



# Strategic Plan

2023 – 2026



# Welcome

from **Declan Cunnane CEO**

I am privileged to be the CEO of NI Chest Heart and Stroke, a charity founded in **1946** by 16 volunteers in response to the Tuberculosis health crisis.

As I reflect on the successes of the 2018-2023 strategy, during which time COVID-19 became another hugely significant health crisis, I am enormously proud of how NICHHS adapted to continue to support the community and people living with chest, heart and stroke conditions.

Whilst so much has changed since 1946 and through challenging times or health crises, one thing remains constant - **we are here for everyone who needs our support.**

**We provide expert care** and support to anyone living with chest, heart and stroke conditions and we work tirelessly to try and **prevent** these illnesses through our **health promotion services and programmes**, our **research** and **campaigning**.

It is clear that whilst we have achieved so much over the years, as a charity there is **still plenty to be done.**

We have developed our new 2023 – 2026 strategic plan in conjunction with our **staff, service users** past and present, **supporters** and our **Governance Board**. We are very grateful for their help in shaping our plans for the next 3 years.

**This Strategic Plan for 2023 – 2026 will be our roadmap and will guide us as we continue to** work tirelessly with our partners and stakeholders to achieve our **vision of a healthy Northern Ireland free from chest, heart and stroke illnesses** and strive in our **mission to prevent chest, heart and stroke conditions and support people affected by them.**

**The need for our work has never been greater.** Today there are **as many as 470,000 people in Northern Ireland living with chest, heart or stroke conditions**, that's around 20% of the population. If we include those who are currently being treated for hypertension (high blood pressure is the number one cause of stroke) then there are **over 641,000 people on registers for chest, heart, stroke related conditions and hypertension.**



**Almost 90% of our work is funded from public donations**, so we are very grateful and thankful for the kind support that we receive which enables us to continue to rebuild lives across Northern Ireland.

On behalf of our staff, service users and volunteers **thank you** for taking the time to read our Strategic Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Declan Cunnane'.

**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

Prevent chest, heart and stroke conditions and support people affected.



## Our Vision

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



## Our Guiding Principles

Engage with people to improve our work.

Contribute to population health and reduce inequalities.

Ensure that what we do is informed by evidence.

Allocate our resources to deliver the greatest impact.



# Our Values



## Compassion

We believe that people are at the centre of everything we do. Everyone is equal and should be treated with dignity and respect.

We will be selfless and people centred, showing kindness and concern for everyone we come into contact with.



## Courage

We believe everyone should feel empowered to make decisions about their own lives.

We will be brave and challenge the status quo.



## Commitment

We believe that people have the right to expect services of the highest quality to meet their needs.

We will be dedicated to the success of our charity and continuously improve.



## Considerate

We believe that everyone should be treated as we would expect to be treated ourselves.

We will respect the needs and feelings of other people and try and understand their point of view.



# Our Code of Ethics

All our activities will be undertaken to the highest possible ethical standards. In addition to meeting our legal and regulatory requirements we are committed to acting openly and honestly in all our activities and comply with the standards outlined in the Code of Fundraising Practice and the Charity Governance Code.

- ✓ We will act honestly, truthfully and with integrity in all our actions.
- ✓ We will report our activities in a transparent and open way.
- ✓ We will treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- ✓ We will always act impartially and objectively and avoid conflicts of interest.

# Why Our Work Matters

## Northern Ireland in Numbers

This breakdown of the most up-to-date available statistics on chest, heart and stroke conditions in Northern Ireland demonstrates just why our care, prevention, research and campaigning work is so vital.



**641,644 people** are on registers for chest, heart and stroke conditions (including hypertension)

## In the adult population

### Have a diagnosis



(around 290,000)  
about **1 in 5** have a CHS diagnosis

### Living with a CHS condition



(around 380,000) (about 470,000)  
at least **1 in 4** live with CHS conditions... maybe as many as **1 in 3**



### #1 cause of death

Deaths due to chest, heart and stroke conditions, when combined, are the #1 cause of death



### 14 deaths per day

(5,268 each year) are caused by chest, heart and stroke conditions combined



**30% of all adult deaths** in 2021 were caused by chest, heart or stroke conditions

Data correct at time of publishing.

## Circulatory Conditions

Any conditions that affect your heart or blood vessels



**180,335 people** are living with circulatory conditions



**10 deaths per day** (3,713 each year)



**112 hospital admissions every day** (40,864 each year)

**16 people** have a heart attack every day in NI



Coronary Heart Disease is the **biggest single cause of premature deaths** (in people younger than 75) across NI

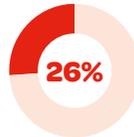
## Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)



**286,603 people** or **14.7% population** have high blood pressure



**Up to 120,000 people** have undiagnosed high blood pressure



When those diagnosed and undiagnosed are combined, **up to a 1/3 of the adult population** have high blood pressure (26%)



**#1** cause of stroke

## Stroke & TIA

When the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off.

**A transient ischaemic attack (TIA)** or “mini stroke” is caused by a temporary disruption in the blood supply to part of the brain.



**40,348 people** have had a stroke or TIA



**2 deaths per day** (845 each year)



**8 hospital admissions every day** (2,910 each year)

## Respiratory Conditions

Any disease that affects the lungs and airways.



**174,706 people**  
are living with  
respiratory conditions



**4 deaths per day**  
(1,555 each year)



**111 hospital  
admissions every day**  
(40,441 each year)

## Atrial Fibrillation



**45,207 people**  
have Atrial Fibrillation  
(AF)



**Around 10,000  
people** may have  
undetected AF



People with AF are at  
**greater risk of stroke**  
and their stroke is **more  
likely to be severe**

## Deprivation and Inequality

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is one of the conditions most strongly associated with health inequalities. **In NI, people living in deprived areas are:**



**You're up to 30% more  
likely to die early** from  
CVD depending on  
**where you live**



**Preventable deaths** in the  
most deprived areas were **three  
times higher** than the least  
deprived areas

## Health and Lifestyle



**SMOKING**

**17%** of people currently smoke  
**1 in 8** women smoke during pregnancy  
**73%** of smokers have tried to quit  
**4%** of 11-16 year olds currently smoke  
**About 1 in 4** 16-34 year olds currently smoke

**Smoking is the single greatest cause of preventable illness and premature death in Northern Ireland, killing around 2,300 people each year.**

**Smoking robs 10 –15 years of healthy life.**



**E-CIGS**

**7%** of people  
currently use  
e-cigs



**DIET**

**56%** of adults  
don't get 5+ portions  
of fruit and veg  
a day



**ALCOHOL**

**350 deaths** per  
year due to alcohol  
consumption.

**54%** of people in  
NI drink at least  
once a week



**OBSESITY**

**6 in 10 adults** are overweight or obese  
**1 in 3 children** aged 2-10 are overweight or obese  
**4 in 10 children** aged 11-15 are overweight or obese

**1 in 4 P1 children** are overweight or obese



**ACTIVITY**

**45%** of adults are not doing enough physical activity  
Primary school children are **sedentary 5 hrs a day**  
and post-primary students **7 hrs a day**

**Children in NI have the lowest  
physical activity levels in the UK**

# Strategic Priorities



# We Care



## Aim:

To offer and deliver exceptional Care Services to meet the needs of people who have chest, heart and stroke illnesses and their carers.



## Priorities:

- Increase the number of people availing of our chest, heart and stroke services.
- Expand, develop and review Cardiac and Respiratory rehabilitation/support services which can demonstrate impact.
- Involve and listen to service-users in service planning, design and review.
- Expand, develop and review services for carers which can demonstrate impact.
- Improve the reach and accessibility of the charity's care services through digital technology.
- Evaluate existing services against a needs analysis and establish clear decision-making criteria for new services.



# We Prevent



## Aim:

To empower people to make healthy lifestyle behaviour changes and reduce their risk of preventable chest, heart and stroke illnesses.



## Priorities:

- Expand, develop and review services to empower healthy living for children, young people and families.
- Contribute to a reduction in health inequalities by developing programmes for people and communities with greatest needs.
- Deliver and improve access to high quality health promotion services across NI.
- Partner with people and organisations who need our services and who share common priorities.
- Ensure all services are informed by evidence of what works and achieve the greatest impact.



# We Research



## Aim:

To find better ways to prevent, treat and care for people affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses.



## Priorities:

- Fund high quality local research into chest, heart and stroke diseases and their risk factors.
- Support research that enables the charity to achieve its strategy and mission with tangible benefits.
- Support collaborative research to leverage funding, profile and impact through partnerships.
- Involve and listen to CHS community and service-users to ensure our research is relevant to local needs.
- Measure and share the impact of the research we fund.
- Apply research findings to improve the evidence base and effectiveness of our work.
- Embed and continuously improve how the charity measures the impact of its work to inform the development of the charity.



# We Campaign



## Aim:

To make chest, heart and stroke conditions a priority for decision makers.



## Priorities:

- Influence public policy relating to the prevention of chest, heart and stroke illnesses.
- Ensure people living with chest, heart and stroke conditions have access to the best treatment and care.
- Build relationships with relevant decision-makers.
- Work with other relevant organisations to achieve shared lobbying.



# Strategic Support

To ensure that our charitable activities can be delivered we rely on the support of a number of vital supporting teams.

## Income Generation

**Almost 90%** of our care and prevention services and research are funded exclusively by public donations. So it is crucial that we raise sufficient income to fund our work.

Most of our work is only made possible by the incredible commitment and support of individuals, families, friends and companies who are passionate about helping us.

We are going to need the public's support more than ever to enable us to deliver our ambitious new strategy to expand our services, so that we can help even more people.

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



## Communications

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In order for people to avail of our services and to support our charity it is vital that people are aware of NICHS, what we do and difference we make. We will continue to make people aware of the symptoms and causes of chest, heart and stroke illnesses and increase public awareness of how to reduce risks of developing these conditions.

## People

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Our staff and volunteers are at the heart of NICHS. With our Gold Investors in People accreditation we will continue to develop our culture where our people are inspired, developed, supported and proud to work for us.

## Finance

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Our finance is and always will be effectively managed and controlled. At all times we will continue to ensure compliance with appropriate financial procedures and controls.

## Governance

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We are led by our Board of Governors who ensure trust and confidence in our charity. With a mix of skills and experience the board will ensure we have appropriate strategic, operational plans and budgets in place and that progress is regularly monitored.

## Physical & Digital Resources

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We need to make sure our staff have the appropriate ICT in order to help them to do their jobs efficiently and effectively. It is also crucial that our staff and our premises are safe. We will ensure that our ICT strategies and health and safety strategies are implemented and reviewed.



# Thank you

**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](http://www.nichs.org.uk)**

## Follow us:

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