

Our Impact

REPORT

2021 / 2022



Chest
Heart &
Stroke



Welcome

from **Declan Cunnane CEO**

2021/22 has been a period of optimism, transition and renewal for Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke (NICHHS). This Annual Impact Report sets out some recent highlights and achievements as we hopefully emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic.

NICHHS was founded in 1946 by 16 volunteers in response to the Tuberculosis public health crisis. As we celebrated our 75th Anniversary this year, it is evident that while much has changed since 1946, including our charity's core mission, one thing remains constant – we are still here for everyone who needs our support.

Today there are over 335,000 people in Northern Ireland living with a chest, heart or stroke condition, that's around 20% of the population. It is clear that there is still plenty to be done. We will continue providing support until we achieve our vision of a Northern Ireland free from chest, heart and stroke illnesses.

The easing of Covid restrictions enabled us to return to face to face delivery of our vital Care and Health promotion activities in our local communities. We supported almost 17,000 people over the past year with these activities. With the recent resumption of our funding of high quality research projects in our local universities and hospitals, we are looking forward to seeing the results of these projects in future years.

Our campaigning work continues, with some very significant successes including a ban in smoking in cars with children, agreement to a consultation on minimum unit pricing of alcohol and the introduction of an action plan on stroke reform by the Health Minister.

In February we hosted our flagship Red Dress Fun Run event at Stormont Estate - the first time since 2019. The support was amazing. Almost 600 people came together and raised over £50,000 for NICHHS. We are very grateful to everyone who took part in the event.

Another highlight for us this year was our Christmas campaign entitled "The Little Things". The campaign, promoted with the assistance of effective TV advertising, raised awareness about the range of little things that people affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses might not be able to do at Christmas, things many of us take for granted for example wrapping Christmas presents, decorating the tree or being able to visit the shops to buy gifts.

As CEO of NICHHS I would like to express my appreciation to all staff members for their diligence and commitment throughout these uncertain times. Thanks to them we continue to be able to support all those who need us.

As almost 90% of our work is funded from public donations, we rely on you – our fundraisers, supporters, volunteers, followers and friends - to make our work possible.

Your contribution enables us to continue rebuilding lives across Northern Ireland. On behalf of our clients and our 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 work is funded thanks to public donations.



Our Mission

Leading the fight against chest, heart and stroke illnesses in Northern Ireland.

Our Vision

A Northern Ireland free from chest, heart and stroke illnesses.



£3,434,745

expenditure on charitable activities.

(based on our unaudited accounts for the year ended 31/3/2022)



16,936

people and organisations supported across all our 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 Coordinators are 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 continuing to connect online via Zoom. The 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, then our **Breathing Better** team is 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. In addition to one-to-one family support, our Breathing Better service offers:

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- both equally important when living with a long term condition.



Supporting people living with 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 and we offer the following:

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:

Our Stay Strong Walking Groups are operating at various locations across Northern Ireland.

We recognise that for many people post diagnosis, regular exercise may be daunting, especially if it is not part of your everyday life. Our team can support you to gain confidence and help take some of the fear out of exercising for you. These groups are delivered over a minimum of 6 weeks and are open to anyone with a cardiac condition.

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



Charlene, Jolene and Eilish's Stories Stroke Survivors

Dealing with a life-altering stroke is not a challenge most of us would expect to strike us in our thirties or forties. But that was exactly what happened to Jolene and Charlene, aged 34, and Eilish, aged 47. It was at our Post Rehab Exercise Programme (PREP) in Lurgan that the three young mums met and shared their journey towards recovery.

Jolene's Story

Mum of three Jolene McAdam from Armagh was 34 when her life was turned upside down by a sudden stroke.

Jolene says, **“There's not an area of my life that it didn't affect.** I needed help with everything - cooking, cleaning, looking after the kids. My youngest, Kaiden, was only 18 months and I couldn't change his nappy. I felt helpless and it was devastating”

“A year on since my stroke I still have issues with my vision, numbness in my mouth and my tongue, and right sided weakness. I was also diagnosed with Holmes Tremor after my stroke. It's very frustrating because people don't understand, they think as time has passed I must be better, and to look at me I look fine. **You can't see all the difficulties beneath the surface.**

I was invited to a wedding recently and I was thinking, what kind of shoes will I wear, because I can't wear high heels anymore. How will I get my hair done, my makeup done? I can't do those little things we take for granted the way I used to.”

However, with our support, Jolene is determined to keep recovering. “Getting out to the PREP group is brilliant – it's the emotional support of having people, and other young mums, who have also been through it and totally understand which is so important. I hate saying life is hard, because that's so negative. Life has changed, but it's about looking at the things I can do.”



Charlene's Story

Charlene Edwards from Lurgan was 34 years old when she had a stroke. She says, **"I was in hospital for six weeks and I couldn't speak a word when I got out.** I stayed at my mum's house for the first week, but I have two boys, and I care for my oldest as he uses a wheelchair. I wanted to get back home for them."

Gradually, with the help of a Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist, Charlene's speech began to improve, but she still struggles with communicating at times, which is called aphasia. She says, **"The PREP group is brilliant – we were made really welcome.** The physio gives us lots of exercises to do with my right hand, and it's not back to normal but it's getting there slowly. Although the others at the group don't have aphasia like me, it's still helpful to speak to them and we can all share what we're going through."

"Getting out to the PREP group is brilliant – it's the emotional support of having people, and other young mums, who have also been through it and totally understand which is so important.



Eilish's Story

Mum of four Eilish Briggs from Banbridge had a stroke at 47, and says PREP 'saved her'.

Eilish is now passionate about raising awareness of the invisible impact a stroke can have on a survivor. She says, "Everybody knows the signs of a stroke and F.A.S.T. but nobody is aware of how it affects people, even as they get their mobility back. It affects your thinking, your understanding. **People look at you and they think you look fine, so you must be fine - and you're not. You're struggling on.**"

"I care for my son Michael, who needs a lot of help. My other son, Adam, had just started high school in first year when I had my stroke. It was a big transition for him and I felt awful I wasn't able to be there."

"The PREP programme I feel has saved me. I felt completely and utterly lost. With the group, being able to talk to each other about what's going on and how we're feeling and them understanding is so helpful. **I no longer feel I'm alone.**"

Care Impact 21/22

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.



2,636
people supported by our
Care Service programmes.

Number of people we supported, with "chest", "heart", and "stroke" as their main condition, and their carers:

517
Respiratory

131
Heart

1988
Stroke

146
Carers

Number of attendances to each of our services over the year:



1,019
PREP and PREP
Online



415
Breathing
Better



909
Taking
Control



138
Carers'
Programme



218
Inspire
Choir



158
Young
Stroke Online



851
Surviving
Stroke Wellness
Sessions



541
Surviving Stroke
Online



195
Heart Strong



491
Walking Groups

Respiratory Support



517

people with respiratory conditions were supported



279

new Breathing Better referrals

Our support made a difference:

100% agreed that the programme helped them **better manage their condition, general health and well-being.**

People who took part in the programme were more confident dealing with managing their lung condition:

% change (increase in confidence as a group, comparing pre to post)

11 ▲

Managing their lung condition

They also told us the programme had a positive effect on their general well-being:

% change (increase in the number reporting "some of the time" / "often" as a group, comparing pre to post)

35 ▲

More relaxed

20 ▲

Felt better able to make decisions

12 ▲

More optimistic about the future

“

The presenters were so helpful and made the **programme easy to engage with, practical and increased awareness** of help available and accessibility. You made it enjoyable.

”

“

This course helped me reflect on and **improve the management of my condition daily.**

”

“

I always thought that exercise was running all day, all the things I couldn't do. Thanks to this course, **I was able to get information about exercise you can do sitting.**

”

Cardiac Support



211 Cardiac Family Support referrals



53 people attended Stay Strong Walking Groups and Heart Strong Education Online

Our support made a difference: Heart Strong Education

100% rated the programme as 4 stars or more. ★★★★★

100% agreed that the programme made a difference to their health, improved their ability to take control of their health and their heart condition, and helped them set goals for their health.

Over the course of the programme, participants reported an increase in...

They reported a decrease in the amount of help they needed dealing with...

% change, increase in awareness, comparing pre and post as a group

- 17 ▲ Mobility
- 14 ▲ General health
- 13 ▲ Chores around the house
- 13 ▲ Getting enough exercise

I feel good about this area / I don't need help... (% change)

- 95 ▲ Overall fitness
- 79 ▲ Confidence (exercise)
- 77 ▲ Getting support I need for my heart condition
- 67 ▲ Mobility

“

The delivery was relaxed but done in a very professional and structured way which put everyone at ease.

”

“

Other people sharing their experiences makes me feel like I'm on the same boat.

”

“

I thought I was eating healthy but now I know that some food choices I make may not be best for my health.

”

Stay Strong Walking Groups

Over the course of the programme, participants reported an increase in...

% change, increase in reporting improvements in each, as a group, pre vs post

- 22 ▲ Overall fitness
- 15 ▲ Confidence (exercise)
- 11 ▲ Overall health
- 12 ▲ Mobility
- 10 ▲ Self-care
- 10 ▲ Depression
- 9 ▲ Doing chores around the house
- 8 ▲ Getting out & about / social activities
- 4 ▲ Anxiety

“

It was a great boost mentally to meet others who have come through a similar experience and share stories, it helped my confidence.

”

“

I felt like I achieved something.

”

“

Contributed greatly to my wellbeing encouraging me to continue to walk.

”

We Campaign

STROKE SERVICE REFORM / AIR QUALITY / CHILDHOOD OBESITY / LONG COVID AWARENESS & CARE / 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 21/22



Smoking in cars

We finally saw a ban on smoking in cars carrying children come into force.



Service user focused

We championed the needs of people experiencing Long Covid, and ensured their involvement / PPI in our work.



Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP)

We pressed for a Minimum Unit Price for alcohol – and, as a result, a consultation was agreed and is underway.



Stroke manifesto

We campaigned for reform of stroke services, and launched our Stroke Manifesto at one of the first post-Covid hybrid events held at Stormont.



Waiting Lists, better services and fair funding

We lobbied for fair reimbursement for the stroke and respiratory services we provide, for improved asthma services, and a reduction in waiting lists.



Asthma

We raised awareness about asthma and its dangers – especially amongst school children.





John Cairn's Story Long COVID

When John Cairns, a 43-year-old dad of three from Comber, contracted COVID in January 2021, it started off as what seemed like a normal cold or flu. But after three weeks, it hadn't gone away. In fact, his symptoms only got worse, and in the first few months, he had to attend A&E three times. His condition is still ongoing.

His symptoms have included a chesty cough, which then changed into shortness of breath even after mild activity, along with aching joints, back pain, pins and needles, burning sensations and heavy legs.

John could never have anticipated being struck down by a long-term respiratory illness at such a young age. "I'm 43 and I need to plan my day to limit the number of things I do to try and get through the day a bit more easily. If I do around 3,000 to 4,000 steps in a day, I am wiped out for 2 or 3 days. Even picking the kids up from school takes me so long and then I'm knackered. I've had to try and adapt my life around this illness."

"It's a completely different life now."

John was referred to NICHHS by his GP and completed our 6 week Taking Control Self-Management programme for Long COVID sufferers. "The Taking Control Programme was excellent. I found it really useful during the early stage of me living with Long COVID. The information around pacing yourself, resting, relaxing, trying not to overdo things, and setting mini goals was very beneficial. Hearing from others living with chronic illnesses, not just COVID, and getting tips and suggestions from this was also very helpful."

"I also formed lasting friendships - there is one other guy who I met in the group who I still connect with today and we share advice and information. It helped that I felt I wasn't alone, that I had a bit of support which was very needed."

John is passionate about advocating for Long COVID sufferers and has voiced concerns about the amount of support that is available for people like him, especially as the rest of the world returns to 'normality' post pandemic. He says, "This is the first time I've had any health issues and I feel the standard of care is nowhere near good enough. I've been waiting around 18 months for an urgent respiratory referral and I'm no further on. I'm lucky I've been able to use some private healthcare but what about others who don't have this? The news now talks about the worst of the pandemic being over and getting back to normal. I think that's great but what about me and the twenty thousand other people affected by Long COVID left without much help or treatment? So many of us are still suffering with little support and the support we do get we often have to find ourselves. **Without NICHS there would be very little. It's so frustrating.**"

For John, despite the fact that life has been altered completely by Long COVID, he has continued fighting to recover and through managing his condition, has been able to go back to working part time. "My employers have been very supportive. I've worked there for 20 years. I've had an Occupational Therapist working with me every couple of weeks through work, and at the moment I'm doing 12 hours a week over 3 days, with recovery days in between. It's a long way from where I used to be but it's something."

"I don't know where I would be without the support of my family, my work and charities like NICHS."



“

The Taking Control Programme was excellent. I found it really useful during the early stage of me living with Long COVID. The information around pacing yourself, resting, relaxing, trying not to overdo things, and setting mini goals was very beneficial. ”

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 active research projects during the year, with 14 currently live, and an additional 9 new studies funded this year. We were delighted to be able to award new grants to these high-quality research projects following a pause in our grant allocation during the pandemic. **This year, we have attracted such incredible research projects that we even made the decision to increase our funding budget by 63% from £400,000 to £638,522.**

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.



AMRC certification awarded May 2021 for best practice in medical and health research peer review.



14 research studies live at the end of the financial year



9 new projects funded this year



£1,902,292 currently invested in research



1

biomarker successfully developed



2

health apps successfully developed & tested



22

publications in peer reviewed journals



4

other NI partners

8

collaborations with health trusts

5

collaborations with GB universities

2

collaborations with Irish universities

4

collaborations with international universities

2

collaborations with non-university partners outside NI

New Research Studies 2021/22

Stroke



IMPACT Stroke II: pilot study of an e-health, carer supported intervention

Is a modified version of ACT - a “talking” therapy - suitable for stroke survivors with significant cognitive problems?

**Dr Noleen McCorry, QUB
£64,969**

A digital lifestyle change intervention for use after transient ischemic attack (TIA) or minor stroke: Pilot RCT

How effective is a digital tool aimed at helping people make lifestyle changes, after TIA / minor stroke?

Dr Neil Heron, QUB, £61,182

Chest



Interfering with interferons in COPD

To what degree do interferons (proteins that the body releases in response to a virus) cause a COPD reaction in healthy lung cells? Can we use existing medicines to block interferons, and will this reduce COPD symptoms?

Dr Joe Kidney, BHSCT, £98,691

Heart



Role of Riboflavin in Epigenetic Modulation of Hypertension

Further research into whether vitamin B2 can be used to treat high blood pressure in people with a specific genetic predisposition: testing on a larger sample of people, and a larger set of genetic samples.

**Dr Lees-Murdock, UU,
£62,394**

Optimising Quality of Life for People Living with Heart Failure in Care Homes: Co-Design Digital Intervention

Developing a heart failure resource for care homes.

Dr Gary Mitchell, QUB, £71,364

PIMS-TS: Cardiac features, clinical course and immune response of children in NI.

Studying cardiac complications in children as a result of COVID-19.

Dr Thomas Waterfield, QUB, £43,777

CABIN feasibility study to promote engagement with Cardiac Rehab through an early holistic intervention.

Can a brief intervention improve people’s uptake and adherence to Cardiac Rehab?

Prof Donna Fitzsimons, QUB, £58,501

Acute coronary syndrome and type 2 diabetes management: identifying an optimal shared pathway

Developing a new treatment and care pathway for comorbid acute coronary syndrome and type 2 diabetes – to ensure joined up support and services.

Dr Karen McGuigan, QUB, £71,885

Physical Activity



Feasibility testing Y-PATH in post-primary schools in NI

Is a post-primary physical activity programme delivered in ROI suitable for NI schools? If so, how should we roll it out?

Dr Angela Carlin, UU, £102,203

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 signs and symptoms of heart attack, stroke and to prevent obesity by encouraging people to enjoy healthy and active lives.

Our health promotion and prevention services include:



A Public Health Agency initiative

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

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

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 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 help 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 NI Health and Social Care Board, it prioritises families and young people who are homeless.

Work Well Live Well & Synergy Learning

Like many organisations, provider of world class learning technology Synergy Learning's working practices and culture were hugely impacted by the pandemic and the company was faced with serious concerns about the toll this would take on the physical and mental health of its employees.

Tory Kerley, Head of People at Synergy Learning explains;

"The Work Well Live Well programme has been an excellent source of support for promoting and improving the health and wellbeing of the Synergy Learning team. It has supported us with surveying the wellness needs in our business, training staff, focusing on skills and knowledge with our management team in regard to mental health and most importantly, devising and executing a full wellbeing strategy."

Tory says; "We are active signatories of the Mental Health Charter and have two trained Wellbeing Champions. We engage regularly in health promotion activities such as staff step challenges and Men's Health Week."

"Feedback from our staff has been fantastic; they recognise the focus and effort we have placed on staff wellbeing and they tell us about the lifestyle changes and positive impacts they've experienced thanks to the programme, which is just fantastic to hear."

"The support we have received working in partnership with NICHS has enabled us to take a compassionate but structured approach to supporting each other and build strong foundations to grow our wellbeing offering for the future. I would highly recommend any workplace getting involved in Work Well Live Well."

Health Promotion & Prevention Impact 21/22



14,528

adults and children and 214 organisations benefitted

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.

Health & Homelessness Service



626

staff and residents benefitted



38

hostels supported



742

info packs / resources sent to hostels



50

recipe books provided



45

staff received AF & BP, Smoking & Sleep training



456

newsletters sent out

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 supported through 1-year programme

120

staff and residents supported

36

staff and residents completed health surveys

14

health & wellbeing initiatives

32

health checks delivered



The Mental Health First Aid Training was extremely informative. Relevant to work, home, and community life.



The sleep training was fantastic. Really beneficial. We'll use frequently working with clients.



The physical activity course was so good, the men enjoyed it and found it so beneficial.



Health promotion in schools



5,964
parents and young people
benefitted from our
schools programmes.

44

schools

3,924

pupils

2,040

parents/guardians

Chester's Challenge Programme



2042

**pupils took part in the
Chester's Challenge
Programme**

33

Schools (54.5% were
extended schools)

2040

supporting resources were
issued to parents and guardians



100% of teachers rated the programme **5 stars**

100% of teachers were very happy or happy
with content and delivery.

89% of pupils "really enjoyed" or "enjoyed"
Chester's Challenge.

Teachers' top 3 answers to "what worked?"

#1	interactive elements	32.6%
#2	practical / physical elements	30.2%
#3	range of resources and visuals	16.3%



The children loved how
interactive the quiz was and
answering questions with the
devices really engaged
the pupils.



The delivery
is brilliant: very
professional and
age appropriate.



The children really loved the
sessions and they have gained
important information. They are already
using what they have learnt to make
healthier choices at breaktime.



**Pupils showed
an increased
understanding of
key health promotion
messages** after taking
part in the Well Schools
programme, (compared
to before they took part):

	Pre	Post	% increase
Why we should eat wholegrains	23.5	56.4	140%
Recommended daily fruit & veg portions	35.8	58.1	62%
Recommended water intake	46.4	74.2	60%
Recommended physical activity	51.7	73.5	22%
Recommended hours sleep per night	83.7	99.9	19%
Recommended muscle strengthening	59.5	68.1	14%

Well Talks (Post-Primary)



1,882 pupils took part
in Well Talks

11

Schools

Viewed webinars



- 40.1%** Eat Well Feel Well
- 22.1%** Physical Activity
- 18.4%** Sleep
- 13.6%** Stress
- 5.9%** Smoking & e-cigs

Health promotion in the workplace



A Public Health Agency initiative

4,591
people
involved across
61 workplaces

181
Health
Champions
trained

60
workplaces supported
to develop Action Plans,
100% implemented

1638 staff completed
health surveys

121 one to one
meetings held

563 employees viewed
Well Webinars

200 employees
attended
Well Talks

278 employees received
training including Health
Champion training

143 registrations of
interest in the
WWLW programme

Well Checks



3,447 people received checks

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 3,500 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.

2.2%
referred to GP with
possible AF

18%
referred for help with
high blood pressure

31%
referred for help with
high cholesterol

99.7% would recommend a well check to others.

99.6% felt staff showed respect

99.5% staff always communicated clearly

99.7% staff were caring

99.5% staff always listened

99.7% staff were always professional

99.5% staff respected my privacy

“

Very informative...it helped me to visualise steps and actions I needed to make positive changes in my life.

”

“

It was encouraging to hear that I'm doing most things right, but with some gentle, nonjudgemental encouragement about some things to improve. Friendly helpful service.

”

“

A really helpful service, and it was delivered in a highly professional and user friendly manner.

”



Fundraising

Almost 90% of our care and prevention services and research are funded exclusively thanks to public donations. So 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.



£3.75 million
raised through public
donations



3676
regular givers



128
companies
supported us



94
gifts in wills



6
Tribute Funds in
memory of a
loved one



23
community
ambassadors
volunteering for us
across NI



232
fundraising events
organised by the
public across NI



108
couples purchased
Wedding Favours or
made a gift for their
big day

giftaid it

£67k
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 2021/22 we received **gifts in wills totalling £2,244,528** from **84 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, **3,676 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.

Making A Difference, Thanks To You

Here are just a few examples of some of the wonderful fundraisers that have been held to support us this year.

Corporate Support

MACE

Our long term partner MACE raised an incredible **£40,000** in 2021/22. Their 77 stores took part in a range of activities to raise this total, from their 75 miles for 75 years challenge, to donating 50p from every Frank and Honest coffee sale to us. MACE were also the headline sponsor for our 2022 Red Dress Fun Run, and our awareness 'Side by Side' campaign. The partnership has raised over **£227,000** to date.



BDO NI

One of our new partners, BDO NI have had a busy year of supporting our work. From taking part in our Santa Abseil, running 5km every day, hosting charity football matches, and putting a team together for the Red Dress Fun Run and the Belfast City Marathon relay – they really have gone above and beyond, and in the process, have raised an incredible total of £11,765 in 2021/22.



Fundraising in Memory of a Loved One

Emma Liggett from Craigavon wanted to remember her Dad Terry in a special way, and took on the Mourne 7 Peaks Challenge, raising a whopping £4,289. Emma said, "After the devastating loss of our Daddy, I really want to get involved with NICHS to give just a little input into helping with current research surrounding heart conditions in Northern Ireland."



Taking on a Challenge

Thousands of local brave hearts joined #TeamNICHs in 2021/22 in support of the cause closest to their hearts, running marathons, competing in triathlons, hiking for miles, zooming down high wires, abseiling down mountains and even jumping out of planes!

To find out about our upcoming events, visit www.nichs.org.uk/events.



A Special Tribute

Jane Robinson from Downpatrick created a special tribute fund in memory of her brother Shane who tragically passed away from a heart attack at the young age of 50 in March 2021. So far, she has raised an incredible £4,392 in his memory for our work through our partner platform, Much Loved. Jane and her friends and family completed a sponsored climb of Cavehill, raising money through her online giving page. Jane also purchased wedding favours for her big day in November 2021, all adding to Shane's special tribute fund.

Jane says, "NI Chest Heart and Stroke is a charity that can prevent other families losing a loved one too soon. Shane will always be so loved and missed every day. I know in my heart that every event we plan Shane will be walking by all our sides smiling."



Red Dress Fun Run 2022

Almost 600 of our amazing supporters from across Northern Ireland came together at Stormont Estate on Sunday 27th February to run, walk or wheel 5k, at our biggest and best Red Dress Fun Run yet. Even more participants joined in virtually at various locations across the country (and beyond) during National Heart Month in February 2022. The event raised over **£50,000** in our fight against heart disease.

Visit www.nichs.org.uk/RedDressFunRun to find out more about our next Red Dress Fun Run event.





Thank you

to everyone who supported us in 2021/22

Almost 90% of our care and prevention services and research are funded exclusively by public donations.

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

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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Silver

