

Our Impact

REPORT

2022/2023



Chest
Heart &
Stroke



Welcome

from **Declan Cunnane CEO**

I am delighted to share with you our 2022/23 Annual Impact Report.

This year 23,761 people and organisations benefitted from our Care and Health Promotion services. We are proud of the huge impact our work has had in local communities across Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, as many as 1 in 3 people are living with chest, heart and stroke conditions. When we include those undergoing treatment for hypertension, a leading cause of stroke and heart attacks, the number of people on registers is over 624,000.

As we reflect on our recent achievements and highlights, we recognize that there is still much work to be done. With this in mind, we have this year developed our new 2023-2026 Strategic Plan in collaboration with our dedicated staff, volunteers, service users past and present, supporters, and Governance Board. Their invaluable contributions have helped shape our roadmap for the next three years.

It is evident that the need for our work has never been greater and we are fully committed and focused on our vision of a healthy Northern Ireland free from chest, heart and stroke illnesses.

Our expertise in providing care and support for those living with chest, heart, and stroke conditions is coupled with our relentless efforts

to prevent these illnesses through our health promotion services, programmes, research, and campaigning work

We are proud that we are currently funding 18 live research projects in local universities and hospitals, and this year we are funding five new high-quality pieces of research which were successful in our Scientific Research Grants application process. We eagerly await the ground-breaking results of these projects in the years to come. Our campaigning work continues as we strive to represent the needs of people with chest, heart, and stroke conditions, even in the absence of a sitting Government in Northern Ireland.

This year we were incredibly proud to be awarded the 'We Invest in People' Gold Accreditation from Investors in People (IIP). Only 17% of organisations achieve Gold, and this accreditation demonstrates the incredible levels of passion and dedication to our work that all of our staff share across the organisation. We are committed to delivering high-quality services which make a difference, while also creating a welcoming, friendly, inclusive and supportive working environment. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all our dedicated staff, without whom we could not have achieved this.

I am also delighted to highlight the tremendous success of our flagship Red Dress Fun Run event held at Stormont Estate in February. The support of over 800 participants raised an incredible £73,000 for our work. Thank you to everyone who took part in this event and contributed to our cause.

As a charity, almost 90% of our income comes from public donations. Therefore, we are extremely grateful to our fundraisers, supporters, volunteers, followers, and friends who make our work possible.

Your contributions enable us to rebuild lives across Northern Ireland, and on behalf of our clients and staff, I thank you.

Declan Cunnane, CEO

What we do

We have been leading the fight against chest, heart and stroke illnesses in Northern Ireland since 1946.

We do this by working across four main areas:

- We Care
- We Prevent
- We Research
- We Campaign

We provide expert **care** and support to anyone living with chest, heart and stroke conditions.

We work to **prevent** these illnesses, by helping detect early signs of chest, heart and stroke illness and empowering individuals to make healthy choices.

We fund **research** to advance how we treat, care for and prevent chest, heart and stroke conditions.

We **campaign** for better care, treatments and awareness of chest, heart and stroke conditions.

As a charity, almost 90% of our income comes from public donations.



£4,126,385

expenditure on charitable activities.

(based on unaudited accounts for the year ended 31/3/23)



23,761

people and organisations across Northern Ireland benefitted from our Care and Health Promotion Services.

We Care

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES / EMOTIONAL SUPPORT / FAMILY SUPPORT / PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMMES / INFORMATION & ADVICE

At Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke, we offer a wide range of care and support services for people living with chest, heart and stroke conditions. We work with people throughout Northern Ireland, along with their families and carers.

Through our Care Services team, we provide:

- Practical advice and information
- Emotional support
- Access to physical activity to support rehabilitation
- A range of programmes for improving overall wellbeing
- Signposting to other organisations

Family Support Service

Our Family Support Service is here to support both you and your family as you navigate life with a chest, heart or stroke condition. You will receive an initial home visit through which we can offer a listening ear and find out more about your individual circumstances. From there, we can provide you with personalised advice and a support plan to suit your needs.

Taking Control Self Management Programme

If you're living with a long-term chest, heart or stroke condition, then our Taking Control Self Management Programme provides a range of skills which will help you to manage your condition better and improve your confidence. It also connects you to people with similar conditions, who understand what it's like to live with a long-term condition.



The programme covers the following topics:

- Getting a good night's sleep
- Managing symptoms
- Medication 'how-to'
- Working with your healthcare team
- Setting weekly goals
- Effective problem-solving
- Better communication
- Handling difficult emotions
- How to relax
- Tips for eating well

Inspire Choir

Our dedicated Inspire Choir is open to all services users, but is primarily targeted at those with chest conditions as singing helps to significantly improve breathing and general lung function.

From The Heart

If you're living with a chest, heart or stroke condition, our 'From The Heart' magazine provides postal support to help you feel more connected to our charity and others in a similar situation to you, and to look after your wellbeing at home.

Support for Chest Conditions

If you're living with a respiratory condition, we are here to help you with whatever challenges you may be facing. Whether it's providing information and advice on your condition to relieve worry and confusion or helping you to connect with others in similar situations, we're here to help you get back on your feet.

Breathing Better Education Programme

An education programme for anyone with a long-term chest condition. It educates people on topics such as proper inhaler use, breathing techniques, physical activity with a chest condition, and making lifestyle changes to improve your health.

Breathing Better Wellness Sessions

Offered both online and face-to-face, Breathing Better Wellness Sessions focus on health promotion, physical exercise and emotional wellbeing. They offer peer support and reduce social isolation.

Breathing Better Walking Groups

Our Breathing Better Walking Groups support people with chest conditions to exercise in a safe environment, at their own pace. The walks facilitate both physical activity, and peer support which are equally important when living with a long term condition.



Support for Heart Conditions

Whether you've just been diagnosed with a heart condition, or have experienced a heart attack and are now recovering, we are here to help with all aspects of your recovery.

Heart Strong Programme

Delivered over 6 weeks, this online cardiac education programme brings together groups of individuals living across Northern Ireland who have a diagnosis of a heart condition. This programme is designed to help participants to learn more about their health and take steps needed to move forward post diagnosis.

The programme covers the following topics:

- Understanding your condition
- Emotions after diagnosis
- Physical activity
- Heart health
- Adopting healthier habits

Stay Strong Walking Groups:

We recognise that for many people post diagnosis, regular exercise may be daunting, especially if it is not part of your everyday life. Our Walking Groups help take some of the fear out of exercising, supporting you to gain confidence and be active in a safe environment at your own pace. These groups are delivered over 6 weeks and are open to anyone with a cardiac condition.

Support for Stroke

Stroke Joint Pathway

Formed and delivered in partnership with the Stroke Association, our joint pathway is here for all stroke survivors and their carers and family members. Working in partnership with local Health and Social Care Trust teams throughout Northern Ireland, we provide integrated support for you and your family through our Family Support Service, offering information, guidance and onward referrals to other services.

Wellness Sessions

Our information and wellness sessions delivered across NI focus on secondary prevention, health promotion, physical exercise and emotional wellbeing. They offer peer support and reduce social isolation.

Post Rehab Exercise Programme (PREP)

Our six-week PREP programme is available across all of Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care Trusts.

PREP provides additional support for stroke survivors after statutory rehab. Aimed at helping you to rebuild your life and gain confidence following a stroke, PREP does this through a combination of education and physio-developed exercises.

PREP covers the following topics:

- What is a stroke?
- The benefits of exercise
- Emotions after stroke
- Food for life
- Lifestyle choices
- Fatigue and falls
- Signposting

Support for Carers

Carers Education Programme (CEP)

Our Carers Education Programme is here for anyone caring for a loved one who has had a stroke. The programme includes Q&A sessions with healthcare experts such as a Stroke Nurse Specialist, physiotherapists, pharmacists, and speech and language therapists and signposting to other organisations to provide support and guidance within your caring role.



Clodagh's Story – Stroke Survivor

Clodagh Dunlop, from Magherafelt, suffered a major stroke 8 years ago at the age of 35. Clodagh's life changed overnight as her stroke resulted in Locked-in Syndrome, leaving her completely paralysed and only able to communicate through blinking. Thanks to determination and hard work, Clodagh has recovered well from her stroke and wants to use what happened to her for something positive and so is now a volunteer for Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke.

Clodagh explains; "I had been unwell and believed I was having a stroke. I asked my sister to call an ambulance. I was taken to a local hospital and as I was waiting in A&E I had a brainstem stroke. I was transferred to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast where I had surgery and a massive blood clot removed from my brainstem. I was given a 50/50 chance of survival."

Thankfully, Clodagh survived but she was to stay in hospital in Belfast for nearly 8 months, fighting through an experience most people would consider their worst nightmare. Clodagh says; "When I woke up in the Intensive Care Unit after my surgery it was a terrifying experience. I couldn't move a muscle but inside my head I was screaming 'I'm here!' I was a prisoner in my own body."

For almost 3 months Clodagh was unable to move or speak. She could only communicate by blinking, but her mind remained completely alert, and she was fully aware of everything that was happening around her. Eventually Clodagh started to show some signs of recovery and was transferred to the Brain Injury Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast where she had to learn to breathe, swallow, walk and talk again. On discharge from hospital, Clodagh completed PREP (Post Rehab Exercise Programme).



Clodagh says; "I spent a long time in hospital and, like many people who suffer a significant stroke, when I was discharged the services came to an abrupt stop. This had a real impact on my mental health and wellbeing, particularly as a young stroke survivor. **There was a real void in aftercare and unfortunately it led to me having suicidal thoughts- but into that void came NICHS and their PREP programme.**"

"PREP gave me the opportunity to meet other stroke survivors. I was with people who understood my feelings because we had shared experiences as stroke survivors. With PREP I was in a community where people were able to understand me and what I was going through. I wasn't the only one whose life was changed by stroke. I was able to talk to people openly and honestly."

Clodagh found the benefits of PREP so great she was keen to give something back to the charity. She explains; **"NICHS may not realise how important PREP was to me, but the group was a turning point in my wellbeing and mental health post-stroke."**



Clodagh has been a volunteer Community Ambassador with NICHS for 5 years. She says; "I wanted to give something back and it was a natural progression from using NICHS services to becoming an ambassador."

"As a Community Ambassador I go to events to tell people my story and raise awareness of stroke and what Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke does to help people like me. I go out to events and accept cheques from fundraisers on behalf of the charity. I like being able to thank people for taking the time and effort to raise money for the charity because I am a real-life example of someone who has been helped by them."

"People often ask, 'What can a charity do?' and I am able to say, 'Actually they do really help.' They can't make you better, but they play a significant role in helping you after a lifechanging event. I have experienced what they do and the difference this makes to people's lives. Volunteering with NICHS is my way of saying thank you for that."



Care Impact

22/23

Over the past year, we've helped almost 3,000 people and their families to adjust to life with a chest, heart or stroke condition, helping them to enjoy life to the full, re-engage with hobbies, and improve their confidence, independence and overall quality of life.



2,588
people supported across
our Care Services

Number of people supported by each of our services:

Family Support	1643	Inspire Choir	31
PREP	345	Taking Control Self-Management Programme	219
Breathing Better	19	Carers' Education Programme	120
Respiratory Walking Groups	58	Return to Work Programme	60
Cardiac Walking Groups	71	Heart Strong	22

Cardiac Support



204 people were referred
to our cardiac services

Heart Strong Education Programme

Those who participated in our Heart Strong Education Programme said...

91%

"It made a difference
to my health"

91%

"It helped me take better
control of my health"

82%

"It helped me take
better control of my
heart condition"

Since joining the programme...

86%

were more physically
active

92%

had improved
their diet

82%

managed
stress better

Stroke Support



1,042 people were referred to
our stroke services

PREP (Post Rehab Exercise Programme)



591 people were
referred

By the end of the programme, participants showed improvements in...

MOBILITY T.U.G. TEST ("Timed Up and Go" is a test of mobility and fall risk)



79%

showed improvements
in mobility



x2

Those who were "independently
mobile" **doubled (103%)**



50%

showed "clinically
important" improvements



74%

were "not a fall risk",
vs **50%** in week 1



10 METER TEST (A test of walking speed)



79%

showed improvements
in walking speed



74%

were classified as
"community walkers" (not
restricted to walking at
home) vs **58%** in week 1



90%

showed "clinically
important" improvements



WELLBEING



70%

showed improvements
in their mental well-being



x2

The numbers classified as
having 'high' well-being
doubled **(103%)**



Respiratory Support



282

people were referred to our respiratory services

Breathing Better Education Programme & Wellness Sessions

“

Attending the Breathing Better course has been invaluable to me. Until I went to the programme I had little or no knowledge regarding my chronic lung condition. The education delivered was so productive and informative.

”

“

I thought it was excellent. The programme was very detailed, the slides and videos were amazing. The best part was learning from others in the group. It couldn't have been better. Connecting with NICHHS has been life changing.

”

Breathing Better Walking Groups

89%

said our Breathing Better Walking Groups improved their fitness, confidence and overall health.

Taking Control Self-Management Programme



219

people were referred to Taking Control

100% rated the programme 4 or 5 stars ★★★★★

88% would definitely recommend the programme to others

100% said that the programme helped them feel more in control and more confident dealing with their condition.

Those who took part reported improvements in their symptoms:

75%

emotional distress

75%

how much their illness affected them

63%

fatigue

63%

other symptoms or health problems

50%

physical discomfort or pain

“Percentage who reported an improvement, pre- vs post”

We Campaign

CHEST, HEART AND STROKE SERVICES REFORM / AIR QUALITY / CHILDHOOD OBESITY / HOSPITAL WAITING LISTS

We campaign and lobby local representatives and Government to introduce health policies and changes in legislation that will lead to improvements in the care and treatment of chest, heart and stroke illnesses, and in the health and wellbeing of the population of Northern Ireland.

We always listen to views of people living with chest, heart, and stroke conditions, and to their loved ones. Your experiences help shape our campaigns for better care and prevention of these conditions, today and tomorrow.

Despite political instability and an Executive who are not sitting, we have continued to work to lead the fight against chest, heart and stroke conditions in any way we can – through working with All Party Groups, working with the Trusts and other community organisations to influence change.

Policy and Public Affairs Key Highlights 22/23



We helped set up the Cross-Party Group on Stroke.



We campaigned about Cardiac waiting lists.



We lobbied the Government for a new Lung Health Strategy and pressed for the Respiratory Forum to be reconstituted.



We lobbied for improved Heart Failure services.

We worked to improve awareness and knowledge amongst the public, patients, and professionals around asthma.

We continued to campaign on issues such as tobacco, alcohol, and obesity.





Ralph's Story - Heart Attack

Ralph Magee from Comber didn't expect that occasional pains in his chest while exercising could be indicative of a heart attack. But aged 56, he found that was exactly what had happened to him.

The father of three and retired Principal of Andrews Memorial Primary School first became aware of potential problems with his health in 2020. Ralph says, "A colleague had organised for Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke to come to the school and do health checks. At the time, I knew I was a bit heavier than I should be. I was exercising but not eating as healthily as I could have been. I also wanted to find out about my cholesterol, because it had been high a few years before and I had been on statins, before getting off them by reducing my cholesterol through exercise."

"I went along to the check and was told pretty much what I expected! The NICHs Health Promotion Officer confirmed my high cholesterol levels and advised me to take the next twelve

weeks to look after my diet and exercise, then to go to my GP and get my cholesterol checked again. If it went down, it would show I was in control of it, and if not, then I would need statins again."

Ralph continues, "It was the beginning of lockdown, and the weather was great. I started going out on my bike and running but going uphill I had to stop because of chest discomfort. At that time, I didn't see it as pain. I didn't think I was having a heart attack. I was able to stop, take a drink and cycle on, so I thought I was fine. With running I was really struggling though. Overall, I knew something wasn't right. One day I was walking our dog up a little hill and felt the discomfort again and knew I needed to go to hospital."

It was in hospital that Ralph received a shock when he found out he needed to have a stent fitted, and that he had suffered a heart attack. Ralph says, "It was only when the doctor came

around on the second day that he used the phrase heart attack. At the time I thought having the stent was precautionary. I was lucky as the heart attack didn't damage my heart muscle. I got off lightly, but it was the warning I needed to look after myself more carefully. My mum had a heart attack at 78 and died of heart failure, she didn't get a chance to have a stent. Hopefully with my stent I've been given a second chance."

Following his heart attack, Ralph got involved in supporting Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke through fundraising. He says, **"I saw an advert for the charity's Red Dress Fun Run. Due to the personal connection it meant something to me and I thought I should support the event. I had started to run again as part of my recovery after my heart attack and I was enjoying it, so I decided to do a 10km run with my friends and two sons in the local area and raise money via a JustGiving page. In 2022, I also decided to take part in the Belfast City Half Marathon supporting NICHs."**

In February 2022 and again in 2023, Ralph also decided to get his pupils involved too. Ralph explains, "We registered the school for the Primary Schools' Red Dress Fun Run. Some classes do the Daily Mile which is designed to get kids outside for 15 minutes a day, and we just made it more fun. We jogged, walked and danced dressed in red. We also held a school assembly where I explained to the children a bit about what had happened to me. All of it helped raise funds for the charity."



“

We registered the school for the Primary Schools' Red Dress Fun Run. Some classes do the Daily Mile which is designed to get kids outside for 15 minutes a day, and we just made it more fun. We jogged, walked and danced dressed in red. We also held a school assembly where I explained to the children a bit about what had happened to me. All of it helped raise funds for the charity. ”



We Research

LOCAL RESEARCH / SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAMME / LIFE CHANGING ADVANCES IN TREATMENT AND PREVENTION OF CHEST, HEART & STROKE ILLNESSES

With your help, we've funded high quality research in local universities and hospitals since 1946. Research is vital in the fight to prevent chest, heart, and stroke conditions.

We have had 20 research projects active during the year, with 2 studies being completed and an additional 5 new studies funded this year.

A special thank you to our Scientific Research Committee for their ongoing support of the grants process, and to the researchers who reviewed and scored the applications we received.



18
research studies live at the end of the financial year



5
new projects funded this year



£386,192
awarded to new research projects in 2022/23

New Research Studies 2022/23

Heart



CLEC3B - a novel biomarker for heart failure: cohort evaluation and development of a point of care prototype

Can we develop a lateral flow device to test for heart failure?

Dr Chris Watson, QUB, £85,525

Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA) in Northern Ireland (NI): a five year review

What do we know about cardiac arrests in community settings (OHCA)?

Julia Wolfe, NI Ambulance Service, £73,048

Developing a sustainable NI register for inherited cardiac conditions with an epidemiological description of national population data.

How many people have an inherited heart condition?

Prof Amy Jayne McKnight, QUB £74,395

Respiratory



INHALER Cohort Study: Investigating How Asthma Links to Early-life Respiratory tract infections

Are severe common cold infections in childhood linked to developing asthma?

Dr Helen Groves, QUB £65,397

Adaptive immune responses and airway microbe-defences following EBV suppression as novel treatment for COPD

Can a common cold sore medication be used in the fight against COPD?

Dr Dermot Linden, QUB £87,826



We Prevent

HEALTH PROMOTION / PREVENTION / ADVICE / HEALTH CHECKS / WORKPLACE, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

We are the only local charity in Northern Ireland dedicated to the prevention of chest, heart and stroke illnesses.

We offer services to workplaces, communities and schools to help detect early signs of chest, heart and stroke illness and provide information to empower individuals to make healthy lifestyle changes. We also work with a range of partners to promote health and raise awareness of the symptoms of chest, heart and stroke conditions and to prevent obesity by encouraging people to enjoy healthy and active lives.

Our health promotion and prevention services include:



Work Well Live Well is a **free** Workplace Health and Wellbeing Support Service funded by the Public Health Agency (PHA) and delivered by Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke. Available to any workplaces based in the Northern, Southern, South Eastern and Belfast Health & Social Care Trust areas, the service provides personalised support to improve the wellbeing of employees. This includes carrying out a health and wellbeing survey and developing a bespoke health action plan for your organisation, as well as providing Health Champion and Mental Health First Aid training and access to webinars and resources.



Well Checks

We offer Well Checks for individuals as well as packages for workplaces and community groups to help detect the early warning signs associated with developing chest, heart and stroke conditions.

Our Well Checks:

- Assess and check for atrial fibrillation, blood pressure and cholesterol issues, as well as measuring your weight, body fat and lifestyle risk factors, with other options available to suit your needs.
- Empower people to make informed and manageable lifestyle changes.
- Promote organisational health and wellbeing with long-lasting benefits.
- Also includes personal and organisational health reports and action planning template.

We also offer pop-up health checks covering Atrial Fibrillation and blood pressure in communities across Northern Ireland throughout the year, particularly in areas of deprivation.

Well Webinar

Our interactive webinars empower people to make informed lifestyle changes that will reduce their risk of developing chest, heart and stroke illnesses. Webinars are available on a wide range of topics, providing the information and tools needed to enable employees to look after and improve their health. Bespoke webinars to suit your business needs can also be produced and delivered.

Topics you can choose from include:

- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity
- Cardiovascular Exercise
- Physical Activity: Strengthening & Stretching Exercise
- Stress
- Sleep
- Alcohol
- A Healthy Heart
- Know Your Signs and Symptoms
- Smoking

Well Talk

Well Talks provide health information to enable your employees to improve their overall health and wellbeing. Our health promotion team will provide information on lifestyle changes employees can make thereby reducing their risk of developing chest, heart and stroke conditions.

Topics you can choose from include all Well Webinar topics, plus:

- Know Your ABCS
- Healthy Eating on a Budget
- Support Your Wellbeing

Well Mind

Well Mind is a workshop which focuses on recognising the triggers of stress and the impact that it can have on your employees. The session will enable employees to understand how stress can be managed in a positive way, using tools such as breathing techniques, reframing and mindfulness.



This supportive behaviour change programme motivates individuals who are ready to make healthier lifestyle changes.

Our health promotion team help employees identify areas that they wish to improve and support them to make these positive changes through personal face-to-face and online support.



Learning early how to enjoy healthy, active lives is key to giving children the best start in life. It helps them grow into adults who are less at risk of serious illnesses like chest, heart and stroke conditions, as well as obesity.

At NICHs we support families, schools and young people by educating them about these issues. We provide interactive health workshops, practical tips and advice on how to eat well, stay active and understand the risk factors to serious illness. We offer our Chester's Challenge programme for primary schools as well as Well Talks for secondary schools and colleges.

Topics covered include:

- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity
- Stress
- Alcohol
- The Dangers of Smoking



We're all at risk of chest, heart and stroke illnesses but for those who are homeless, the risk is even greater. Often they don't have access to a GP or the conditions that support healthy lifestyle choices. We provide:

- Health promotion information and resources
- Cook It and Walking Programmes
- Health Checks and Talks
- Health Champion training for hostel staff
- Our one year Well Space programme promoting healthy hostels

Our Health and Homeless service aims to raise awareness of healthy living and to reduce the risk of chest, heart and stroke conditions. This service is currently available to homeless hostels and drop-in centres in the Belfast and South Eastern areas. Funded by the Public Health Agency, it prioritises families and young people who are homeless.

Asthma Can Kill Campaign

We launched our asthma awareness campaign in conjunction with the Asthma Partnership Group in Summer 2022 with the aim of raising awareness asthma, how dangerous it can be and the importance of the correct use of inhalers. The campaign also focused on the alarming fact that only 15% of health care professionals are educated on correct inhaler use which means they are not passing on the right techniques to patients.

To address this, as part of the campaign we hosted a Q&A webinar for parents, carers and teachers, demonstrating the correct techniques for taking inhalers and giving them the opportunity to ask any questions they might have. We also created an online asthma hub of resources and information about asthma on our website.

"Your Number's Up" Blood Pressure Campaign

Our blood pressure awareness campaign ran during September and October 2022, aiming to draw awareness to the fact 1 in 2 heart attacks and strokes are linked to the condition and urging the public to get checked and know their numbers.

We hosted an Online Blood Pressure Advice which allowed attendees to send in questions for a panel of health professionals to answer. The session also discussed information about preventing, detecting and managing high blood pressure to help reduce stroke and heart attack risk.

Our Health Promotion team also visited a number of MACE stores throughout the campaign to provide free pop-up blood pressure checks to local communities. Over 330 checks were carried out, with 49% of people being signposted to their GP for high blood pressure.

Health Promotion & Prevention Impact 22/23



21,173

people and organisations across Northern Ireland

We offer targeted services to workplaces, communities and schools to help detect early signs of chest, heart and stroke illness and empower individuals to make healthy choices.



5,891
Schools



7,943
Work Well
Live Well



374
Health and Homeless
Programme



142
Well Space



6,477
Well Checks

Health & Homeless Service



374
staff and
residents
benefitted



38
hostels
supported



205
resources
provided



100%
of hostels were
satisfied with
the service



11
hostel staff
trained in AF &
BP and Mental
Health First Aid



5/5
BP & AF
training
was rated
5/5 stars

Well Space

Well Space is our 1 year programme which supports hostels to develop a health and wellbeing action plan. We train staff and residents as "Health Champions" and provide them with additional support and training, to help them make these action plans a reality.



3
hostels
completed the
1-year programme



142
staff and
residents
supported



6
health
champions
trained



12
health &
wellbeing
initiatives



3
trained in
Mental Health
First Aid

100% agreed

BP & AF Training benefitted
the health & wellbeing of
hostel residents

32%

were referred to their GP for high
blood pressure, blood sugar,
cholesterol or AF

Health promotion in schools



5,891

parents and young people benefitted from our schools programmes.

57 schools

Chester's Challenge Programme



30

Schools (54.5% were extended schools)

1,212

pupils took part in the Chester's Challenge Programme

1,212

supporting resources were issued to parents and guardians

100%

teachers rated the Schools programme as **5 star**

100%

teachers rated the Schools programme as **5 star**

100%

teachers reported that pupils were **eating more healthily**

92%

teachers reported that pupils were **more active**

100%

teachers reported that pupils were **more aware of healthy eating**

Compared to before the programme, pupils showed an increase in knowledge about...



79%

Eating 5 a day



43%

Physical activity recommendations



34%

Strength training

Well Talks (Post-Primary)

4,679

Attendees

57

Talks

27

Schools



Well Talks by topic



- 64% Vaping
- 12% Sleep
- 7% Stress
- 6.5% Smoking
- 6% Signs & Symptoms
- 3% Alcohol
- <1% Heartley's Heart Talk

Health promotion in the workplace



7,943
employees
benefitted across
60 workplaces

145
Health
Champions
trained

60
workplaces supported
to develop Action Plans,
100% implemented

1,080

Well Checks
delivered

63

Health Champions
trained in Mental
Health First Aid

883

employees
attended
webinars

176

attended
networking
events

100%

of Health Champions
reported increased health
& wellbeing knowledge

86%

rated training
as 5 stars

Well Checks



6,447 people received checks

88% on 2021/22

Demand for our Well Checks has been overwhelming this year with local people seeking alternatives to visiting their GP to check in on their health. During the year, we provided nearly 6,500 health checks, helping to identify Atrial Fibrillation (AF), a type of irregular heartbeat that increases

your risk of having a stroke, high blood pressure, and other risk factors. With this information, we encouraged recipients to make healthy lifestyle changes, and signposted them to seek professional help.

1.1%

referred to GP with
possible AF

16.4%

referred for help with
high blood pressure

22.3%

referred for help with
high cholesterol

People who received a check said...

100%	felt they were shown respect	99.5%	staff communicated clearly
99.9%	staff were caring and compassionate	99.7%	staff listened to me
99.8%	staff were professional	98.5%	staff ensured I had adequate privacy

"I was absolutely amazed at how professional and comprehensive the Well Check was. Something that could've been shame provoking was the total opposite. I feel very motivated to work on the areas identified. Thank you so much."

"Well worth half an hour of your time to get a good insight into where you stand with your health and what you can do to make changes you need. Prevention is so much better than cure."



Fundraising

Almost 90% of our income comes from public donations. Most of the work you can read about in this report was made possible by the unstoppable determination of individuals, families, friends and companies who are passionate about helping us. We can't thank everyone enough.

All of the money we receive stays in Northern Ireland, funding programmes and supporting local people right here in our communities, workplaces, schools, hostels and universities.

There are lots of ways to help and support us. From becoming a regular giver and donating a small amount of money each month, organising fundraising events with friends or work colleagues, to leaving a gift in your will. We really appreciate any support you can give us, so we can continue to help everyone in Northern Ireland living with chest, heart and stroke conditions.

Please visit www.nichs.org.uk/how-you-can-help for more information.



£3.26 million
raised through public donations



3420
regular givers



200
companies fundraised for us



23
community ambassadors volunteered for us



49
people gave gifts in wills



1061
families chose to support us with donations in lieu of funeral flowers in memory of their loved one



107
couples purchased wedding favours or made a donation in celebration of their big day



Over 330
community fundraising events organised across NI



1,145
supporters took part in events and challenges



£73K
raised from our annual Red Dress Fun Run event – up 36% from the previous year!



Over £68K
additional income from claiming Gift Aid on donations

A life-changing legacy

Gifts in wills fund more than a third of our work. A gift left to support our work in your will could improve the lives of thousands of local people in so many different ways. From life-changing care and support services, to ground-breaking research and lifesaving prevention work, such as community health checks and educational talks.

With almost half of all adult deaths in Northern Ireland caused by chest, heart or stroke illnesses, we want to be there caring for people with these conditions and finding ways to prevent them in the first place. This is how gifts in wills can make a huge difference.

During 2022/23 we received **gifts in wills totalling £1,588,888** from **49 incredible people**, who have left behind their own individual legacy of hope and care. We are truly grateful for their generosity and thoughtfulness towards others.

Give a Regular Donation – Make a Lasting Impact

Every month, **3,420 local people** help support our services with a regular direct debit or payroll donation. Their gifts enable us to make future plans and provide life-changing care services.

Regular donations can help make an immediate and lasting impact on people whose lives have been devastated by a chest, heart or stroke illness, helping them and their families get the support they need to recover, rehabilitate and return to living life to the fullest.



Michelle and Katie's Story - Asthma

Katie Hoy, aged 12 from Belfast, has suffered from severe asthma since she was a baby.

Mum Michelle explains; "From she was just 8 weeks old Katie was constantly wheezy. When Katie was about 14 months old she developed a chest infection and was prescribed three different types of antibiotics, but the infection lasted from November until January. In the end the GP said they couldn't give Katie anything further and she was sent on to The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. That visit resulted in her being referred to the hospital's asthma clinic. Katie was very young for this to happen as most children aren't referred until they are around 5 years old."

Katie was prescribed inhalers, which the family ensured were used correctly, but her asthma got gradually worse. "She was having asthma attacks everywhere," says Michelle. "The doctors told us Katie had gone from being asthmatic to being a brittle asthmatic which means there are no signs an asthma attack could be imminent."

Katie endured a long list of hospital stays. Doctors were unable to explain why she was so badly affected.



Michelle continues; "The doctors at the asthma clinic tried everything with Katie over the years- different inhalers as well as steroids but nothing was working so she was referred on to a consultant. Katie was then prescribed a new and expensive biological therapy called Dupilumab that is delivered by injection. Dupilumab has been shown to work well in both asthma and eczema when standard therapy has failed. Katie gets this on a fortnightly basis, and it has been life changing for her."

"Katie hasn't been hospitalised by an asthma attack since starting the Dupilumab injections.

Also, for the first time in over 2 years, Katie has been able to stop taking steroids on a constant basis which is great as there can be side effects of taking these long term."

"Also, it has only been in the last six months that Katie has been able to properly hold down any hobbies. With being constantly unwell, Katie was never able to attend any afterschool activities frequently enough to really be part of a team and properly enjoy the activity."

Although starting the Dupilumab therapy has made a massive difference, Katie's inhalers and adherence as to how she takes these is still vital. Michelle explains; "Katie must use her preventer inhaler every day and she takes her reliever inhaler absolutely everywhere she goes, even if it's just a quick trip to the shops. Having inhalers handy can be the difference between life and death and we must always be ready for an emergency."

Katie says; "I have suffered with asthma my whole life. I have always felt different from my peers as I have never been able to lead a normal life and participate in normal activities with my friends. Before, most plans I made with my friends and family ended up being cancelled due to my asthma flare ups. Things like planning birthday parties, attending gymnastics and Gaelic.

Since I started the Dupilumab injections I can lead a more normal life and continue with my afterschool activities. Asthma is not stopping me. I don't forget my asthma is severe though and always make sure to take my medication twice a day and bringing my inhalers with me when I'm out with friends and family."

Michelle adds, "People just don't realise how dangerous asthma can be and that's why we're sharing our story and supporting Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke's asthma campaign, to spread awareness. Asthma should be acknowledged more-it's not just a bit of wheeziness, it can be fatal. The brutal fact is people die every day from asthma attacks. We wanted to share our experiences to play our part in helping raise awareness and get people to take asthma seriously."



“

Since I started the Dupilumab injections I can lead a more normal life and continue with my afterschool activities. Asthma is not stopping me. I don't forget my asthma is severe though and always make sure to take my medication twice a day and bringing my inhalers with me when I'm out with friends and family. ”










Thank you

to everyone who supported us in 2022/23

Almost 90% of our income comes from public donations.

Find out how you can support us at www.nichs.org.uk

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