

# The Review

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

# Chest Heart & Stroke

## Tragic soccer player helps save other lives



**The family and friends of a Belfast man who died tragically young from a heart condition are helping NI Chest Heart & Stroke with a unique project to save other young people's lives. Gary Morris, a keen footballer, died in February 2012 at the age of 33 from sudden cardiac death.**

One cause of sudden heart death in the young is Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH). The genetic condition affects one in 500 people and causes an unusually high production of cholesterol in the body. There are no warning signs and people affected are often unaware that they have it until it is too late. Gary's family arranged a series of football tournaments as part of a fundraising drive to help us kick-start a service to identify everyone in Northern Ireland with FH.

Chief Executive Andrew Dougal said: "We have been interested in FH and measures to combat it for many years. Research funded by this charity identified two abnormalities in genes which cause the condition, and families with that genetic mutation were able to be identified and treated. But our decision to launch this new project with £37,000 start-up funding will have even more far-reaching effects."

The money will enable the Northern Ireland-wide project – co-ordinated at Belfast City Hospital but involving hospitals in every area – to establish itself with the necessary equipment. It is hoped the Health Service will provide a part-time nurse to advise and assist families in each Health

Trust area. Said Mr Dougal: "For the first time, we will have a regional register of all people affected by FH in Northern Ireland and doctors will be able to undertake screening of subsequent generations of the families involved. Since FH is one of the most common inherited genetic conditions, it has huge potential to enable early intervention to save lives.

We are very grateful to Gary Morris's brothers Gerald and Stephen, Corrymeela Football Club and many other clubs for helping us with the fundraising drive. It's a tribute to Gary's memory that many other lives will be saved."

NI Chest Heart & Stroke also pays tribute to the families of Gareth Boyle from Garvagh, who died suddenly at the age of 31, and William Walker from Coleraine, who died aged 25, for their generosity at a time of great personal loss.

**Anyone wishing to contribute can make a secure online donation at [www.nichs.org.uk](http://www.nichs.org.uk) or via the Corrymeela FC Just Giving page <https://www.justgiving.com/Corrymeela-FC>.**

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as a volunteer**  
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**IT firm Asidua  
funds respiratory  
support groups**  
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**Stroke family  
support extends  
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**We fund £270,000  
of research**  
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**To Scotland –  
by surfboard!**  
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### See how the work of Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke helps our local community

If you know someone affected by one of these illnesses – and most of us do – you may be familiar with our services across Northern Ireland. If you don't know about us, here's your chance to get acquainted. We are a local charity, run by local

people for the benefit of local people. Every penny we raise is spent here. But without the support of the Northern Ireland public and our partners in business, we would not exist. In the following pages, you will learn about the extraordinary lengths some people will go to in the name of fundraising.

You will find out about companies which have put something valuable back into their communities. And, just as

importantly, you will discover how we put this generosity to good use.

For example, we've spent more than £270,000 in the past year on high quality research in our hospitals and universities. Our support services to people affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses are expanding all the time.

And when the people who depend on us need us to speak up for them, we're there, whether it happens to

be on the media or in the corridors of power at Stormont or Westminster.

For the first time, we're having this annual review distributed with copies of the Belfast Telegraph.

**So if this is your first introduction to us, have a look at what we do in Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke. And please help us in whatever way you can.**



## Chairman's Report



**If you are familiar with NI Chest Heart & Stroke, you'll have noticed something very different about our look recently.**

We have reinvigorated and updated our brand to help us compete in an increasingly crowded charity marketplace. We have done so to bring our image into the 21st century and – we hope – to improve our income through donations.

Let me assure you that we have not used any of our

precious donated funds to do so. The branding work has been achieved with commercial income we receive from renting out advertising space on the side of our building in Belfast and from the bank cash machine at the entrance. All donations continue to be used as they always have been – for the direct benefit of those who need our services.

We have updated our brand because in the current economic climate, it's a case of adapt or perish. In the past year, our services cost more than we received in donations. We need to reverse that deficit quickly and we believe a more modern look will help us do that. There is huge competition in Northern Ireland for a shrinking amount of voluntary income. London-based charities have moved here, meaning that we have to fight for every penny in donations to support our

valuable work in every area. Sadly, donations are not the only area where we are having to work harder.

The Chief Executive and I, along with the Chairman and Director of the Stroke Association (NI) met the Minister for Health, Edwin Poots, to convey our concerns about the reduction in funding for the regional Stroke Strategy.

The loss of £4.25m annually will mean that much of the community element of the stroke strategy will not be implemented. It is impossible to ensure effective early supported discharge of patients from hospital if the resources don't exist in the community to support the patient and family.

I am delighted to announce that our own Stroke Family Support Service is now available in every part of Northern Ireland. We continue to play our part to com-

plement the Health Service in the rehabilitation of stroke clients in the community.

Our Scientific Research Grants Committee had more than £350,000 to spend on research projects. Although the total number of research grants requested was in excess of £3m, the committee felt that it could not allocate as much as £350k because not enough projects reached the very high standard set by the committee. The remaining funds will be carried over to fund projects during next year's research round.

I want to thank all our volunteers and staff for their hard work during a challenging year. I appeal to everyone reading this to help us in the coming year as we continue to battle against the diseases that claim so many local lives and cause so much suffering.

**Professor MPS Varma**  
**Chairman**

## Chief Executive's Report

**As the Chairman has pointed out, we are embarking on an exciting new future with an updated and modern image. While we have been serving the people of Northern Ireland for more than 60 years, we must move with the times to compete.**

Our old logo was two decades old and no longer represented the vibrant, forward-looking organisation that we have become. Our research indicated that most people preferred the new version and regarded it as much more representative of our current work. Some people may feel that branding is not important, but as Apple or any other successful business will tell you, it's vital in how the world sees your organisation. A logo needs to be instantly recognisable, memorable, and

visually attractive. It also needs to communicate something about the organisation. In our case, the strap line "We're on your side" says it all.

In the past year, despite the very difficult economic environment, we have expanded and developed our services to people affected by chest and stroke illnesses and their families across Northern Ireland.

Our Self-Management programme, which enables people with long-term conditions to take charge of their own lives, continues to expand.

Our Stroke Family Support Service has now been extended to the North West. This has been possible solely due to donations from our supporters. It means that

the service, which is so vital to families in the weeks and months following stroke, is now available in every part of Northern Ireland.

We are working to ensure that a greater number of heart patients receives cardiac rehabilitation to assist their recovery. We continue to lobby MLAs regularly on pressing issues affecting people with chest, heart and stroke illnesses.

On the fundraising front, the Chartered Institute of Public Relations raised more than £2,000 for our work in memory of John Harrison MBE, the talented photographer who died suddenly at the age of 51. John and his colleagues had been of tremendous support in getting our message across

in the media. We miss his imagination, his easy way with everyone he met and his constant good humour.

We thank the Morelli family for organising several events, including a centenary gala ball, in aid of NICHS. This was to mark the family's centenary of being in business in Northern Ireland. A big thank you also to all our other supporters from the world of business, including Asidua, whose generosity has enabled us to run two of our respiratory support groups.

Last, but not least, we thank you, the people of Northern Ireland, for your continued support in these increasingly tough times.

**Andrew Dougal OBE**  
**Chief Executive**

## NICHs: A Year in Figures 2011/12

Well over **3,000 people** with chest, heart and stroke illnesses and their families and carers were supported by NICHs in 2011 – 2012.

NICHs run **23 Stroke Schemes** and **5 Young Stroke Groups** helping **711 people** across Northern Ireland.

NICHs Stroke Family Support had **1,409 new referrals** and made **2,514 home visits**.

NICHs run **25 Respiratory Schemes** helping **433 people**.

**42 people** took part in the new Moving On - Post Rehabilitation Service, piloted in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

**10 Self Management Programmes** were held helping **135 people**.

**£25,356** in NICHs Welfare Grants were awarded to **89 people** with chest, heart or stroke illnesses to help in times of financial hardship.

A total of **£272,701** was awarded by NICHs in Scientific Research Grants in 2011/12.

Over **4,500 health checks** were carried out by NICHs Health Promotion Nurses, staff and volunteers in 2011/12.

## Thanks to all our volunteers!



**As always, the publication of our Annual Review is an opportunity to thank our volunteers. They include fundraisers, the people who help run our services and support groups and – surprisingly to many people – our Council and Governance Board.**

Although we have more than 500 volunteers, the ever-expanding nature of our services and need for funds means that we are always looking to involve more. If you think you could spare some time to help others, please get in touch. You might be interested in organising an event, assisting with

a store collection, or helping in a services group. Those who volunteer for us find it a hugely rewarding experience. Some volunteers have been involved with NICHs for decades.

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## New Support Group For Lung Disease Sufferers

**NI Chest Heart & Stroke has opened its 25th Respiratory Support Group in a joint venture with the Colin Neighbourhood Partnership in West Belfast.**

The new Colin Respiratory Group provides support and advice for people in the area affected by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Around 27,000 people are currently undergoing treatment for the condition in NI.

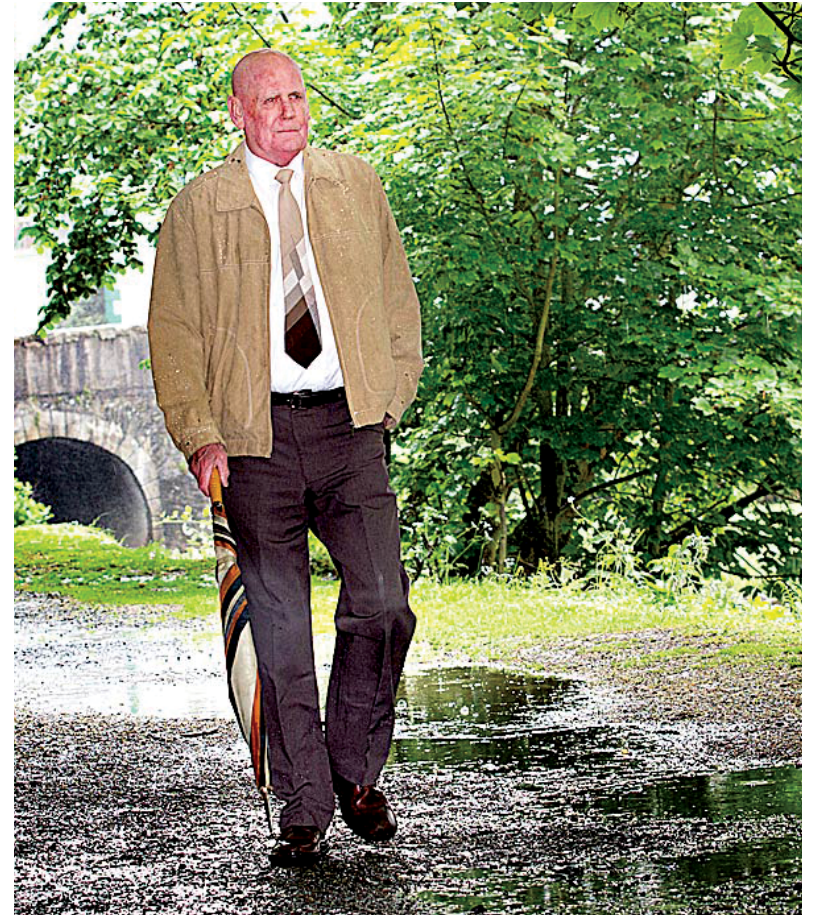
Sam Kelly, (81) a member of the new group, was diagnosed with COPD 30 years ago. He said: "The group has helped me develop ways to manage my COPD, as well as

being a great social outlet where you can meet with people who have similar problems. Any help with this illness goes a long way, because as anyone with the condition will tell you, nothing else matters when you can't breathe."

Umberto Scappaticci, Community Development Worker at Colin Neighbourhood Partnership, said: "Respiratory problems affect a significant percentage of people in this area and it is great that they now have somewhere to meet to get support and advice. The group will meet in Brook Activity Centre and anyone living with a respiratory condition is more than welcome to attend."

The group's sessions at the Brook Activity Centre in Poleglass run from 11.00am to 1pm on the third Wednesday of every month. Maureen Bruce, Community Health Development Worker from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, who is based in the Colin community, said: "We identified a need for a local Respiratory Support Group from having worked with many people who live with a long term illness. This initiative will help people to understand their condition and manage it on a daily basis. It is a very positive step forward for the many people living with respiratory disease in the Colin area."

## I learnt to manage my condition



**John Hicks was diagnosed with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in the mid 1990s. His condition worsened in 2006. Here, he explains how he rebuilt his life after leaving hospital.**

"The local respiratory team gave me details of the local Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke co-ordinator Julie and I joined the Respiratory Support Group in Kilkeel. They were a very pleasant group of people who had a really positive outlook on life despite their condition. Some were carrying oxygen bottles around with them and using walking frames to get around.

"After I had been attending their sessions for a while, I had the opportunity to attend a Self Management Programme being held in Bessbrook. Some of my support group friends told me that they had gone previously and that I would enjoy it. I went along and learned about healthier eating, exercise and better communication skills.

"I went swimming again, actually just walking in the shallow end of the pool to start with but gradually worked up to swimming a width and then managing a length. I felt my confidence growing as we went along. I then started to change my

diet, eating more regularly and better food, as well as swimming more regularly.

"I got so much from the course and - with increased confidence in myself - I went on to start doing voluntary work for NI Chest Heart & Stroke and Headway Newry. With NICHHS I began helping out with a stroke group in Kilkeel, making tea, doing the exercises with them and generally helping the group members in any way I could. I also trained to be a befriender to support other people with long-term respiratory conditions.

"It seemed only natural that when the opportunity came along for me to learn to be a trainer on the Self-Management Programme I jumped at it, in the hope that I could help other people with long term conditions enjoy the improvements in their lives that I had. One woman wanted to walk again in the fresh air but was afraid. She did it."

**"Thank you to NICHHS for what they have given me - self-worth again, a purpose to life and the belief that I can do what I want to do."**

## IT Firm Supports Respiratory Groups



**Asidua, the Belfast based IT integration specialists, have adopted NI Chest Heart and Stroke as their charity of the year, pledging to raise £10,000 to support our West Belfast and Belfast City Hospital Respiratory Support Groups for one year.**

Angela Canavan, Asidua Chief Operations Officer said:

"As a Belfast based company, we wanted to ensure that our fundraising efforts over the coming year could be directed to help support NICHHS activities in our local area.

Therefore I am pleased to announce that we will be focusing our efforts to help raise £10,000 to support two NICHHS Belfast respiratory groups.

**"Building on our successful partnerships with TinyLife, NSPCC and Disability Action, we are delighted to announce that NI Chest Heart and Stroke will be our charity of the year for 2012 to 2013."**

Vanessa Elder, NICHHS Fundraising Manager said: "Asidua's support will fund our Belfast Respiratory Support Groups for a year, ensuring that so many people living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) get the support they need to manage their conditions. 2,000 people a year die in Northern Ireland from respiratory illnesses and our support groups will be able to support more people with the help of Asidua."



## Health and Politics

**At NICHs, we welcome the formation at Stormont of the first ever All Party Group on Heart Disease and Stroke. It's a sign that politicians are recognising the importance of the message we have been sending out for many years that we must work together to combat chest, heart and stroke illnesses.**

It's one thing for MLAs to lend their support to the battle against cardiovascular illnesses, but it's quite another to persuade the Department of Health to allocate a sufficient portion of its budget to that battle.

**The Health Minister recently laid out his future plans for the Health Service in Northern Ireland, placing the emphasis on prevention of illnesses and moving the focus of care away from hospital and into the community.**

We share the view that prevention is better than cure but the Government, local Executive and Health bodies need to do much more together in terms of promoting health, tackling inequalities and developing healthy public policy such as consistent food labelling. Despite recent improvements, circulatory disease remain one of the main causes of death and disability in Northern Ireland. This can be partly attributed to lifestyle, with the risk of circulatory disease increasing with lack of physical exercise, poor diet, smoking and alcohol consumption

**Males and females in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland live as many as 8 and 5 years less than those in least deprived areas**

We need further action, not just a commitment, in tackling the wider determinants of health – this includes housing, level of income and education, all contributing to health inequalities. People living in more deprived areas of Northern Ireland tend to exercise less, drink more alcohol and smoke, placing them at increased risk of dying earlier from often preventable deaths such as heart disease and stroke. Access to some services can also vary across Northern Ireland. This is unacceptable in our view.

**Figures show that one in 14 men and one in 33 women have had a heart attack or stroke. With more people surviving both conditions, there is an increasing need to care for patients and their families.**

We congratulate those MLAs who accepted the challenge of forming this new all-party group.

## Cardiac Service News

### Cardiac Group Affiliation

In 2011 we developed a new relationship with all 23 Cardiac Support Groups in Northern Ireland, to provide them with improved information and support, as well as a cost effective way of obtaining insurance.

### ECG Training

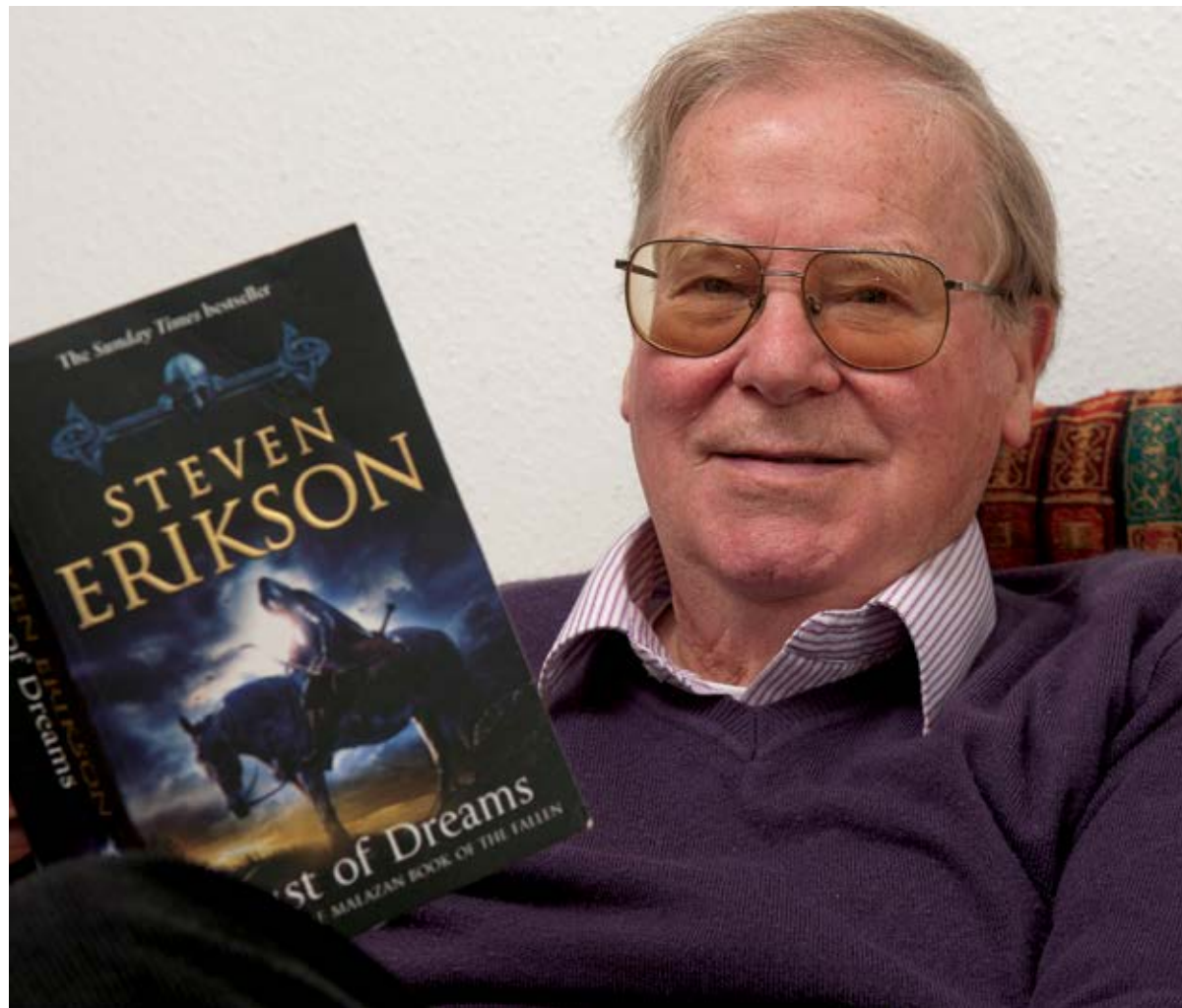
We have delivered a training programme for GPs and health professionals, to improve ECG techniques within doctors' surgeries. Training people in electrode placement and better interpretation of results ensures that appropriate

action is taken for patients, particularly in an emergency. We worked with each of the Health and Social Care Trusts to identify appropriately trained staff to deliver the training, and we funded the initiative.

### Cardiac Rehab Campaign

During 2011/12 we continued our Cardiac Rehabilitation Campaign in partnership with the British Heart Foundation. It is essential that all heart attack patients are encouraged to benefit from cardiac rehabilitation to promote recovery.

## How I experienced a heart attack without pain



**We all think we know what a heart attack must feel like – crushing chest pain and sudden collapse, just like a scene in a TV medical drama. But Tom Welsh's story indicates that it is not always like that.**

One evening last year, Tom (75) from Limavady, began to sweat and shake for no apparent reason. His shirt felt a little tight, but there was no obvious pain. His symptoms, coupled with nausea, made him think it might be something he had eaten. Eventually, he began to feel seriously unwell – but still there was no pain. His wife called the doctor, who in turn summoned an ambulance.

**"It wasn't until I reached hospital that I realised I had had a heart attack," he says. "I thought I was going to die, and yet I had no pain in my arm or chest at any stage."**

Tom currently attends NICHs Limavady Cardiac Support Group where people with similar health conditions meet to share their experiences.

**Thanks to the support of the group, he has made radical changes to his diet and now regularly exercises and takes part in healthy activities to keep fit.**

Sharing medical and health concerns with group members has also helped to relieve the isolation and fear of living with a serious medical condition.

Tom's story illustrates that heart attacks have many different symptoms, not

all of them involving serious pain. Younger women, in particular, seem to experience chest pain less than any other group of heart attack sufferers.

In general, women's symptoms can differ greatly from the classic signs of heart attack. Some may experience back pain. In others, it may be like a bad episode of indigestion.

Whatever your age or sex, acquaint yourself with the signs and symptoms of heart attack.

**You can find information on our website at [www.nichs.org.uk/461/heart-attack](http://www.nichs.org.uk/461/heart-attack)**



## Proving that there's life after stroke



**Brian Crozier had a stroke in February 2012. He doesn't describe it as major, but it was enough to leave him with weakness down one side of his body and a loss of confidence about going out alone.**

Brian, from Tandragee in Co Armagh, says: "When it happened, I couldn't get out of bed. Luckily the mobile phone was within reach, so I called my daughter and she contacted the ambulance." Brian (72) lives alone. His wife Elizabeth died in 2010. After leaving hospital, he began attending our new 'Moving On' Service, supported by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. The service is designed to help stroke survivors improve their recovery once the Health Service rehabilitation has finished.

"One of the best things about it was mixing with people who'd had similar experiences," he says.

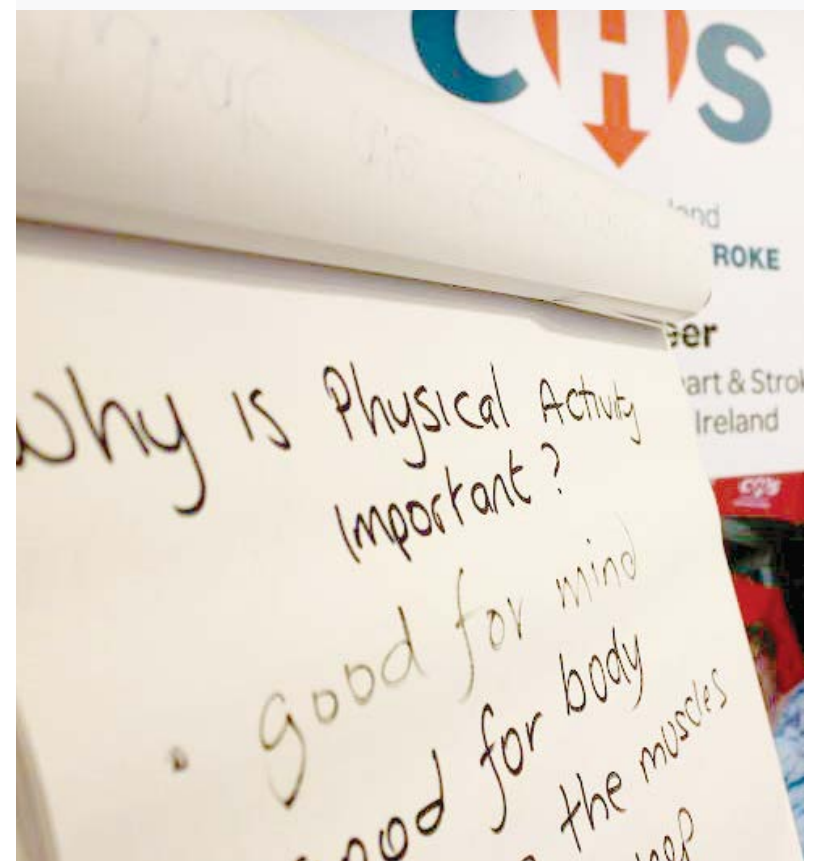
"I'd got to the stage where I was reluctant to go out on my own, and I think that loss of confidence was one of the worst effects of the stroke. I know I'm a lot

better off than some other people who've had strokes, but I found it difficult to leave the house."

Brian still needs to build up his confidence, but he gets out regularly for walks with his son, Colin. He is also involved in Church activities and has recently taken up going to bowling again, as well as watching Portadown Football Club's home matches. He admits, though, that the team's recent run of results hasn't helped his mood much!

Recovery after stroke is different for everyone. For some, it can be a long journey. But whatever the position you find yourself in, one of our stroke services will be able to help. Between our Stroke Family Support Service, the Moving On Service, general Stroke Schemes and Young Stroke groups. We're on your side.

## Taking control – and changing lives



**The NICHS 'Taking Control' Self Management Programme is about giving people the confidence, skills and knowledge to manage their condition better and be more in control of their lives.**

"It has given me back an interest in other people, helped me restore my sense of humour and helped me take better control of managing the illness."

**"I am now living my life to the full by making a few changes. Setting myself regular simple tasks that are achievable is now very important to me."**

It can be used by those affected by chest, heart or stroke illnesses – in fact, by anyone with a long-term health condition. It does not conflict with existing programmes or treatments. It is designed to complement and enhance regular treatment.

We continue to work in close partnership with Arthritis Care NI in relation to a Service Level Agreement with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

As a member of the Long Term Conditions Alliance, we continue to promote the importance of self-management and lobby for such programmes to be available to all people living with a long-term condition.

Comments from some of the people who have taken part include:

"I have now been able to return to work."

**"It has been very informative and helped me deal with everyday issues. It helped me to talk and share my problems. Made me more determined to fight my illness and not allow it to beat me."**

"I can find ways of controlling my emotions a lot better and in general knowing how to cope and to help my husband with his emotions."

## Stroke Family Support extends right across our community



**The big news about NICHS Stroke Services is that we now have Stroke Family Support for everyone affected by the condition in Northern Ireland.**

We secured additional funding from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to take the service into Antrim Hospital. In the Western Trust NICHS was able to raise funds to establish the service for Stroke Family Support in Altnagelvin Hospital.

Our Stroke Family Support Service recognises that

stroke affects every member of the family in different ways. The person who has suffered the stroke has particular needs, but wives, husbands and children may also need help in adjusting to their new roles as carers. Stroke Family Support starts in hospital or as soon as the patient returns home. It:

- Identifies the needs of everyone in the family
- Sets goals for recovery
- Provides information
- Offers emotional support
- Gives advice on avoiding a repeat stroke

- Offers telephone support and home visits

Any stroke survivor is eligible, as is any carer or family member of a stroke survivor. You can find the phone numbers for our Stroke Family Support Co-ordinators on [www.nichs.org.uk](http://www.nichs.org.uk) under the heading What We Do.

Alternatively, call 028 9032 0184 and we can provide the information over the phone. Remember we're on your side.



## Smokers? See your future self in an instant!



**Recently we've been using Aprilage, a remarkable piece of software that shows people how their faces will age if they continue to smoke.**

Aprilage gives a person an immediate and sometimes shocking glimpse of the future. It is a powerful interactive tool, especially for young people. It leaves a lasting impression on girls in particular. Many of them are horrified by the deep wrinkles and yellowing of the skin that occurs through long-term tobacco use.

The face of a smoker looks, on average, 1.4 times its actual age. So, according to Aprilage developers (using data from the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York), a 30 year-old

person who smokes 20 cigarettes a day will look 42. A 50-year-old with the same tobacco habit looks 70.

Some reactions from schoolchildren to what they saw included:

**"I enjoyed learning about the effects of smoking by watching the pictures on Aprilage"** Boy (11) Hollywood Primary.

**"I learned today never to smoke! It could make me look old and I could die early."** Girl (10) Straid Primary.

**If you want advice and support to stop smoking call 0808 812 8008 or visit [www.want2stop.info](http://www.want2stop.info)**

## Energise - Improving the Health of Homeless People

**Homeless people experience some of the poorest health outcomes and inequalities in our communities, dying earlier than their counterparts from often preventable deaths including chest, heart and stroke illnesses.**

We have been working with the homeless community for over 9 years. We use innovative and sensitive ways to improve their awareness of healthy living, improving access to services with an ultimate aim of preventing cardiovascular and respiratory illness in this community.

Our work, funded by the Belfast Health Trust and the South Eastern Health Trust, is carried out in more than 40 hostels with well over 500 people benefiting from the service annually.

As part of this work we also deliver more than 20 Health Fairs over the course of the year in conjunction with other health specialists. We also provide 1-1 lifestyle support and advice.

**"I know I need to change my lifestyle and that's a lot easier, when you get this kind of help."** Man in his 60's from a North Belfast Hostel.

## Chester's Challenge highlights the importance of Promoting Health within Schools



**Our health promotion programme for primary pupils, Chester's Challenge, has visited 41 schools and taught more than 1,000 children about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity and the dangers of smoking.**

This was the first full year of the project, which uses Chester – a cute cartoon chimp – as its mascot.

We have been shocked by some of the stories we have been told. One teacher in north Belfast told us that he found one of his 8-year-old pupils smoking outside the school gates. When asked how he obtained the cigarettes, he said: "My mum got me them." Not believing the story, the teacher went to meet the mother at the school gates. When questioned, she admitted: "Yes, every day before he gets up I go down the shop and buy him his cigarettes."

To most people, the story is scarcely believable, but unfortunately it does occur, often because of a lack of knowledge. This is why it is essential that we give pupils the knowledge to understand the damage caused by smoking, so we can challenge what may be social norms in the local community.

Some of the schools visited by Chester's Challenge are in some of the most socially deprived areas of Northern Ireland. It is important to reach children in these communities, especially

those in the P5 to P7 age group, which is highly impressionable. Reactions to the programme included:

**"I learned not to smoke even if someone in your family does."** Boy (10), St. Aloysius Primary, Lisburn.

**"I learned that when you smoke you can get COPD and there's no going back."** Girl (9) St. Aloysius Primary, Lisburn.

Our 'Physical Activity and the Heart' workshop has really taken off, encouraging pupils to get their 60 minutes of exercise per day. This workshop teaches children about a healthy heart through games and relays. The 'Eat Your Way to Health' workshop has also remained popular.

**"The main thing we learned today was that if we don't exercise and don't eat healthily we could have a heart attack."** Girl (10) St. Joseph's Primary, Crossgar, Co Down.

This has been a very solid start to the project, and we hope to build on its success. When questioned, 83% of participants reported that they "really enjoyed" the workshops, while 16% described them as "okay."

## At work or play, health checks save the day

**Our health promotion nurses were busier than ever, offering health assessments in the workplace and to members of the public. They carried out nearly 4,500 health assessments ranging from a quick cholesterol measurement to a full health and lifestyle assessment.**

Our Health Checks include:

- Cardiac Risk Factor Assessment
- Cholesterol and Body Composition
- Health and Lifestyle Assessment

Health checks, delivered by volunteers, at our unit in Connswater Shopping Centre in east Belfast proved popular. A total of 588 people had their blood pressure checked, of whom 221 were referred to their GP for further investigation – that's a staggering 38%.



# Research offers lifeline in battle against illness

**This year we awarded more than £272,700 in research grants to professionals working in our local hospitals and universities.**

The largest grant - £109,080 - went to Professor Liam Heaney and his colleagues at Queen's University. The project will investigate why people with 'difficult to treat asthma' do not respond to treatment with inhaled steroid drugs.

The team has already examined tissue samples taken from the airways of patients in this group, and established that a very important genetic 'switch' called SOCS1 is reduced in the lining cells of the lungs of people with severe asthma. The project aims to understand why this molecular switch fails to turn on. It will also examine, in the laboratory, a potential method of turning on SOCS1 in the airway, using a naturally occurring compound called 'Interferon Gamma'.

If this can be done, it will dramatically improve people's lives because they will respond better to inhaled steroids, and reduce the cost to the Health Service.

**Dr Brenda O'Neill and colleagues at the University of Ulster received almost £80,000 to investigate the benefits of exercise in people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).**

It will compare the effects of an exercise programme with those of traditional pulmonary rehabilitation and establish if a simple regime of walking could offer an easy, cheap and independent way of benefiting the lung health of COPD sufferers.

**Another exercise study, run by Dr Alison Gallagher and colleagues at the University of Ulster, was awarded £57,500 to establish whether a programme of walking could change the balance of the 'good' and 'bad' components of cholesterol in the blood of people who are overweight or obese.**

Dr Amy-Jayne McKnight and her team at Queen's University received £26,500 to investigate the role of genetic structures called 'Telomeres' in raising the risk of heart disease in people who have undergone kidney transplants. It's hoped the research will identify those most at risk, enabling them to be given protective treatment against cardiovascular disease.



## How to apply for a grant

**Our grants are available to researchers working in Northern Ireland carrying out studies that will primarily benefit the people of Northern Ireland.**

NICHS welcomes applications for research projects which investigate the impact of any of these diseases on individuals, their families or communities. A short application form should

be completed in the first instance.

This will be scrutinised by the organisation's Scientific Research Grants Committee. Successful applicants at this stage will be invited to submit a full application, which will be subject to extensive peer review for quality assurance. Further details can be found on our web site, [www.nichs.org.uk](http://www.nichs.org.uk)

## Grants Committee and Conference

**We welcome the new members of our Scientific Research Grants Committee, responsible for overseeing the awarding of research funding.**

Professor Mike Shields is a Consultant Paediatrician and Professor of Child Health at Queen's University and the Royal Hospitals Trust.

Dr Mark Harbinson is a consultant cardiologist at the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and a senior lecturer at Queen's University.

Professor Cathy Craig, Head of the School of Psychology QUB, Director of Research, and Course Coordinator for the masters in Psychology of Performance Enhancement in Sport and Health.

\*The 8th NICHS Scientific Conference was held in February 2012 at the Royal Victoria Hospital. Those attending included academics from both local universities, members of our Scientific Research Grant Committee and a range of health professionals including consultants, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

# Queen's PhD student recognised for BPD research



From left Dr Lorcan McGarvey, Consultant Respiratory Physician at The Royal Group of Hospitals and Senior Lecturer at QUB, Aisling Gough, Winner of the Roger Lowry Medal and Dame Karen Dunnell, Vice-Chair of the NICHS Scientific Research Grants Committee.

**This year's prestigious Roger Lowry Medal for research – named in honour of NI Chest Heart & Stroke's former Chairman – was awarded to Aisling Gough, a PhD student at the School of Nursing and Midwifery Research Unit at Queen's University.**

Aisling's research – entitled the Premature Adult Lung Study (PALS) – is supervised by Dr Lorcan McGarvey. In Northern Ireland each year 50 premature infants will develop bronchopulmonary dysplasia, or BPD.

Many may be left with long term physical, medical, psychological and socioeconomic disadvantage extending beyond childhood and into adult life.

The research is studying adult survivors of the condition to try to identify early treatments for infants that might prevent

adverse health effects in later life. The aim of the research is to:

- **Provide new and important information on the outcome of survivors of BPD**

- **Inform strategy for the current care and future management of the increasing numbers of children in Northern Ireland who are born prematurely and develop BPD.**

We congratulate Aisling on joining the elite club of Roger Lowry Medal winners.



# Fun times Fundraising!



## Station2Station

The Fire and Rescue Service offered a lifeline to people affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses when they named us their charity partner. Firefighters have completed a number of events for NICHHS throughout the partnership, such as their 700-mile Station2Station bike ride. They have also held a number of static cycles events, fun days and car wash days at a number of stations. So far they have raised more than £12,000 for our work.

Noel McKee, pictured centre, of the Fire and Rescue Service said: "We want to raise as much money as possible for NICHHS as well as having the opportunity to meet with people and share some life-saving messages both in terms of fire safety and health promotion."



## Causeway Trek 2012

Our annual Causeway Trek continues to grow in popularity. On one of the sunniest days of the year, it attracted more than 400 participants and raised in excess of £18,000.

Roisin Hughes, our Fundraising Co-ordinator, said: "The Causeway Trek takes in some of Northern Ireland's most scenic countryside around the Giant's Causeway and is open to people of all abilities to raise funds and improve their own fitness."

Our picture shows a team of walkers from Ballymoney recruited by Claire and John Davison, with the beautiful Antrim coastline in the background.



## Belfast Marathon

The Belfast Marathon in 2012 was a wetter and gloomier affair than the Causeway Trek, but the weather didn't dampen the spirits of the 300 participants who pounded the streets of the city on behalf of NI Chest Heart & Stroke. Their efforts brought in £37,000.

Maureen McCourt, our health promotion nurse, ran the marathon again this year. She has tackled events all around the world, including the Sydney Marathon in 2006. She said: "Getting fit can add years to your life and – in combination with a healthy eating plan – can help you avoid heart disease and stroke."



## To Scotland by Surfboard

Here's a fundraising effort with a difference – top surfer Al Mennie dodged tankers, trawlers and an oil rig to paddle his board from Northern Ireland to Scotland.

Al – who has surfed some of the biggest waves on the planet – set off from the Giant's Causeway and reached Islay a staggering nine hours and 25 minutes later.

"The final stretch of three miles was the toughest," he said. "I could see the cliffs but the current wouldn't let me get to them. Then when I finally broke through the current sucked me westerly and almost sent me past the end of the island". Al had expected the trip to take eight hours, but the fierce currents meant that at times his speed dropped to less than two miles per hour.

## BE Aerospace

Over the last year, in the small town of Kilkeel, Co. Down, employees of BE Aerospace have been taking part in all sorts of activities to help rebuild lives with NICHHS. BE Aerospace, which employs 550 people in the manufacture of aircraft seating for the global market, announced its brand new charity partnership with us in July 2011.

Since then, the commitment of BE Aerospace's Entertainments Committee and the generosity of its employee base is reflected in the amount which has been raised for NICHHS: more than £10,000 already surpassing the original target.

NICHHS Fundraising Manager, Vanessa Elder said of the corporate partnership: "It has been a real pleasure working with such a dedicated group of people, who have been so generous not only financially, but also with their time, in organising events such as themed raffles, big breakfasts, Family Fun Days and weight loss programmes! Not to mention the



fantastic prizes of iPads to holidays and extra annual leave days."

Neil Cairns, Vice President & Managing Director of the BE Aerospace Kilkeel plant, believes charity partnerships are integral to the company:

"BE Aerospace is delighted to have teamed up for the first time with NI Chest Heart & Stroke. This charity has an excellent reputation and the amazing work it does deserves high praise and recognition. For BE Aerospace social responsibility is an important part of our work ethic."

*Pictured with Vanessa Elder, NICHHS Corporate Fundraising Manager are the BE Aerospace Entertainments Committee and their Vice President and Managing Director Neil Cairns*

## Chartered Accountants Ireland

The Institute of Chartered Accountants Ireland and its regional office in Northern Ireland, the Ulster Society, joined forces with NI Chest Heart & Stroke to run the institute's first ever Charity Day on Friday 23rd April 2012.

That Friday afternoon, thousands of chartered accountants across the whole of Ireland, as well as chartered accountancy students, colleagues, family and friends got active for one big cause, to beat cardiovascular disease across the whole of Ireland. They ran, walked or cycled 5 miles each.

There were many healthy initiatives, health assessments and dress down days. Collectively, employees of Harbinson Mullholland, Goldblatt McGuigan, Moore Stephens, FPMCA, RSM McClure Watters, McCartney and Co, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Invest NI, ASM, Cavannagh and Co, as well as their friends and families raised over £12,000 to help those affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses.



Chartered Accountants Ulster Society Chairman Fergal McCann said: "On behalf of Ulster's Chartered Accountants, I'm delighted to row in behind Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke. I see this initiative as a fantastic opportunity to get fit and active, while raising much-needed funds for charity."

*Pictured at the launch of the Chartered Accountants Ulster Healthy Heart Day are Chartered Accountants Dick Milliken, former British and Irish Lion and Sean Cavanagh, former GAA Player of the year along with Vanessa Elder, NICHHS Corporate Fundraising Manager.*



# Biggest Lunch a Worthwhile Munch



**It was Northern Ireland's biggest lunch date of the year – and people taking part had the chance to win a number of tasty prizes, including a cookery masterclass with TV's Jenny Bristow.**

The Hearty Lunch, organised by NI Chest Heart & Stroke and supported by O'Brien's Sandwich Bar, Northern Ireland's leading sandwich chain, was held in June 2012 and encouraged people to host a meal, invite friends and charge each of them a modest fee, to be donated to the charity's work.

The event got off to a flying start as UTV's Julian Simmons – who recently underwent cardiac surgery – gave it his stamp of approval. Other names from the worlds of TV, film and sport also signed up, including rugby star Chris Henry and GAA hero Sean Cavanagh. Jenny Bristow did a Facebook and Twitter web chat, advising people

on healthy recipes for their event. Our furthest away lunch was at the home of Alison Parkinson, who lives on New Zealand's South Island. O'Brien's Director Adrian Garvey said: "We are very pleased to be able to support the work of NI Chest Heart & Stroke and underline the importance of healthy eating. Everyone in Northern Ireland knows someone affected by a chest, heart or stroke illness and this is a great, fun way of supporting those affected."

We are very grateful to O'Brien's for their superb support, to all the celebrities who helped out in any way and, of course, to all those who held a Hearty Lunch.

Our picture shows TV's Julian Simmons tucking in at the launch of the Hearty Lunch, supported by O'Briens. He was joined by NICHs Director of Fundraising, Siobhan Hanley and Adrian Garvey, Director of O'Brien's.

# Raising Funds in our Local Communities...

## Ards Mayor Charity of the Year

A charity collection by the Mayor of Ards raised more than £700. Councillor Meryvn Oswald spent a day at Tesco in Newtownards chatting to shoppers and promoting the work of NICHs. Meryvn, who has had two stents fitted in his heart arteries, said it was vital to give something back to such a worthwhile cause. The mayor organised a number of other events and handed over a cheque for over £1750 at the end of his time in office.

## Marion Flanagan Memorial Football Match

The Flanagan family from Castlewellan organised a memorial GAA match at St John's in memory of their mother who died from a stroke in August 2011.

**The event was a great success and raised more than £8,500. Many thanks to the family for all their hard work at a time of great personal loss.**

## Charity Sheep Shearing - Limavady

A charity sheep-shearing event was held at the Coast Road Inn, Limavady, after the County Londonderry and Limavady Agricultural Show.

Local businesses kindly supplied prizes for an auction and raffle, money for the prize winners and food for the barbecue. A big thank

you also goes to Snappy Snaps in Coleraine for their sponsorship. The Speed Shearing attracted competitors from all over Northern Ireland, with Jack Robinson from Claudy winning first prize with an amazing time of 19.40 seconds. Trevor Clarke was second on 22.57 and John McCormick third with a time of 22.85.

All winners generously donated their prize money back to NI Chest Heart & Stroke. David Thompson kindly agreed to auction off the prizes donated by Jamie Mark of Foylehov in Limavady, Colm Donaghy of North West Motor Factors in Limavady, John McElderry of Ballymoney and BC Plant Hire, Limavady.

**After an amazing night a remarkable total of £2,800 was raised. County Londonderry and Limavady Show then kindly donated £200 to bring the total to £3,000.00.**

This was three times the amount raised last year.

*Pictured - Event Organisers: back row - Chrissy Mullan, Alwyn McFarlane, John Harbinson, David Linton, Sean Quigley, Jonathan Loughery. Front row - Paula Kerlin, Melissa Knox, Fergus Harbinson and Brian McCluskey, NICHs Community Fundraiser.*

## Donation in memory of a loved one.

As a special and lasting tribute, many people choose to support Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke by requesting that family and friends make a donation in memory of a loved one.

Please contact Paddy Trainor on **028 9032 0184** for further information or visit **[www.nichs.org.uk](http://www.nichs.org.uk)**

**WE'RE  
ON YOUR  
SIDE**

**Chest  
Heart &  
Stroke**





## Raising Funds in our Local Communities...



### Heartbeat Trek

The Heartbeat Trek took place in Derry/Londonderry in June to commemorate the lives of members of three local families. The Darroch family, the Dunn family and the Sargent family have all lost relatives to heart attack or stroke.

The trek started at the Waterfoot Hotel and took in the New Bridge and Peace Bridge before returning to Waterfoot. There was a choice of four walks, one "lap" of the course being 3 miles. The more intrepid participants opted for the 18-mile version. There was fun for the children, with a bouncy castle, face painters and a clown modelling balloons. There was also a goody bag for everyone taking part.

*Pictured above are members of the Dunn and Sargent family at the finish line of the Heartbeat Trek.*

### Tyrone Rose

Donna Ross, Tyrone Rose for 2011, chose NI Chest, Heart & Stroke as her charity of the year. As well as taking part in a sponsored abseil down the Europa Hotel in Belfast, Donna organised a fantastic fashion show at the Linen Green in Dungannon in November, which raised more than £1,100 for our work.

### Orchard County Vintage Vehicle Club

The Orchard County Vintage Vehicle Club donated £2,750 to NICHs this year – proceeds of their 21st annual vintage rally, which was sponsored by Ulster Bank and Barclays.

In total the club donated more than £8,000 to their three chosen charities after their fantastic display of cars, craft stands and ever-popular Tea Room. In total, the Orchard County Vintage Rally Vehicle Club have raised over £75,000 over the past 21 years for charities including NICHs.



### Tractor Trek

Glenarm tractor enthusiasts Stephen Robinson and Leslie Morrow, together with their families, organised a Tractor Road Run in aid of NICHs.

The 25-mile run took place over a range of country roads, farmers' lanes and private land around the scenic Glenarm area. Family members provided refreshments for the participants at the start of the day and at the half-way lunch stop, enthusiasts had the opportunity to see Stephen Robinson's collection of Nuffield and Leyland tractors. Through the generosity of the participants, the event raised £1,200.

*Pictured above : Leslie Morrow, Valerie Saunders, NICHs Community Fundraiser and Stephen Robinson*



### Our Caring Caretaker – Davy Boyle MBE

Davy Boyle, from Coleraine – better known as the Caring Caretaker – continues to raise money annually for his chosen charities, including NICHs. Since 2000 he has raised a massive total of almost £350,000 for worthy causes.

### Over the past four years Davy has donated £38,000 to support our work in the Causeway area.

NICHs Chief Executive Andrew Dougal said: "Davy has motivated people to help in fundraising in so many different ways and has inspired so many".

"His selflessness in enduring the most oppressive winter weather conditions with his annual Christmas sit out is an example to others".

## Leave a Lasting Legacy



**Despite the dire economic conditions, people kindly continued to remember us in their wills. During 2011-2012, their generosity meant that we received £1,122,652 in legacy income.**

Legacy income enables us to rebuild the lives of thousands who suffer from chest, heart or stroke illnesses across Northern Ireland. This source of income also makes it possible to fund important research projects through our local universities or hospitals. Research benefits local people in the first instance – but it often has global implications. For example, NICHs funded research identified two genes responsible for Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH), which can cause very early death from heart disease.

Legacies provide a vital source of income for us, on average each year funding 40% of our work. We welcome all legacies and related enquiries. Funds can be directed to a particular area of our work and we are happy to discuss this on an individual basis, or with a financial or legal advisor in more detail.

**When you make a will, after you have taken care of your family and friends, you are in the best position to leave a lasting legacy to help those that suffer from chest, heart or stroke illnesses.**

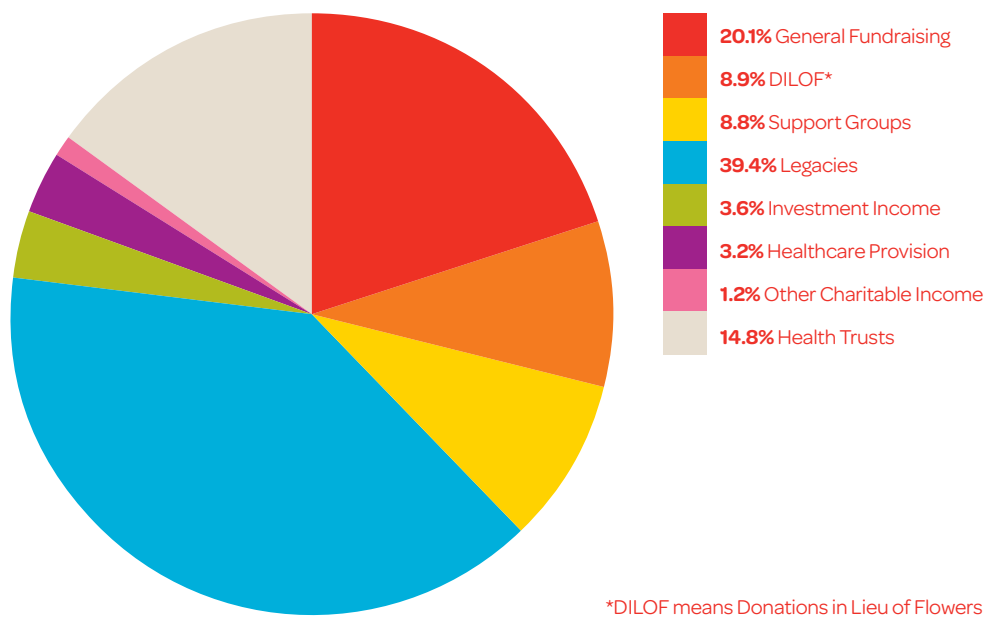
There is a number of ways you can leave a lasting gift to NICHs. You can leave what's left of your estate after all expenses and gifts have been deducted. Or if you prefer, a specific sum of money. You can also leave a particular possession.

If you haven't made your will yet, or are thinking of including NICHs in your will, we would welcome the opportunity to speak to you. **Please call Alison Vidamour on 028 9032 0184.**

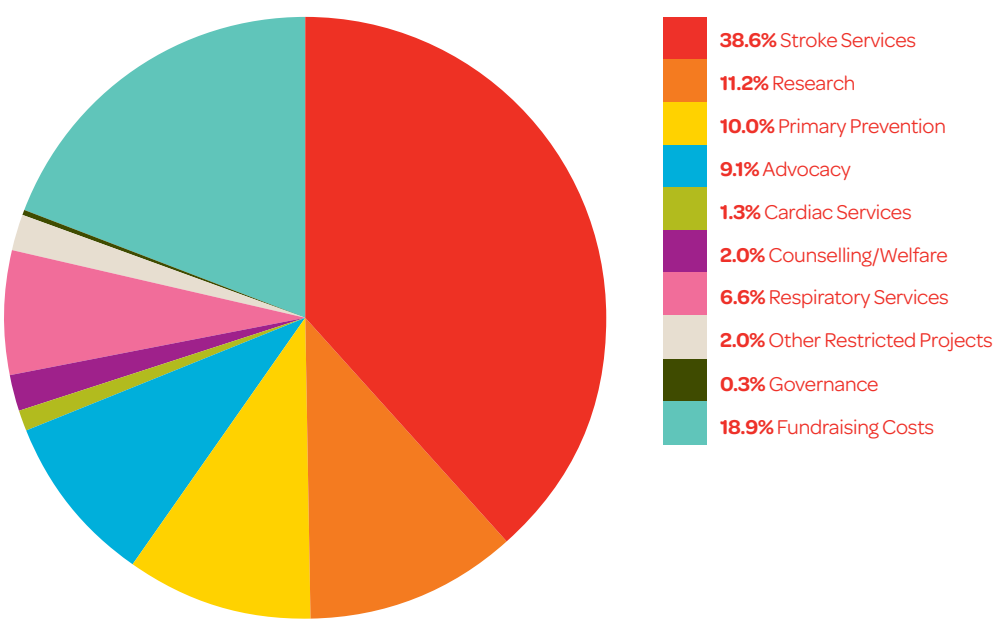


# Our Income

## Where our money comes from



## Where our money goes



# Join us on Facebook and Twitter



Mention us to your friends – the more followers we have, the more we can spread the message about about our work to combat chest, heart and stroke illnesses.. Find us on Facebook, too. We're at [www.facebook.com/Belfast.NICHs](http://www.facebook.com/Belfast.NICHs).

If you have a Twitter account, you can now follow us @nichstweet or find our page at [www.twitter.com/nichstweet](http://www.twitter.com/nichstweet). It's the best place for up-to-date snippets of information about what we're doing, as well as links to research and other interesting material from Northern Ireland and around the world.

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Sir William Hastings KB CBE

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Prof Michael Shields,  
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Queen's University Belfast



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

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ON YOUR  
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