were the fatigue, "I had never experienced tiredness like it," and admitting that he needed help with some tasks. "I have always been a fiercely independent person but even now I didn't want people doing things for me.

"When I think back now I am so glad that I took the opportunity to attend the programmes that the NICHS Family Support Co-ordinator told me about. If I hadn't I would still be at home thinking there was little I could do."

Tommy embarked on our Taking Control Programme and says listening to other people accomplishing weekly goals really encouraged him. "It was a case of, if they can do it so can I," he says.

One of the most important lessons he has learned is that it's okay to accept help from others. "If you keep saying no, people will eventually stop

asking," he says. "And where does that leave you when you really need help?"

Tommy now volunteers with NICHS, meaning that he is able to encourage and inspire others with his experiences. But he also feels that it's important for him to continue to meet and talk to people who understand what life after stroke is like.

If you want to know more about our "Taking Control" Self Management Programme, please go to www.nichs.org.uk/takingcontrol

FRIENDS UNITED BY COMMON BOND

Felix Cunningham from Tandragee remembers the days when his COPD would leave him fighting for breath at 4am.

"It was scary," he says. "The questions keep going round and round in your head – should I go to hospital now or leave it a while longer? Will I be able to get my next breath or not?"

Felix is a founding member of the Dungannon Respiratory Support Group. When he found out that his friend Mervyn Doherty also had COPD, he invited him to join the group. Felix says: "I find it very useful to have a network of people, actually they are friends, who I can talk to and who are there to support me if I have a flare up and have to go to



hospital. I'm naturally a very positive person and I believe in doing all that is in my own power to look after myself."

Mervyn says: "I've been friends with Felix for years so when I was diagnosed with COPD, he invited me to the group. We all try to get to the meeting, even if we are not feeling 100%. But if someone is unwell and can't attend, then we go to them."

If you want to know more about our Respiratory Support, please visit www.nichs.org.uk/respsupport



DON'T LEAVE CARERS IN THE DARK

While we often hear what it's like to fight the long battle of recovery after stroke, we don't always hear what it's like to be a carer of someone who is a stroke survivor. We may imagine becoming a carer when we are in our 60s or 70s, but no one imagines they will become a carer in their 40s.

Allan Leonard was just 44 when he became his wife Beverley's carer. She had suffered a devastating stroke at the age of 40.

After five months in hospital, including the Regional Acquired Brain Injury Unit (RABIU) at Musgrave Park Hospital, Beverley returned home. But that was just the start of Allan's long and sometimes frustrating experience as a carer.

"I was probably quite naïve about how soon I would be able to return to an ordinary routine. As a carer I never received any brief from anyone at any time in the process. I figured it out – as most carers do – along the way. There doesn't seem to be anyone in the system

who has any responsibility for the carer's wellbeing, whether physical or mental. There appears to me to be too much reliance on the self-resilience of the carer.

"Once Beverley became stronger, after about a year, I succeeded in negotiating with the Health Trust to exchange some of Beverley's personal care provision for personal assistance – a care professional who comes out to accompany and supervise activities directed by the client.

"For Beverley, this meant someone to watch her iron clothes, for example, or to go for short assisted walks in a nearby park."

Inspired by his wife, Allan was determined to reclaim as much of his own life as practical, whilst accepting their new situation. "Many family carers are so overwhelmed with the enormity of the caring task they don't take care of themselves. Beverley's personal care provision meant that I could then spend more time and attention taking care of myself."

And they both want "to turn something bad into something good," as Allan put it. From his carer's

perspective, this includes him wanting an honest appreciation by health professionals of the carer's role in the design of healthcare pathways. He does this by sitting on an Integrated Care Partnership for Ards, along with his wife.

Allan also attends a stroke carers' group at NICHs, which he said has been useful:

"As with anyone dealing with a traumatic event in their lives, it helps to meet up with others in a similar situation. I suppose that I'm a more conspicuous member of the group – a younger male – but there's usually someone else who gives me perspective, and the sincerity and goodwill by the staff, volunteers and all reminds me that I'm not alone."

Caring can take a great physical and emotional toll on a person. If you are a carer, you need to make time for yourself when possible. Relaxing can help stave off feelings of anxiety, stress and even depression. There's lots of help available.

To find out more, please go to www.nichs.org.uk/carers

RESEARCH: A HISTORY OF SUCCESS

Our first research grant was awarded in 1958 to Dr Knox of Londonderry Chest Hospital and amounted to the princely sum of £35. Since the year 2000, we have awarded nearly £5m to researchers at our local hospitals and universities.

Now, in this 70th anniversary year, let's look at some of the successes from past awards.



Professor Pascal McKeown: Effect of a polyphenol-rich diet on vascular and platelet function: a randomised controlled trial

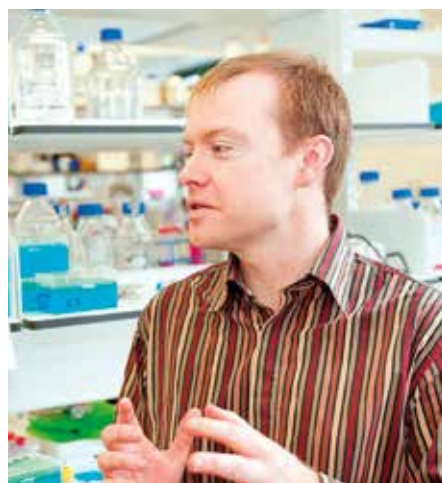
In 2010, we awarded Professor Pascal McKeown of Queen's University Belfast £32,000 to investigate if eating more polyphenols would improve blood vessel function in patients with high blood pressure. Polyphenols are an important group of substances in fruit and vegetables.

The study involved 92 patients who either consumed a low fruit and vegetable diet or a high fruit and vegetable diet (six portions of fruit and vegetables, including one portion of berries per day and a small portion of dark chocolate) for eight weeks.

The research team found that by adding fruit and vegetables, berries and a little dark chocolate to their existing diets, patients were able to improve the health of their blood

vessels. This is an important result because it provides additional evidence that eating a healthy diet leads to improvements of blood vessel function, which in turn could lead to a lower risk of heart attacks and strokes in future.

The team plan to disseminate this information through presentations at meetings and publications of papers in journals which are read by heart specialists and those with an interest in nutrition.



Professor Michael Tunney and Professor Clifford Taggart: Improved detection and treatment of anaerobic bacteria in non-Cystic Fibrosis bronchiectasis

In 2008 we awarded £131,565 to Professor Michael Tunney (pictured) and Professor Clifford Taggart at QUB for research to define airway microbial composition in a range of

respiratory diseases characterised by chronic lung infection.

These projects contributed towards a wider research programme at QUB. Both Professor Tunney and Professor Taggart developed specific expertise and became recognised as world leaders in this area. Results from these projects identified specific clinical markers which could be used as suitable probes for a molecular diagnostic test.

The team are now working with Randox Diagnostics on the development of a biochip which can be used to monitor bacteria and respiratory viruses causing lung infection in patients. This technology would allow for more rapid diagnosis of infection, improved antibiotic treatment and potentially contribute to better clinical outcomes and quality of life for respiratory patients.

Researchers at QUB are now currently leading a €50 million Europe-wide consortium to develop new inhaled antibiotics to manage chronic lung infection. The new antibiotics, which are to be trialled over a five-year period, are expected to improve patients' quality of life by reducing lung infections and flare ups, improving lung function, and overcoming antibacterial resistance.



Professor Suzanne McDonough and Dr Jacqueline Crosbie: Virtual reality to help in stroke rehabilitation

In 2002 we awarded Dr Jacqueline Crosbie and Professor Suzanne McDonough at Ulster University £117,646 to help people with stroke regain use of their limbs with the help of virtual reality.

The research team completed a pilot study employing a low cost, virtual reality system which allows people with stroke to be immersed in a virtual world. The similarity to computer gaming meant that people became more motivated and spent longer on physical exercises than was possible with traditional physiotherapy.

Since the original research in 2002, the technology and landscape of virtual reality has significantly changed. More advanced and sophisticated equipment now exists, offering more potential for the applications of virtual reality. The combination of games and virtual reality along with specific user motion can enhance the immersive experience of the user, enabling users to experience heightened feelings of embodiment in virtual

representations of their arms and hands. The team have now developed a system that pairs physical therapy requirements to engaging game mechanics – in a process that is now called gameful design or gamification, and are keen to share their early findings with people who have had a stroke and get their input throughout the project as it develops.

In terms of the next steps, the team are now planning to test the usability of their system with people with stroke in a number of different settings. Through additions to their research team they are now able to progress the project and extend the system design. The team will also be examining how they can embed assistive technologies into activities of daily living.

The team at Ulster hope that in the future these developed systems could potentially be situated in Acute/ Post-Acute hospital wards, as well as in the home, to supplement and support existing practices offering self-managed and personalised rehabilitation.

AMRC Peer Review Audit

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke has been awarded a best practice certificate in the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) Peer Review Audit 2015. The award acknowledges the high quality of our research programme and peer review procedures. We ensure the research we fund meets the highest possible standards of quality, accountability, transparency and openness.

We are very grateful to our Scientific Research Committee and over 50 external reviewers who through their work ensure that we fund research of the highest scientific quality and merit.



2016 RESEARCH GRANTS

NICHS has awarded a total of £332,408 to the following 2016 research grants.



Development of the GUT faecal microbiome in infants with chronic airway disease

Dr Bettina Schock (above) of QUB was allocated £56,078 to examine how gut bacteria and the immune system develop in infants with chronic lung disease, including cystic fibrosis (CF). The bacterial community of the gut of babies and infants is different from that in adults, but usually stabilises by the age of 12 months.



Development of a supportive intervention to meet the needs of carers of people with advanced heart failure

Professor Donna Fitzsimons (above) from Ulster University aims to develop a supportive intervention for carers of people with advanced heart failure and evaluate its acceptability to carers. These results will undoubtedly help us improve services for patients living with heart failure and their carers in Northern Ireland. The project was awarded £49,595.



Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour to determine attitudes and knowledge of e-cigarette use in a sample of Northern Irish young people (11-16yrs) and their parents

Dr Liz Simpson of Ulster University was allocated £116,453 to examine e-cigarette use within NI. This two-stage study employs the theory of Planned Behaviour (theory-driven research) and will provide a better understanding of the personal and social factors influencing e-cigarette use.

Baby Hearts Research for additional funding request 2016 Professor Helen Dolk. Amount awarded: £49,687

We are allocating funds for a brief extension to the Baby Hearts Study to ensure that the team reach their original target sample of 1,200 participants, which will greatly increase the value for money and power of research findings. We are looking forward to the final results, which are expected in April 2017.

EpiRiboSH: Epigenetic Effects of Riboflavin Supplementation in a Randomised Control Trial of Hypertensive patients stratified by MTHFR genotype

Dr Diane Less-Murdock was awarded £60,595 to examine the effects of riboflavin (Vitamin B2) supplementation on individuals who have been shown to have a specific genotype which predisposes them to high blood pressure. The findings of this study will provide important information about the mechanism linking this novel genenutrient interaction with hypertension.

More information about the research grants funded by NICHS can be found at www.nichs.org.uk/research

LOBBYING VICTORIES PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

After a concerted campaign by NICHs we are delighted that a ban in smoking in cars carrying children was approved by the NI Assembly.



Even though England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland had introduced bans, it looked as if the NI Executive was not going to act despite the fact that opinion polling we commissioned in 2014 showed 82% of the public wanted a ban. This left us with no option but to seek to work with Assembly Members to bring an amendment to the

Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill which largely dealt with e-cigarettes.

Our lobbying work with Assembly Members, which included encouraging our supporters to sign a petition and to write to their MLAs, eventually paid off. The then Health Minister, Simon Hamilton, announced that he would in fact bring forward an amendment to his own Bill in order to bring in a ban on smoking in cars carrying children.

The whole process was very drawn out and in the end the Act was only passed on the very final sitting day of the Assembly. The active campaigning of hundreds of our supporters who signed the petition and many of whom took the trouble to write to their Assembly Members was vitally important.

Neil Johnston, NICHs Public Affairs Advisor, said: "NICHs are delighted with the ban which has come about as a direct result of our campaigning work. Thank you to everyone who gave us their support."

'Proxy buying' an offence

The Tobacco Retailers Act, around which we lobbied extensively, is gradually coming into operation. One of the measures is to make it an offence for adults to buy cigarettes on behalf of children. Although this will be a difficult measure to enforce we will be working to ensure that the various Councils take their enforcement responsibilities seriously. If you witness cigarettes being sold to children or see cigarettes being sold to an adult and then passed on to a child, please contact Neil Johnston on njohnston@nichs.org.uk who can then liaise with the relevant officials.



Looking Forward

Having focused heavily on smoking in recent years, our campaigning work in the near future is going to focus more on obesity. In particular, we will be campaigning for the proceeds of the 'Sugar Tax' in Northern Ireland to be 'ring fenced' to promote physical activity in primary schools. With one in four primary school children either overweight or obese, we will be working with others to improve opportunities for our children – for example by increasing the amount of PE in primary schools. Northern Ireland is currently at the bottom of the league table in this regard and is storing up future health problems as a result.

Neil Johnston will be looking to work with all our supporters to impress on Assembly Members the importance of taking action.

"In opinion polling four out of five of people in Northern Ireland supported our call to ring fence this money. It is crucial that government acts to counter the obesity issue – particularly give the direct link with heart and stroke conditions," he said.

"NICHs are delighted with the ban which has come about as a direct result of our campaigning work. Thank you to everyone who gave us their support."

PROMOTING BETTER HEALTH

Our health promotion team is focused on providing people with support, advice and encouragement to make healthy choices in their lives to reduce their risk of developing cardiovascular or respiratory illnesses. The Health and Homeless service works with some of the most vulnerable people in our society who have a high risk of ill health. Our Schools Programme (overleaf) works with "extended" primary schools which are in areas of greater social disadvantage. Our team also delivers health checks in businesses and in the community. Here, one of our health promotion nurses, Maureen McCourt, who celebrated her 70th birthday in January 2016, reflects on the years she has worked with NICHHS.

Maureen's Story – in her own words

I started with NICHSA, as it was called then, in 1994. My parents had both died in 1992, and after nursing them both at home I took a year off. The charity was taking on nurses to do health promotion work through a government scheme. So I applied, worked for a year and enjoyed it very much.

Because health checks were becoming so popular, NICHSA decided to employ permanent staff. Again I applied and was accepted, becoming the first permanent "Education Nurse."

More than 20 years on am I still enjoying it? – Yes! Why? – I love working with people, I enjoy being an encourager. I'm keen to help people work towards being and having a healthy lifestyle leading to a healthy life.



I've been all over the country doing health checks. Working with the Northern Ireland-based Farrans group has also taken me to places as far apart as Cambridgeshire and the Western Isles of Scotland, where I did five flights in 36 hours with health checks in between!

For a period of time I also worked in the office as the Health Promotion Manager taking bookings, organising nurses' diaries and the monthly invoices as well as doing the health checks. I have always found everyone in NICHHS friendly and helpful and I have made long-term friendships.

Another love of mine is running. I'm aiming to complete my 70th marathon before my 71st birthday. As you read this I will have completed my 69th!!

As I looked at my application for employment as an Education Nurse in 1995, I smiled. My referees were Dr John Yarnell, Lecturer in Clinical Medicine, and Dame Mary Peters!! My statement in support of my application read: "Over the past 15 years I have altered my own eating and exercise

habits for the better and can therefore speak to those under assessment with a fair degree of personal experience. Not everyone needs to train for and run marathons as I have done to prove the point. Rather each person needs sound advice and sympathetic encouragement, at whatever level, to amend their eating and exercise regime to produce a healthier lifestyle."

Health and Homelessness

The numbers of those who found themselves homeless in Northern Ireland increased during 2015/16. Relationship breakdown, poverty and a lack of other essential needs such as housing, jobs, money, social support and mental health were some of the causes.

Many of our clients had expressed an interest in learning wellbeing techniques and cited stress and poor sleep as key areas of concern. We worked with them and others to develop a short leaflet and CD to help people to sleep and relax. Jim B., a resident at a hostel in north Belfast, was delighted with the results and said:

"To be this relaxed is fantastic for me and I feel I have learned a lot about sleep and how important it is for my physical and mental health."

Our clients and hostel workers also asked for information and support about healthy eating and nutrition. Residents at Life Hostel participated in a Cook It Programme to develop cooking skills and to learn about healthy food choices. Julie Clark, a Senior Support Worker at Life, said:

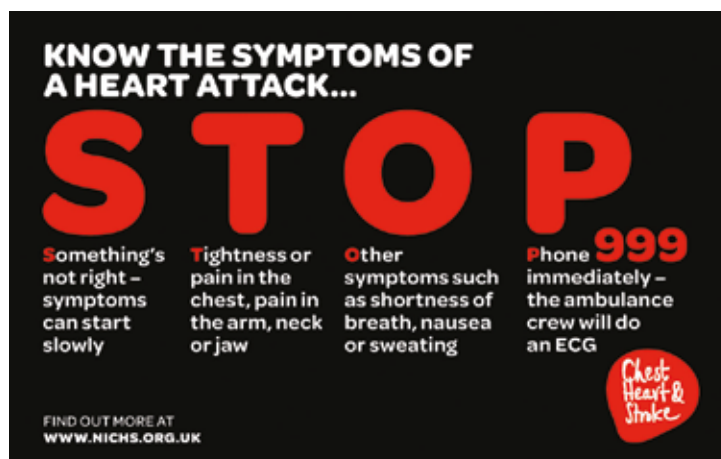
"Some of the girls have begun to change some of their eating and shopping habits since commencing the programme which is fantastic."

Laura Kennedy, a Cook It Dietician, came along to provide support during the final session, which focused on foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar, hidden fats and sugar and also nutritional labelling. Laura said:

"At the end of the session the girls all said they really enjoyed the programme and were delighted when presented with certificates of completion."

We worked with service users and hostel workers to develop three recipe books to suit different skills, need and budget:

- Cook Healthy Stuff – for those wanting to cook healthily for a healthy lifestyle
- Store Cupboard Recipes – for those who want to cook healthily on a budget
- Mediterranean Diet – for those who want to create heart healthy meals



We delivered our Health & Homeless Programme in 36 hostels through 127 visits which benefited 858 people. Of the 858, 483 (56.2%) were male and 375 (43.7%) female, with 221 being from ethnic minorities.

Health Campaigns

Our mission is to prevent chest, heart and stroke illnesses in Northern Ireland and care for those affected by them. So in 2015/16 we undertook two health campaigns: Sweat the Small Things and STOP.

Fidelma Carter, our Public Health Director, had a monthly column in Local Women magazine, touching on different health messages each month.

Our Sweat the Small Things campaign (April to June 2015) was designed to encourage people to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives and to log the number of minutes they did on our online "Totaliser".

Our aim was to record 202,000 minutes of physical activity, which is one minute for everyone in Northern Ireland who is living with a chest, heart or stroke condition. In fact, by the end of June we had smashed this target with over 312,000 minutes.

Among those logging their efforts were rugby stars Chris Henry and Craig Gilroy, and football playing twins Andrew and Aaron Burns.

STOP campaign

In a survey at the 2015 Balmoral Show, NICHHS found that, even if someone was suffering from chest pains, the most well-known symptom of a heart attack:

- 50% would do nothing or wait and see if the symptoms go away
- 20% would make an appointment to see their GP
- 30% would drive to hospital or call an ambulance

So in the summer of 2015 we ran a health promotion campaign to raise awareness of the symptoms of a heart attack. The STOP campaign aimed to tell people about the symptoms of a heart attack and the importance of phoning 999. STOP describes the symptoms of a heart attack and what action should be taken.

We repeated the campaign in the summer of 2016 and plan to make heart health awareness campaigns an annual event.

For more information about our health promotion, please contact us on 028 9032 0184 or healthpromotion@nichs.org.uk and to read more about keeping healthy visit www.nichs.org.uk/choosetobehealthy

YOUNG PEOPLE CHOOSE HEALTHY STUFF!

Our health promotion programmes for schools gained some new recruits and plenty of praise in 2015/16.

Chester's Challenge, the three-week P5 programme targeting healthy eating, physical activity and the dangers of smoking, has been running since 2010. Chester's Challenge is offered to extended schools. Extended schools serve areas of the highest social disadvantage.

Mr J Duddy is a P5 teacher at Maghaberry Primary School, which took part for the first time this year. He said: "This year NICHs visited my primary class over three weeks and it was fantastic. During the visits the children and I learned about the importance of healthy eating, the eatwell guide, how these food groups help our body and how much of each we should consume. Some of this was a great shock to the kids!

"We also discussed the importance of exercise and physical activity and how this benefits our health. The children thoroughly enjoyed the activities in which they competed against each other in a series of mini games. It was also very interesting to learn how to locate and measure our heart rate, which the children still talk about before and after PE.

"Finally, we talked about the risks of smoking and how it affects our health. The children really enjoyed having their picture taken and seeing the effects of smoking as they aged.

"Overall, the children thoroughly enjoyed the visits from NICHs and still talk about Jessica and Katie and all the fun and interesting facts they learned over the three weeks. We can't wait until next year."



What Children say

We asked three children what messages they would give to adults about being healthy. Their advice is:

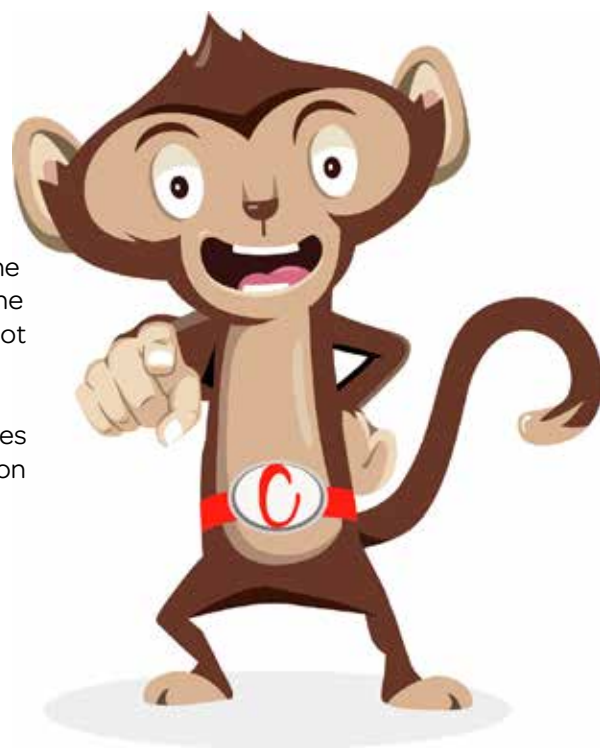
- "We shouldn't eat any more than one piece/bar of chocolate a day."
- "We should get 60 minutes per day of exercise."
- "Chester teaches us smoking is really bad for you."

How cute! Let's take their advice!

What Teachers say

- "This is a brilliant programme! The children have really enjoyed all the activities and they have learnt a lot from it."
- "The use of the interactive quizzes was excellent! The second session which included physical activity was a real fun change from just delivering it in the classroom."
- "Children were engaged throughout. When they weren't sure about an answer they remained focused to find out."

To celebrate NICHs's 70th Anniversary we have developed a Chester's Challenge 70th Anniversary Pack, which allows teachers to reflect on how healthy eating, physical activity and views on smoking have changed since the 1940s.
www.nichs.org.uk/chester70th



COMMUNITY AND EVENTS FUNDRAISING

Every year we need more than £3m to fund the work you have read about in this Annual Review. 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 we would like to send a huge thank you to everyone who makes our work possible through financial support.

In Your Community

Thousands of people across Northern Ireland support us each year. This is only a snapshot of the community events that are organised but we appreciate each and every event that takes place.



Celebrating with a Splash!

Portrush's annual Santa Splash took place on the 20th December at the East Strand. Congratulations to Stephen McConnell and all the organisers for putting on an amazing event – and well done to everyone who braved a freezing Atlantic to help raise almost £5,000.

Superb Support Groups

It was another busy year for all our fundraising groups, who organised a wide range of successful events and represented us at countless community presentations.

Kilkeel Group hosted its annual pop-up shop in July, raising £1,600.

A special mention goes to Tandragee Group, who retired after 21 years of service and an incredible £250,000 raised.

Thank you also to Glengormley Group which celebrated its 30th year and a staggering cumulative total of £360,000. Well done everyone!



A Country Christmas

Local country stars Malachi Cush and Susan McCann hosted a special Christmas knees up on the 8th December along with lots of special guests. The event, which was supported by Irish TV and Armagh City Hotel, was a sell out and raised an incredible £10,000. We are looking forward to this year's concert already!



Ballycastle Support Group hosted a successful Ticker Tea Party in September, bringing in £912.



If you would like to make a difference by organising your own event, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us for more information on **028 0932 0184** or go to **www.nichs.org.uk/yourownevent** for some ideas.

RUN TO REMEMBER GOES THE DISTANCE!



Every year, hundreds of runners take on a challenge in memory of loved ones who have been affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses. This year has been no exception, with more than 400 NICHs supporters participating in our Run to Remember programme, raising an astonishing £70,000. Many took part in the annual Belfast City Marathon and others braved the cold wind and showers to take part in our Easter Benone Beach Run.

For many, these events are highly charged and emotional, the culmination of months of training and fundraising. To anyone who took part, you have our admiration and gratitude. You have gone the distance and you're changing lives!

For more information about taking on a running event for NICHs, please visit www.nichs.org.uk/runtoremember



STEP UP 2016

Our new 'Step Up' challenge event programme is about people doing something extraordinary together. Launched in January 2016, the programme offers a range of new walking, cycling and trekking events with a challenge suitable for all levels of fitness and ability.

Rugby star Chris Henry, who had a TIA in 2014, and Tracey Gumley, a stroke survivor from Omagh, launched Step Up in January. Both have faced their own challenges. Chris got back to international rugby. Tracey had to learn to walk again and was delighted, 18 months after her stroke, to finally walk in high heels again.

The Step Up Trek, taking place in September 2016, will see teams of four or five participants taking on the highest peak of each county in Northern Ireland. Only two team members need to check in at each summit, allowing teams to tailor their strategy according to the strengths of individual members.

Our first two Step Up Trek teams come from the dynamic White family in Newry, who are Stepping Up to remember and celebrate the life of their beloved mum Patricia. The teams' efforts are even more special and poignant because 2016 marks the year that Patricia would have turned 70 years old – coincidentally the year that NI Chest Heart & Stroke marks its 70th anniversary.

By joining one of our Step Up events, you too can ensure NICHHS will reach even more people with life-saving messages and make a massive difference to the lives of those living with chest, heart and stroke illnesses. Thank you and good luck to all our Step Up participants this year!

More information about our Step Up events can be found on www.nichs.org.uk/challengeevents



THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS

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



Musgrave Wholesale Partners (Mace and MarketPlace) have announced a new three-year partnership with NICHS and plan to raise more than £150,000 through in-store fundraising, events and collections.



Autoline Insurance Group launched a year-long series of fundraising initiatives to celebrate their 40th year. Pictured are Corporate Fundraising Executive Sinead Magill receiving a cheque for £1,000 from Managing Director Michael Blaney.



Staff from EE held a static cycle in the Kennedy Centre in Belfast, raising £718.02. Our very own Declan Cunnane and Gareth McGleenon added some pedal power!



Employees from The Old Bushmills Distillery raised a fantastic £12,300. A number of successful fundraising events were held, ranging from the company's annual barrel roll to a raft race at Portrush.



Seagate Technology encouraged employees to tackle their weight and change their lifestyle through Business in the Community's £ for £b 12-week challenge. More than 150 employees raised £2,000 by losing a total of 1,600 lbs and 283 inches from their waists.



The Lazy Lawn corporate golf day at Clandeboyne Golf Club, which was won by Huston Estate Agents, was a great success raising £7,074.

If you would like to know more about how your workplace can support us, please visit www.nichs.org.uk/corporatepartner

HOW YOUR MONEY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Throughout 2015/16 our individual supporters have continued in their commitment to supporting our care services, prevention work and life-saving research. Individual giving income continues to grow and cash and regular gifts amounted to £365k last year.

The Individual Giving Fundraising Team continues to work closely with our Care Services and Public Health teams so that donors are well informed about the huge impact of their support, and about the difference they are making to people's lives.

Our annual Spring Raffle Appeal in support of NICHHS's Respiratory Care Fund raised over **£35,000**. Donations and ticket sales from the 2016 Spring Raffle will meet 15% of our investment in respiratory research in 2016/17.

Our Christmas Heart Research Campaign raised a fantastic **£74,500**. The associated appeal letter secured **£44,459**. Individual donations will support almost 90% of the 'Eye as a Window to the Heart' research project. The mailing was



£2,042,023

was bequeathed by **61** people who so generously remembered those affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses through gifts in their wills.

dedicated to the families of the 2,385 people whose lives were lost the previous year to heart disease in Northern Ireland.

Regular giving through direct debits and standing orders has seen a growth of 8% and a fantastic **£180,415** has been received in regular gifts from over 3,000 committed givers throughout the year. This is enough to fund our network of 28 Stroke Support Activity Groups for an entire year.

Our "Taking Control" Self Management programmes received a significant boost from our January "Be Inspired!" supporter newsletter. The **£10,995** raised will enable 46 people to attend a potentially life-changing NICHHS Taking Control programme which delivers crucial support to help people manage their condition better and significantly improve their quality of life.

Legacy gifts have continued to be the cornerstone of fundraising, making up 59% of all donations in 2015/16. An incredible **£2,042,023** was bequeathed by 61 people who so generously remembered those affected by chest, heart and stroke

illnesses through gifts in their wills. These funds make possible a huge proportion of our work.

Donations in Lieu of Flowers remain an important source of income, bringing in **£242,253**, which represents almost 7% 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.

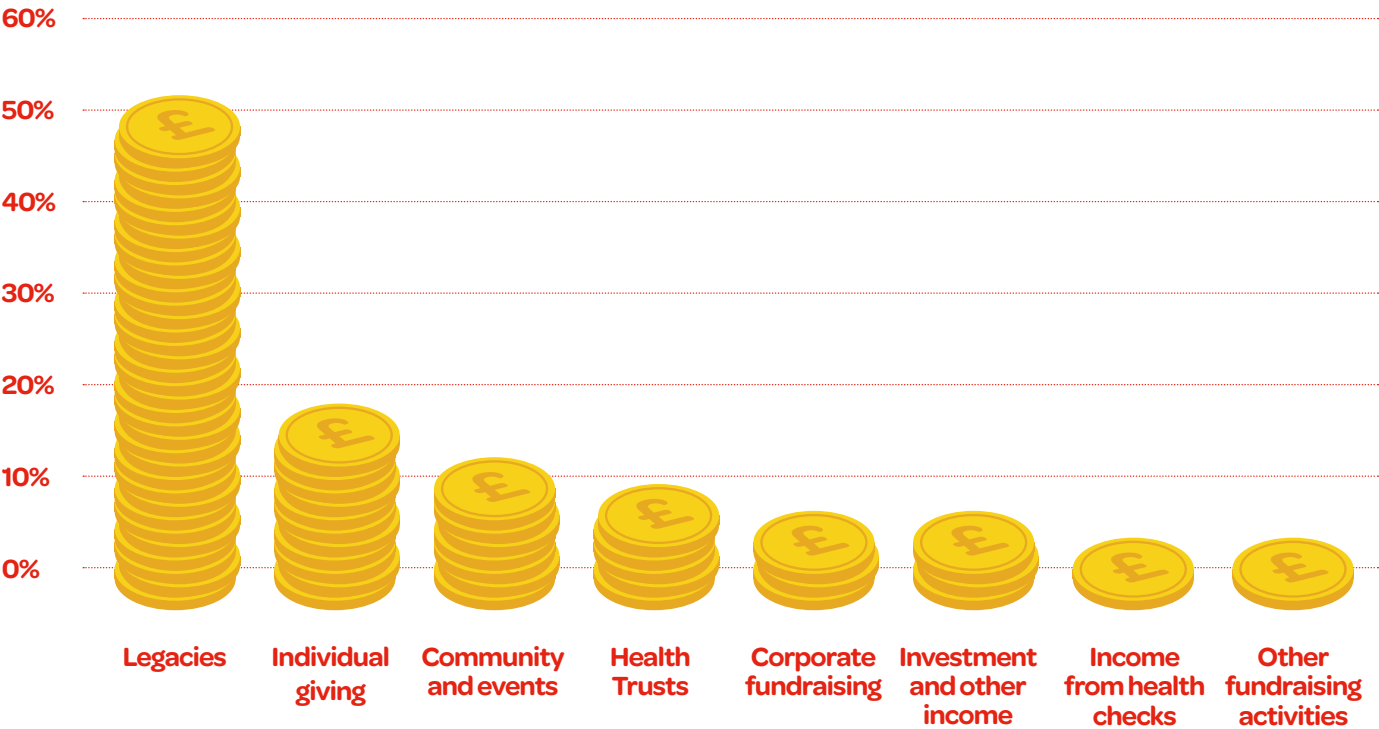


£10,995

raised will enable **46** people to attend a potentially life-changing NICHHS Taking Control programme.

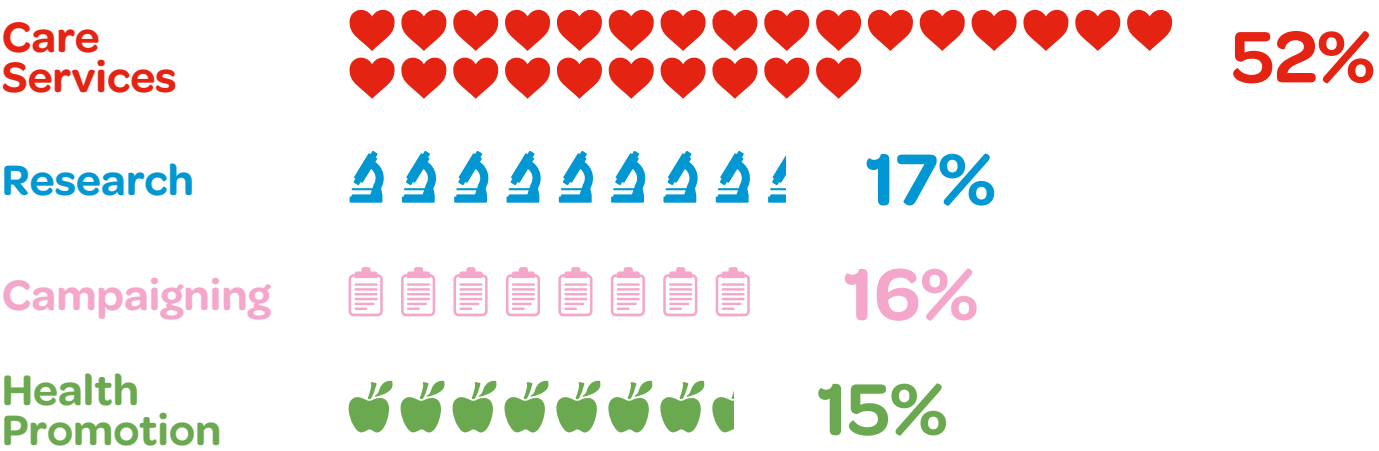
If you would like to make a gift to support our work, please call **028 9032 0184** or visit **www.nichs.org.uk/donate**

WHERE OUR INCOME COMES FROM



Total income
£4,042,609

WHERE OUR INCOME GOES



Total Charitable Expenditure: £2,471,755
+ Governance £10,895
+ Fundraising Costs £858,148
= Total Expenditure: £3,340,798

A YEAR IN FIGURES

Over **4,000** people with chest, heart or stroke illnesses and their families and carers were supported by NICHS in 2015/16.

NICHS Stroke Family Support had **1,567** new referrals, which is over **half of all stroke survivors** in Northern Ireland, and made 2,721 home visits. NICHS helped 550 people across Northern Ireland through its 28 Stroke Activity Groups.

277 people benefited from NICHS's 20 Respiratory Schemes.

There were **399 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, and the Northern Trust at the start of 2016.

134 people took part in 10 "Taking Control" Self Management **Programmes**.

We are currently funding **11 research projects in Queen's University Belfast and 8 in Ulster University** – 11 cardiac, 2 stroke and 6 respiratory projects.

We delivered **1,578 health checks** to 23 businesses and 16 community organisations. 1,675 blood pressure measurements were taken at the Balmoral Show and other events.

We gave 124 health talks in the community.

We reached **2,084 pupils** by delivering health talks to 6 primary and 4 secondary schools and 3 youth clubs, and 44 Primary schools received our 3 week Chester's Challenge Programme.

We delivered our Health & Homeless Programme in **36 hostels** through 127 visits which benefited 858 people, with 22 health checks for 93 people who are homeless and 47 referrals to GP.

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(to 30/09/15)

Mr Declan Cunnane
(from 01/10/15)

Deputy Chief Executive

Mr Declan Cunnane (to 30/09/15)

Mr Gareth McGleenon
(from 01/10/15)

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Trust and Queen's University
Belfast

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Dr Lorcan McGarvey
Queen's University Belfast

Gareth Neil
Lay Representative

Professor Philip Reilly (to 14/01/16)
Queen's University Belfast

CHEST, HEART & STROKE CARE FUNDS

Right now we're investing almost **£3m** in Northern Ireland to save and transform local lives. Whilst great advances have been made in some areas of diagnosis, treatment and knowledge, there is a great deal more for us to do. 40% of adults deaths are related to chest, heart and stroke illnesses. In a family unit of five people, that means two of them.

We're on your side and we need your help.



Chest **£800k**

**Activity Support
Groups**

**Awareness, Education
& Campaigning**

**Self Management
Programmes**

Research



Heart **£800k**

**Affiliated Support
Groups**

**Awareness, Education
& Campaigning**

**Self Management
Programmes**

Research



Stroke **£1.25m**

**Family Support
(at hospital and home)**

Activity Support Groups

**Specific Support Groups for
Young Stroke Survivors**

Self Management Programmes

'PREP' Programme

**Awareness, Education &
Campaigning**

Research

Support our chest, heart and stroke care funds today. Donate by calling 028 9032 0184 or send a donation to the address below.

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 email 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

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

Belfast

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

North West Office

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