



# Coping with the Pressures of Farming



Freephone Helpline:  
**0800 138 1678**

(Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm, voicemail and support options available at all other times)



# Acknowledgements

Adapted from a publication by Teagasc and Mental Health Ireland.

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# Introduction

**Staying well mentally is just as important as staying well physically. Dealing with stress and strain, the ups and downs of life, are part and parcel of daily living. Farming, whilst rewarding, can sometimes feel stressful. Sometimes dealing with the day-to-day pressures of farming combined with life's other demands leads to greater stress and pressure, resulting in feelings of being unable to cope. On such occasions, being able to reach out to someone to talk to or get advice from can make all the difference in sorting out the troubled situation or problem.**

**This resource entitled 'Coping with the Pressures of Farming' is aimed at farmers and farm families based in Northern Ireland. It has been researched and collated to address some of the many and varied issues that contribute to stress when not handled appropriately.**

## Objectives of this resource

- To promote positive mental health among farmers and farm families.
- To encourage help seeking behaviours in terms of emotional well-being among farmers and farm families by increasing awareness of services available.
- To reduce financial stress by encouraging more efficient ways of managing resources and increasing awareness of support services.
- To improve community understanding of what mental health truly is and challenge the fears and stigma often associated with mental illness which can be barriers to seeking necessary professional help.
- To promote and encourage the development of Social Farming for the benefit of vulnerable citizens persons and their families.

## **Part 1**

Addresses the day-to-day management of farming and the essential requirements to manage farming effectively and efficiently.

## **Part 2**

Addresses mental health and wellbeing with an emphasis on the more common mental health issues that can impact on day-to-day living.

A key theme throughout the resource is how and where you can access Further Information either through direct contact with organisations, useful websites, helpline numbers, and other publications. If you are worried or concerned about yourself, a family member or friend, contact one of these support services, or make contact with your family doctor. Even if you feel that you don't need a number right now, save a selection of them to have handy on your phone or screenshot the relevant page. Please remember that the information contained in this resource is not a substitute for professional and/ or medical advice.

**If you, or anyone you know is in distress or despair you can call Lifeline for free on 0808 808 8000 24 hours a day.**

**We hope you find this resource beneficial.**

Rural Support has developed this publication with the permission of Teagasc and Mental Health Ireland who first developed this resource for farmers and farming families in the Republic of Ireland. With the assistance of the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland this resource has been re-produced for the Northern Ireland context. The information provided is based on common pressures which farming families experience and aims to provide a guide for farmers and farm businesses to help deal with pressures.

This resource brings together practical information on a broad range of farming matters and presents them in a direct and accessible manner. A similar approach has been adopted to highlighting mental health matters. For many years, people were reluctant to talk about mental health issues and were somewhat reluctant to ask for information or support. This contributed to a sense of separation and distance, which often compounded their difficulty and problems. Thankfully things are changing, and we now have a much more positive outlook when it comes to talking about and dealing with mental health concerns and issues.

Our farming sector is going through a period of great change and transformation and this can bring uncertainty and additional stress for people in rural areas. Isolation and loneliness can exacerbate mental health concerns and make some problems seem insurmountable. By reaching out for support and maintaining contact with friends, neighbours

and advisors we can reduce that sense of isolation and share the burden. Having access to good quality and trustworthy information can make all the difference when making decisions and considering options.

If you or someone you know frequently feels exhausted or overburdened, you can help protect yourself and others from the stresses which farm life can throw at you by learning how to recognise the symptoms of stress and taking steps to reduce and manage it. From the experiences of Rural Support staff, Farm Business Mentors and volunteers who support farmers on a regular basis, we are aware that farming while rewarding, can be a stressful occupation. Financial stresses, poor work-life balance, farm labour challenges, isolation, and habitual stressors such as animal mortality are part of many farm families' lives.

It is very important that we have conversations about these stressors and how they can be addressed to increase and sustain farmers' resilience.

We hope you find this resource helpful and remember, it is important to reach out to others in order to make that connection to protect and promote positive mental health. It is time to be hopeful about our mental health and working together represents the best approach for the future.



**Jude McCann**  
Chief Executive – Rural Support

## Pressures of farming

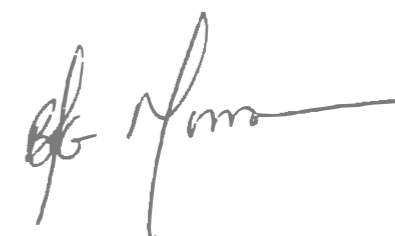
Anyone can experience excessive pressure and demands outside work just as much as they can at work. This is particularly true for farmers; unpredictable weather, commodity prices, rising costs, animal diseases, health problems, as well as isolation, can all cause pressures for the farming community and can lead to issues with a farmer's mental wellbeing.

It is important for farmers to realise that how they deal with pressures and stress can affect their ability to farm safely and remain healthy, yet because farming is such a busy occupation it's often the last thing on their mind. Farmers are good at looking after their land and livestock, they fix and maintain equipment, improve and enhance their farms, but often forget to look after the farm's greatest asset - themselves.

This book is designed to provide practical help and guidance on dealing with the pressures which are often encountered, and signpost to sources of help and advice. The information is divided up into commonly encountered issues to make it simple to find the specific information you need. Additional support is available from a number of organisations such as Rural Support, and I would really encourage anyone who is struggling to seek help.

There is also a section on practical, tried and tested advice on looking after yourself. It would be easy to ignore this, but from personal experience, I know that a few simple steps can make a massive difference. I would encourage everyone to read this section and look for things which can work for you.

HSENI would encourage farmers to recognise that they are the farm's most important asset – so if they are to protect the farm (and everyone relying on it and them) they need to protect themselves. Often we can't avoid the hazards and pressures of farming, but by working safely and managing stress, farmers can reduce the risk of accidents, improve their general health and create resilient businesses.



**Bryan Monson**  
HSENI Deputy Chief Executive

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Rural Support was established in the autumn of 2001. The aim was to help farmers and other rural residents impacted by the severe foot and mouth crisis which was plaguing the agricultural industry. In 2002 Rural Support was registered as a charitable company. The severe impact foot and mouth disease was having on farming and on the farming community as a whole was soon realised. It was this awareness and the urgent need to address this distress that led to the establishment of Rural Support and its telephone helpline. Rural Support remains unique in that it is specifically designed to support the wider farming community, and that its volunteers who assist its helpline service all have rural backgrounds.

Initially set up to alleviate the stress, worries and concerns experienced in the face of foot and mouth, Rural Support has subsequently broadened its focus to include concerns related to financial problems, inheritance issues/succession planning, disease outbreak, and the burden imposed by farm paperwork and related matters. These increasing pressures are a result of changing circumstances. While retaining its core focus on issues such as stress and emotional distress, physical and mental

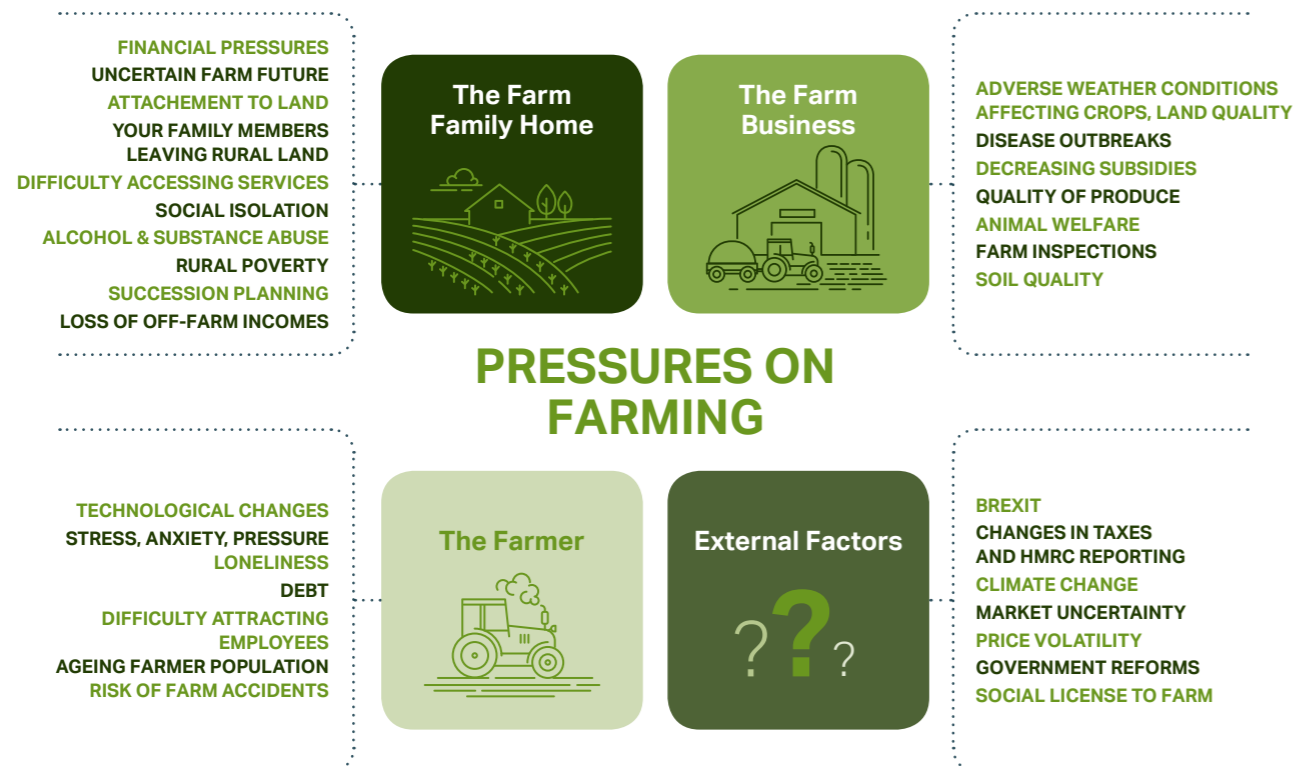
health and the often-related risk of suicide, Rural Support now has extensive experience in handling problems associated with major incidents including animal diseases and major weather events, such as that experienced in the spring of 2013 and more recently in the North West in 2017. Such incidents have highlighted the on-going needs of the farming community and the valuable service that Rural Support provides.

### **Our vision is of a vibrant, healthy and resilient farming community in Northern Ireland.**

Our mission is to provide professional and practical support to farmers, farm families and farm businesses throughout Northern Ireland. What we do:

- 1 **Helpline Support**
- 2 **Farm Business Mentoring**
- 3 **Promoting and Coordinating Social Farming**
- 4 **Outreach Support and Referrals**
- 5 **Emotional and Technical/Practical Support**
- 6 **Promote Positive Mental Health**

## Why we do our work



## Impact of our work

- Improving the wellbeing of farmers and farm family members
- Helping to build more resilient farm businesses
- Supporting farmers to deliver a Social Farming service and supporting service users to participate
- Enhancing the social inclusion, mental health, physical health, and personal development opportunities for farmers and participants of Social Farming
- Increasing awareness and understanding of needs of the farming community
- Enabling partnerships between rural stakeholders to deliver better outcomes for the farming community

# The Farm Business



### Understanding your farm's financial performance

The financial performance of a farm will indicate how well the farm is operating. Cash flow is the most important financial measure you should use when completing financial analysis. Cash flow is a measure of the cash that is available after the day-to-day operation of the farm. This is the source of cash that is used as household income on many farms.

### Importance of awareness of financial position

It's only when you regularly review financial reports that you are in a true position to plan the future of your farm business. Financial analysis must be based on solid information. If a farm business is failing, the long term consequences for the farm family will be more severe if no action is taken. The loss can be minimised if the overall financial position is identified as early as possible.

### Information needed

All farms should have:

- Annual cash flow analysis which includes budgets and a budgetary plan for the future.
- A breakdown of all assets and liabilities of the farm business and farm household.
- It can be a very useful exercise to look at the previous year's performance and then make comparisons.

### Help with improving financial management

- The farm accountant can provide an indication of financial performance. They can also make recommendations or refer you for more specialist advice.
- Your accountant or a financial consultant can help you to analyse your business and has useful tools available to help you keep records and provide guidance on managing finances.

### Training and up skilling on financial recording

There are a range of courses/ programmes being offered to help develop skills in farm or general business financial management:

#### [CAFRE Farm Family Key Skills \(FFKS\) programme](http://www.cafre.ac.uk/industry-support/farm-family-key-skills/)

Offers workshops to help Northern Ireland farmers with their business decision making in the key areas of Animal Health, Business Planning, Health & Safety and ICT.

[www.cafre.ac.uk/industry-support/farm-family-key-skills/](http://www.cafre.ac.uk/industry-support/farm-family-key-skills/)

Tel: 0800 028 4291

#### [Rural Support's On Farm Business Support](http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk)

This service aims to help farming families tackle farm business issues such as finance/debt and business decisions regarding the future. It is aimed at families or individuals experiencing stress or worry in relation to the farm and provides free, independent and confidential support from a business mentor, experienced in agriculture and finance.

[www.ruralsupport.org.uk](http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk)

Freephone Helpline:  
0800 138 1678 (Mon-Fri 9am to 9pm)

#### [The Prince's Farm Resilience Programme](http://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk)

Run by Prince's Countryside Fund and facilitated by Rural Support in Northern Ireland provides support through one-to-one, on farm mentoring and group workshops focusing on areas such as finance and business planning, making efficiencies and looking at new opportunities, preparing for the future, succession planning and change management.

[www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk](http://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk)

Tel: 0207 566 8695

### Planning your Farm Business

Every farm family should set business and personal goals. You have to strategically look at your business and allocate your available resources (labour, time, money and equipment) in order to set goals that are achievable.

### Importance of Business Planning

Running a farm business in the absence of a sound business plan puts more stress on the farm manager and the family in general. Many expanding farm businesses run out of cash, so it is important to complete a plan to prevent this common problem.

### Elements of a good farm business plan

- All family partners should be aware of the plan and buy into it.
- The goals should be clear.
- Family members or partners should be assigned for various tasks or activities.
- The roles of family members should be regularly reviewed to match the business goals and skills requirements.
- Plans should be regularly reviewed.
- Annual leave plans including holiday requirements of family members.
- The personal time allocation within short term business plan.
- Inputs for planned farming activities should always be costed, planned and timed.

### Developing your farm business plan

- Your accountant or financial consultant can provide specialist advice in helping to develop a business plan.

Support can be obtained from the same organisations which provide financial planning support as in the previous section.

Planning allows farm business owners to:

- Think about where I'm going
- Think about what I have to do
- Estimate extra costs, extra revenues and risks

#### [CAFRE's Business Development Groups scheme](http://www.cafre.ac.uk)

Offers support to groups of farmers from a dedicated facilitator.

Activities include benchmarking, on-farm meetings, demonstrations and skills training. Through the scheme participants get access to a CAFRE Development Adviser and have the option to gain a qualification.

To register your interest for future tranches email: [kt.admin@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:kt.admin@daera-ni.gov.uk)

[www.cafre.ac.uk](http://www.cafre.ac.uk)

#### [Enterprise Northern Ireland](http://www.enterpriseni.com/business-support)

Provides business support through 28 Local Enterprise Agencies across Northern Ireland who offer support to develop a business plan for a new business.

Find out the location of your nearest agency:

[www.enterpriseni.com/business-support](http://www.enterpriseni.com/business-support)



# Business Planning **Worksheet**

In order to develop a plan for the farm business it is important first to consider what's important for individuals in the farm family as well as business goals.

The following worksheet may be helpful in considering this. At this moment in time, reflect on what are your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from a personal and business perspective.

Strengths		Opportunities	
Personal / Family	Business	Personal / Family	Business
Weaknesses		Threats	
Personal / Family	Business	Personal / Family	Business

# Business Planning **Worksheet** Continued

Further areas for consideration when business planning:

**Where are you currently and where do you want to get to?**

Personal circumstances which may impact farm business
Education/training qualifications - What is existing in the business? What more is needed?
Succession Plan currently in place
Land, buildings and fixed equipment
Machinery
Labour - hours spent- paid and unpaid- family/ employees
Your market and customers
Farm business productivity
Overall business state and financial health of the business

## Workforce management

As herd size increases, the labour resources on farm become stretched. Initially, this is dealt with by adopting labour efficient techniques and systems. These include compact calving, an efficient calf feeding system and a good milking routine, to mention but a few.

Another approach with increasing numbers is to increase the use of relief workers or contractors e.g. milkers, slurry, fertiliser and heifer rearing. But as numbers increase further additional full-or part-time staff may be considered. This can be difficult for you to see as you attempt to complete all of the work yourself. Joint farming ventures, such as farm partnerships and share farming are also ways to gain help and share responsibilities.

## Importance of workforce management

The ability to manage staff is a key skill requirement in order to ensure a profitable business operation. A good workforce management approach will help the business run smoothly with minimum stress.

If workers enjoy their work environment they are less likely to want to leave and this gives a much better return on the investment or payback with their skills development.

## Requirements in managing a workforce

- All employment issues such as hiring, keeping workers, employment conditions and costs.
- Defining work tasks before and during employment.
- Team works skills and ability to lead.
- Negotiation and communication.
- Help available in managing a workforce

Farmers who start employing people need in most cases to acquire new skills and information. The main sources of information include:

[Labour Relations Agency](http://www.lra.org.uk)

[www.lra.org.uk](http://www.lra.org.uk)

[Department for Employment and Learning](http://www.delni.gov.uk)

[www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)

[Department for Communities Employers Online NI](http://www.employersonlineni.com)

[www.employersonlineni.com](http://www.employersonlineni.com)

[Health and Safety Executive NI](http://www.hseni.gov.uk/)

[www.hseni.gov.uk/](http://www.hseni.gov.uk/)

[HMRC](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/)

[www.gov.uk/pay-for-employers](http://www.gov.uk/pay-for-employers)

## Training Opportunities

There is a broad range of skills-based training available in workforce management. The key training areas of relevance would include:

- Negotiation and Communication
- Leadership
- Management
- Workforce/ Human Resource Management



There are legal requirements on farm businesses which need to be met in a broad range of areas.

Rural Support has found that farmers can have fears about proper implementation of legislation and the implications of noncompliance and that this can have an impact on mental well-being. Keeping informed about legislation by using the resources that are available to you will improve your resilience.

## Importance of understanding the farm legal requirements

The consequences of not complying with farm legislation requirements can be very costly in terms of fines and penalties. It is important that farm families understand the relevant Government requirements. There may be a number of Government departments or state agencies with whom farmers must comply. These include:

- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Local Authorities
- HM Revenue & Customs

## What is included in Government Legislation?

There are many legislative requirements which farms must meet. This list is not comprehensive:

- Cross Compliance  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/cross-complianceverifiable-standards](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/cross-complianceverifiable-standards)
- Basic Payment Scheme
- The Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water, Air and Soil (CoGAP)  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/codegood-agricultural-practice-cogap](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/codegood-agricultural-practice-cogap)
- The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations and the Phosphorus Regulations 2015-2018 and The Nitrates Action Programme 2019-2022

- General Import Licences for Animals/Animal Products
- Pollution Prevention and Control- District Councils Charging Scheme NI 2018
- The Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (NI) 2006
- Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977
- Pesticide Regulations guidance - Spraying Law and Legal requirements for the storage, sale and supply of Pesticides.
- Livestock and Meat Commission Farm Quality Assurance/ Red Tractor  
[www.lmcni.com/farm-quality-assurance/](http://www.lmcni.com/farm-quality-assurance/)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety on farm  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg270.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg270.pdf)
- The Control of Pollution (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
- Waste Management Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
- Building Regulations NI 2012

## Where can I find out more about Government requirements?

[Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs:](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/)

Basic payment scheme: 0300 200 7848

Environmental issues: 0300 200 7842

Animal Welfare: 0300 200 7840

[Farm Quality Assurance helpline:](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/)

028 9263 3024

[Health and Safety Executive NI:](http://www.hse.gov.uk/)

0800 0320 121

[NI Water:](http://www.niwater.gov.uk/)

03457 440088

[HM Revenue & Customs:](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/)

[www.gov.uk/browse/business](http://www.gov.uk/browse/business)



Research has found that there is a relationship between the health of animals and the health of the farmer. Good animal welfare and good herd health means less stress on the farmer. Equally, when a farmer is stressed, research has found that animal health may suffer.

There are practical steps and supports farmers can avail of to maintain good herd health and animal welfare. Your vet and agencies such as DAERA can offer advice to support you. However, people who surround themselves with animals will inevitably have to say goodbye on a continuous basis. This is normally due to animal sales. However, the loss of animals due to sickness, disease or mortality at birth can make farmers feel stranded or isolated. Farmers can sometimes blame themselves for making poor management decisions.

Threats that farmers must deal with in relation to animal health include; tuberculosis (TB) outbreak, Johne's disease, Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD), calf scour of many forms, worm infection, calf mortality at birth, flooding, dogs worrying sheep and viral diseases etc. There are many disease risks and on farm challenges which could completely challenge the bravest and toughest of us.

### When you lose Animal(s)

The death of an animal on a farm can be very significant for many farmers. This is closely linked to the financial loss and the hollow feeling of not performing as well as your neighbour, discussion group colleagues or peers. Anger, frustration and sometimes guilt are the types of feelings that come with losing animals.

Research has found that dealing with animal disease and deaths is a major challenge in farming that should be discussed more openly, in discussion groups, for instance. It's important to talk about your loss with peers who will empathise with you.

All farmers at some stage have experienced heard/crop disease and death of animals. You should remain busy and focused on the farm. If, however, months after your loss you still feel isolated, unfocused on the farm or if you feel that you are not able to cope or lack the passion to farm the way you did in the past, then you should seek help. Agencies such as Rural Support are a source of support to farmers dealing with loss of animals. Talk to your veterinary practitioner and ask for help on combating disease issues or mortality problems.

### Where can I get information on maintaining good herd health and animal welfare?

- Your local vet
- DAERA Animal Health and Welfare: 0300 200 7840
- Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI) [www.animalhealthni.com](http://www.animalhealthni.com)

If you are under stress due to loss of animals or concerns regarding animal welfare Rural Support could help:

Freephone Helpline:  
0800 138 1678 (Mon-Fri 9am to 9pm)

[www.ruralsupport.org.uk](http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk)



Traditionally, family farms in Northern Ireland have been passed to the next generation on death. More recently, social and economic changes have meant that many farm businesses are now transferred to the next generation during the owner's lifetime.

### Make a Will

Passing on ownership of a farm business can be stressful, whatever the circumstances. However, it can be particularly difficult when the transfer is unplanned through illness or the sudden death of the owner.

It is therefore important that you, as the current owner, have considered your options and have made legal arrangements to ensure that your wishes for the future ownership of your farm business are carried out. If, having consulted your solicitor and accountant, you decide to retain ownership of some or all of the farm business until your death, it is important that you make and regularly update your Will.

### The risks involved in not making a Will

If you do not make a Will, your spouse will not automatically inherit all of your property after your death; instead, it will be divided according to the rules of intestacy, between your next of kin. These rules are rigid and may mean that the farm business will be divided between a number of relatives. This can often cause disputes within families and the break-up of the farm business.

In addition, the absence of a Will can result in a delay in the payment of money due to the farm business (including DAERA payments), pending a legal decision as to who is entitled to receive such payments.

### The benefits of making a Will

It is important that you make and regularly update a Will, to provide certainty and clarity regarding the division of your estate, and to avoid the potential for disputes and delays. If you choose to make a Will, it must be carefully drafted and professional advice should be considered.

It is important that you choose a solicitor who understands the specific issues involved in the transfer of a farm business, and executors (those appointed to carry out your wishes) who have a good knowledge of your particular business, one of whom should be younger than you.

### Farm business assets

It is vital that all the assets of the farm are dealt with in such a manner so as to ensure that they pass to the person you intend. When you are making a Will, it is very important that you ensure that your solicitor has knowledge of all of the assets involved in your farm business.

This may include, not only the land but also the livestock, plant and machinery, entitlement to Basic Payment Scheme payments and other grant payments.

You should also discuss who will be responsible for the payment of any outstanding farm debts, and who will be entitled to monies which are owed to the farm business on your death.

### Importance of planning

It is important that your Will is regularly updated, to take account of changes in the farm business, assets owned, family circumstances and changes in the law.

Illness and incapacity are often unplanned and can cause a great deal of stress for other members if the decision maker on farm is no longer able to fulfil this role. You can minimise disruption by ensuring, where possible, that more than one person is named on the herd book, flock number, Farm Business ID and bank account signatory.

## Power of Attorney

A Power of Attorney is a legal document giving someone else the authority to take actions or make decisions on your behalf. It enables you to choose a person/ or people (called an attorney) to deal with your farm business affairs. A Power of Attorney ceases when you become mentally incapable of managing your affairs, but an Enduring Power of Attorney will continue.

Appointing a Power of Attorney could ensure your wishes are carried out and farm business continues to operate should you become incapacitated through accident or illness.

You should seek legal advice as careful consideration should be given to the range of powers you wish to give your attorney.

## Inheritance Tax

Depending on the scale of your farm business Inheritance Tax could be an important consideration in relation to your succession planning however it should not be a barrier to putting a succession plan in place.

A solicitor and/ or accountant, with relevant experience, can assist you in carefully considering these issues and the appropriate tax reliefs with regard to planning your succession.

## Talking about Succession Planning

For many farmers the issue of succession planning causes a great deal of stress, worry and fear. Many farmers do not want to think about retirement and worry about how it will affect their physical, emotional and financial well-being.

There are many reasons why farm families avoid the subject of succession however it is important to weigh up the consequences to the family and farm business of doing nothing versus having difficult conversations and taking steps to address the issue now.

It is important to take the time to think about where your farm business is now, where it is headed and what you want in terms of a work-life balance now and in the future.

## Other options

If you have no obvious or identified successor Land Mobility, Partnerships & Share/Contract Farming options could be considered. Arrangements such as these could lead to a reduced work load, improved work-life balance, reduced stress through shared decision making and improved profits and viability.

## Help with Succession Planning

- A professional accountant/ solicitor/ financial advisor with knowledge of the farming sector
- A professional succession planning facilitator
- An agricultural consultant
- Agricultural Law Association

<https://ala.org.uk/>

- UFU/ YFCU Land Mobility Scheme

<https://yfcu.org/land-mobility-scheme>

If you are experiencing stress in relation to making decisions about the future Rural Support could help through it's On Farm Business Support service.

Freephone Helpline:  
0800 138 1678 (Mon- Fri 9am to 9pm)

[www.ruralsupport.org.uk](http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk)



Tax time on the farm can be a little stressful in gathering all your forms and receipts in preparation for a visit to your accountant or when doing it yourself. Self-assessment is for the self-employed, including farmers, where you make your own tax assessment.

For many self-employed the idea of trawling through a mountain of incomings and outgoings in the form of receipts, cheque books and bank accounts is often put on the long finger. Procrastination is often the method used to deal with this in the shorter term. However sooner or later this chore will have to be faced either by oneself or provided to an accountant or tax advisor so as to avoid penalties.

Assistance is always at hand, either online or face-to-face. Therefore, nobody needs to face this stressful task alone. By filing your return on time and getting it off your desk you will also clear your mind.

The HM Revenue & Customs website itself provides detailed information about tax and tax compliance matters for the self-employed. This includes how to calculate and pay your tax and file your tax returns.

## Filing your tax return

There are a number of steps involved in filing your tax return. These are detailed on the HMRC website to assist in filing tax return and in making a self-assessment.

## Where can I find out more on self-assessment and filing my tax return?

- Contact your local accountant/tax adviser for further assistance
- HM Revenue and Customs

[www.gov.uk/self-assessment-tax-returns](http://www.gov.uk/self-assessment-tax-returns)

Telephone: 0300 200 3310

(If you have a National Insurance number and Self Assessment Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) have them with you when you phone).



The government has a range of benefits to provide opportunities and support.

Benefits are available for people of working age, for pensioners, for families and children, and for people with disabilities and their carers.

The system also provides additional income when your earnings are low.

There are several benefits and financial supports available which can be availed of in certain circumstances. To qualify for a particular benefit, you must meet the conditions that the government specifies.

### People of working age

Benefits and services for people of working age, for example Jobseeker's Allowance, are dealt with by Social Security/Jobs & Benefits offices around Northern Ireland.

These offices can help you with:

- finding work
- starting your own business
- managing on a low income

If you cannot work because of an illness or disability there are a number of benefits you may be entitled to.

### Pensioners and people planning for retirement

The Pension Service, which is part of the Department for Communities provides services to:

- anyone planning for their retirement
- people approaching retirement
- people who've already retired
- employers

### Families and children

Social Security / Jobs & Benefits offices look after benefits and services for families, including those:

- bringing up children, including children with special needs
- managing on a low income, including help with health costs
- expecting or bringing up children

### People with disabilities and carers

The Disability and Carers Service, which is part of Department for Communities, is responsible for benefits and services for people who are sick or have a disability, and their carers (Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance).

Recent changes to the benefits system (the move to Universal Credit) will impact self-employed claimants differently to other claimants. It is important that if you are currently accessing benefits or if you are likely to in the future, that you get appropriate advice to avoid or reduce the impact on your income.

### Where to get help

[Make The Call helpline](#)

To enquire if you're getting all the benefits, services and supports you're entitled to.  
Freephone: 0800 232 1271

[Tax and Benefits Advice helpline](#)

For advice on tax and benefits.  
Freephone: 0800 988 2377

[Welfare Reform helpline](#)

If you are concerned about changes to your benefits.

Freephone Advice NI: 0808 802 0020

Visit your local Citizens' Advice centre:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/northern-ireland/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/northern-ireland/)

Agricultural crime is a serious concern to farmers. If you are a victim of rural crime, this can have a substantial emotional and financial impact on you, your family and farm business.

### Keeping your farm secure

On your farm you may have valuable livestock, expensive equipment and vehicles. There are some simple things you can do to increase security on your farm, making it harder for thieves to get access to your land, livestock and equipment.

### Keeping your house and farm secure

To keep your house and farm secure, there are some general things you can do:

- invest in good locks for doors and windows
- be aware of people or vehicles coming and going and report any suspicious activity to the police
- keep a register with photographs and descriptions of animals, tools, equipment, vehicles and any other valuables
- contact the Police Service for Northern Ireland (call 101) or your local Police and Community Safety Partnership (PCSPs) for crime prevention advice
- find out if a Farm Watch scheme or a Rural Text Alert scheme, operates in your area

### Security around the farm

Farms can cover large areas of land and it can be difficult to make them completely secure. There are things you can do to make your farm more secure:

- check fencing, hedges and walls regularly - they should be robust and well maintained
- restrict access to your yard with locked gates and security barriers - the fewer ways in the better

- fit alarms to storage sheds and other buildings
- consider installing a CCTV system to your yard, sheds and any other vulnerable areas
- invest in good lighting for your farmyard

### Keeping livestock, vehicles and equipment secure

- In order to keep these assets secure you should:
  - regularly check fields with livestock
  - keep hedges, fences and gates in good repair
  - keep sheds and stockyard gates closed and locked
  - always tag your livestock
  - take photographs or videos of valuable animals with the brand and/or ear tags clearly visible
  - keep a recent and accurate record of all your livestock
  - lock away tools and equipment not in use
  - mark vehicles, tools and machinery with your house number and postcode or your Business Identifier number
  - secure or immobilise vehicles, plant, trailers and machinery when not in use
  - remove machinery and vehicles from fields overnight
  - keep valuable vehicles and machinery in a securely locked shed
  - always remove keys from parked vehicles
  - consider fitting an electronic vehicle marking system or tracking device

### Where to get help

If you wish to report a crime you should call the PSNI on 101 or Crimestoppers Rural Crime Reporting Line: 0800 783 0137

[For crime prevention Advice:](#)

Find your local Policing & Community Safety Partnership: 028 9040 8500

# Looking After Yourself

Normal ageing is a gradual process accompanied by some physical decline, such as decreased vision, hearing, and pulmonary and immune functions. Changes also occur in mental functioning. Coping with all these gradual changes can be difficult and challenging but it can be done in a healthy way. Each individual ages in their own way.

### Risk Concerns

Many farmers don't retire primarily because, unlike many other employment situations, there is no standard retirement age from farming. Farmers by their very nature simply like to keep going. Those who wish to remain active well into their later years can often do so with adequate support and if they take care of themselves remaining aware of the risks involved with routine farm activities. Stress reduction, open communication and creating a safe work environment are the keys to helping the older farmer continue working.

Some of the main causes of farm accidents for the older farmer include:

- PTO guards broken or missing
- Carrying out high risk maintenance on buildings and roofs
- Decreased mobility and reaction time in relation to driving tractors/machinery and working with bulls and other livestock
- Strength, mobility and flexibility in relation to working from height
- Working alone with livestock
- Stress which can lead to lack of concentration, depression, low moods and exacerbate physical illness
- Poorly maintained tractors and machinery
- Starting tractor from outside the cab

### Risk Management

- Adjusting work practices and making sure not to be in a position that would require quick movement to get out of the way to avoid injury.
- Assessing the work to be done.
- Get competent help when handling livestock.
- Have tractors and machinery properly maintained.

### Looking after your Physical Health

Regular exercise and eating a balanced diet can seriously improve your health by:

- Keeping your weight down
- Lowering your blood cholesterol
- Preventing high blood pressure

Often farmers ignore symptoms of ill-health, putting them down to getting older and avoid visiting the doctor. It is important to seek professional advice from a pharmacist or GP when you are ill.

### Where can I get more information about staying fit for farming?

[Your own GP](#)

[Health and Safety Executive NI](#)

[www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0800 0320 121

[Farm Family Health Checks Programme](#)

This programme is a one-stop mobile facility offering free health assessments and advice tailored specifically for you.

To find out when the screening van will be near you telephone: 028 2563 5573.

### Understanding Mental Health

We all have mental health, like we all have physical health. Both change throughout our lives. Our mind, like our body, from time-to-time can become unwell.

Mental health has to do with different aspects of our lives including

- How we feel about ourselves.
- How we feel about others.
- How we are able to meet the demands of life.

The World Health Organisation states "Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder". It is defined as "a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community."

Good mental health is essentially about how you look after yourself physically and mentally. Mental health is a spectrum, or a continuum, that applies to everyone. It is all to do with daily living. There are days when you can feel at either end of the spectrum. The ideal is to try to keep yourself somewhere in the middle.

### Well-being:

At the 'healthy' end of the continuum individuals are experiencing well-being, a state of good mental and emotional health. At this point people may also experience stress but are managing it well as an aspect of everyday life.

However, where problems become more serious or prolonged, coping may become progressively more difficult and can lead to poor mental health necessitating some form of appropriate support.

### Emotional Problems or Concerns:

Discomfort has risen to a level of distress leading to the beginning of difficulty in coping which can result in possible insomnia, lack of concentration or loss of appetite. If the distress levels increase, it is advisable for a person to seek appropriate professional help as the person at this point of the continuum may be vulnerable to depression or general anxiety.

### Where can I find out more about mental health and wellbeing?

[Minding Your Head website](http://www.mindingyourhead.info)

[www.mindingyourhead.info](http://www.mindingyourhead.info)

[Mental Health Foundation website](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/)

[www.mentalhealth.org.uk/](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/)

There is a wide range of voluntary sector groups and organisations that offer support and information on a range of specific problems – please refer to the appendix at the back of this resource for a full list of services in your local health trust area.



Unfortunately, the terms mental illness and mental health are often used interchangeably thereby causing confusion as to our everyday understanding that mental health and mental illness are different. They are different in the same way as is good and poor physical health.

One of the fundamental differences between the two is that everyone has some level of mental health all of the time, just like physical health, whereas it is possible to be without mental illness. It is a recognised, medically diagnosable illness that affects the way people think, feel, behave, or interact with others.

Sadly, there are often perceived barriers to seeking help with the warning signs of mental illness, one being fear of dealing with the unknown, another being the stigma often unfairly associated with mental illness. The consequence can be avoidance thereby compounding the situation and slowing the recovery process.

### Mental Illness

Signs and symptoms of mental illness can vary, and often it can be a combination of changes that are indicative that help or support needs to be considered. (Please note that the following signs are not a substitute for a clinical diagnosis).

- Feeling sad or down for a prolonged period
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
- Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt
- Extreme mood changes of highs and lows
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping
- Detachment from reality (delusions), paranoia or hallucinations

- Inability to cope with daily problems or stress
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Major changes in eating habits
- Excessive anger, hostility or violence
- Suicidal thoughts and self harming

### Recovery and Mental Illness

Recovery from mental illness, like physical illness, is possible with the correct professional support and those with mental illness can still enjoy a positive sense of overall health and well-being.

There is a range of professional support available in Northern Ireland for people with mental health problems including:

- Medical treatments
- Psychological therapies
- Psychiatric interventions

A GP will usually be the first point of contact for these services and will also provide advice, support and treatment where appropriate.

### Where to get help

[Your own GP](#)

[Lifeline](#)

If you, or anyone you know is in distress or despair you can call Lifeline for free on 0808 808 8000 24 hours a day.

[Minding Your Head website](http://www.mindingyourhead.info)

[www.mindingyourhead.info/](http://www.mindingyourhead.info/)

There is a wide range of voluntary sector groups and organisations that offer support and information on a range of specific problems – please refer to the appendix at the back of this resource for a full list of services in your local health trust area.

There are noted risk factors, both physical and mental, associated with farming. Research indicates that on-going mental distress leads to anxiety and depression. Mental distress also leads to increased risk of accidental injury. Mental distress from farming can arise from on-going work time pressure, bureaucracy, financial pressure, work unpredictability and the presence of farm hazards. The juggling of such competing demands can accumulate to the point that it can lead to stress, and poor mental health.

One of the more general definitions of stress is the feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure.

A certain amount of stress is a normal part of everyday living. A certain degree of stress can be positive, making us more alert and helping us perform better in certain situations, such stress is only healthy if it is short-lived.

Unfortunately, excessive or prolonged stress can lead to debilitating illnesses such as heart disease and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

### Awareness of stress symptoms

Stress symptoms are warning signs that indicate that something needs to be changed. The signs of stress will vary, some of which can often overlap.

**Physical symptoms** - can include headaches, chronic tiredness and fatigue, insomnia, musculoskeletal aches and pains, stomach and bowel problems, hypertension, rapid heart rate, panic attacks, weak immune system.

**Emotional symptoms** - can include depression, anxiety, worry, fear, feelings of powerlessness and being overwhelmed, feeling trapped, frustrated, irritable or angry, loneliness, grief and feeling like crying a lot.

**Cognitive symptoms** - can include obsessive thinking, negative thinking, poor short-term

memory, difficulty concentrating, catastrophising, mind reading, black and white thinking – interpret things as all good or all bad, unable to see options.

**Behavioural symptoms** - can include being angry with other people, inability to make decisions, chronic complaining, procrastination, withdrawal from family, friends, lack of self-care, compulsive behaviours, changes in eating patterns, increased alcohol and caffeine consumption, gambling and other addictions.

### Practical Ways of Personal Stress Management

Whenever there is a feeling of being overwhelmed by stress it is helpful to have a range of practical strategies to reduce its impact.

- Don't ignore signs that you are stressed
- Focus on what you can do to work through problems and what support is available
- Talk to someone about how you are feeling
- Try relaxation exercises

The **'Take Five Steps to Wellbeing'** model is one such strategy which you can find in the appendix of this resource.

### Where can I find out more about managing stress?

[Mind](#)

[www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/stress/](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/stress/)

### Rural Support

If you are experiencing stress or worry in relation to the farm Rural Support can offer free, independent and confidential support from a farm business mentor, experienced in agriculture and finance.

[www.ruralsupport.org.uk](http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk)

Freephone Helpline:  
0800 138 1678 (Mon- Fri 9am to 9pm)

Everyone occasionally feels sad or "blue". We can often use the expression "I'm feeling depressed" or "not myself lately" when we are feeling sad or miserable. Usually these feelings pass in time over a couple of days or less.

However, if such feelings are interfering with your day to day living and they don't go away after a couple of weeks, or if they come back, over and over again, it could be a sign that depression is beginning to set in. If this is the situation it is advisable to seek professional help. People can get better and recover with treatment.

Although there are several types of depression there are a number of common symptoms which can include:

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities, hobbies or friendships
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts

Not every person who has depression will have all of these symptoms. Some people with depression can cover up and 'mask' their symptoms.

Depending on the number and severity of symptoms, a depressive episode may be specified as mild, moderate or severe.

It is important to remember that depression is a health problem and needs to be addressed in the same way as a physical health problem.

Appropriate and effective treatments are available for depression and can be accessed through your GP. These include medication and other treatments such as counselling or other talking therapies.

If you are concerned that you or someone you know might be showing signs of depression it is important to get support.

### Where to get help

[Your own GP](#)

[Rural Support](#)

Provides a listening and signposting service for farmers and rural families across Northern Ireland through its confidential helpline. Freephone Helpline: 0800 138 1678 (Mon- Fri 9am to 9pm)

[www.ruralsupport.org.uk](http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk)

[Samaritans](#)

The Samaritans helpline provides a safe space for people to talk when things are getting to them.

**Freephone:** 116 123 (24/7 365 days a year) or  
**email:** [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

[Aware NI](#)

Support groups for people with depression and bipolar disorder as well as carers for people with the illness.

<https://www.aware-ni.org/>

There is a wide range of voluntary sector groups and organisations that offer support and information on a range of specific problems – please refer to the appendix at the back of this resource for a full list of services in your local health trust area.

If you, or anyone you know is in distress or despair you can call Lifeline for free on **0808 808 8000** 24 hours a day.

# Looking After Yourself (Self-Care)

It is important to take the time to reflect on how well we are looking after ourselves and identify our own individual ways of maintaining or improving our well-being.

The following worksheet is a simple and practical way of identifying how well we are taking care of ourselves and can help to identify any areas for improvement.

The list below is not exhaustive, it is merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant to you and rate yourself on how often and how well you do these.

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

3 = I do this well (e.g. frequently)      1 = I barely or rarely do this      ? = This never occurred to me  
2 = I do this OK (e.g. occasionally)      0 = I never do this

## Physical Self-Care

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch & dinner)
- Eat healthily
- Get enough sleep
- Exercise
- Get regular medical care for prevention
- Get medical care when needed
- Take time off when sick
- Get massages
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing or do some other fun physical activity
- Wear clothes I like
- Take holidays
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Psychological Self-Care

- Take day trips or time away from the farm
- Make time away from telephones, email and the internet
- Make time for self- reflection
- Notice my inner experience- listen to my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings
- Have my own personal talking therapy (e.g. counselling)
- Write in a journal
- Read literature that is unrelated to work
- Do something at which I am not expert or in Charge
- Attend to minimizing stress in my life
- Engage my intelligence in a new area e.g. go to an art show, sports event, theatre
- Be curious
- Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

# Looking After Yourself (Self-Care)

Continued

3 = I do this well (e.g. frequently)      1 = I barely or rarely do this      ? = This never occurred to me  
2 = I do this OK (e.g. occasionally)      0 = I never do this

## Emotional Self-Care

- Spend time with others whose company I Enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in my Life
- Give myself affirmations, praise myself
- Love myself
- Re-read favourite books, re-view favourite movies
- Identify comforting activities, objects, people, places and seek them out
- Allow myself to cry
- Find things that make me laugh
- Express my outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Spiritual Self-Care

- Make time for reflection
- Spend time in nature
- Find a spiritual connection or community
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish my optimism and hope
- Be aware of non- material aspects of life
- Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- Be open to not knowing
- Identify what is meaningful to me and notice its place in my life
- Meditate/ Pray
- Sing
- Have experiences of awe
- Contribute to causes in which I believe
- Read inspirational literature or listen to inspirational talks/ music
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



# Looking After Yourself (Self-Care)

Continued

3 = I do this well (e.g. frequently)      1 = I barely or rarely do this      ? = This never occurred to me  
 2 = I do this OK (e.g. occasionally)      0 = I never do this

## Relationship Self-Care

- Schedule regular dates with my family, partner or spouse, if applicable
- Schedule regular activities with my children, if applicable
- Make time to see friends
- Call, check on, or see my relatives
- Spend time with my companion animals
- Stay in contact with faraway friends
- Make time to reply to personal emails and letters; send holiday cards
- Allow others to do things for me
- Enlarge my social circle
- Ask for help when I need it
- Share a fear, hope or secret with someone I trust
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Workplace or Professional Self-Care

- Take a break during the workday (e.g. lunch)
- Take time to chat with co-workers, if applicable
- Make quiet time to complete tasks
- Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- Set limits with clients and co-workers
- Balance my workload so that no one day or part of a day is "too much"
- Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- Get regular supervision or consultation
- Negotiate for my needs (benefits, pay rise, better terms)
- Have a peer support group
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Overall Balance

- Strive for balance within my work-life and work day
- Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play and rest

## Other Areas of Self-Care that are relevant to you

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses.

- Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"?
- Listen to your inner responses, your thoughts about self-care and making yourself a priority.

Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

(Self-care tool provided by kind permission of Conor McCafferty, Zest).

# My Daily Self Care Planner

DAY	Things I want to do and intend to do! (Be specific with activities)			Did I do?		If not, WHY?	
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Yes	No	Good Reason	No Good Reason
Mon							
Tues							
Weds							
Thurs							
Fri							
Sat							
Sun							

## Simple Self Care Plan

Identify helpful behaviours which help when you feel stressed and avoid behaviours which do not help (self-care tool provided by kind permission of Northern Health and Social Care Trust)

When I am feeling stressed or in a low mood I should try to:		When I am feeling stressed or in a low mood I should try NOT to:	
✓		✗	
✓		✗	
✓		✗	
✓		✗	
✓		✗	





Alcohol is one of the oldest and the most widely used drugs in the world. Most of us use it for enjoyment, but sometimes drinking alcohol can be a problem. Some people drink alcohol because they believe it can alter their mood and feelings or help them cope with situations or emotions they find difficult.

However, alcohol is a depressant drug. It affects how the brain works, slowing down the central nervous system and can increase levels of anxiety or make symptoms of depression worse.

It is important to remember that alcohol has the potential to be addictive.

The after-effects of heavy and repeated alcohol use can make day-to-day living more difficult and can contribute to problems with sleep, physical health, finances, work and relationships.

Alcohol interferes with the chemicals in the brain's control system. The effect alcohol has on our brain makes us drunk, but it can also cause longer lasting or even permanent damage to our brains.

For example:

- Mood changes
- Learning and concentration difficulties
- Mental health problems like anxiety and depression
- Poor memory, dementia
- Alcohol related brain injuries

### Taking control and staying within low-risk drinking limits

The government's unit guidelines state that there's no safe level of alcohol consumption. Unit guidelines are the same for men and women and both are advised not to regularly drink more than 14 units per week (e.g. 14 units is equal to 5 pints of lager/ beer/ cider approximately).

### Where can I find out more about support for alcohol issues?

[Drugs and Alcohol Northern Ireland](http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info/alcohol/)

[www.drugsandalcoholni.info/alcohol/](http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info/alcohol/)

[Alcoholics Anonymous](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/)

An organisation of men and women who share their experience with each other hoping to solve their problems and help others to recover from alcoholism.

Tel: 028 9035 1222

[www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/)

[Al-Anon](http://www.al-anon.org/)

An organisation which offers help and support to families and friends of problem drinkers.

Tel: 028 9068 2368

(6pm to 11pm, 7 days a week;  
10am to 1pm, Monday to Friday)

There is a wide range of voluntary sector groups and organisations that offer support and information on a range of specific problems – please refer to the appendix at the back of this resource for a full list of services in your local health trust area.

There are many different types of drugs including prescription and recreational. A drug can be described as a substance taken for its narcotic or stimulant effects.

When someone is dependent on drugs they may experience a difficulty controlling their use or spending a lot of time involved in drug use and less time on other things in life.

Various things influence how a person is affected by the drugs they take. Some of these things include:

- A person's size, height and weight
- Diet
- Whether other drugs have been taken
- The way the drug is taken
- The environment where you are taking it

Mixing recreational or prescription drugs with alcohol is extremely dangerous. Some users of drugs experience what is known as a 'Come Down'. It is also referred to sometimes as 'Crashing'. This experience can be triggered by numerous different drugs and some people seem more susceptible to this happening. The users will experience a dramatic worsening of mood as the peak effects wear off. This is caused by both physiological and psychological factors.

Physiologically, all the chemicals in the drugs that make you feel 'happy' and full of energy, have been absorbed or used up by the brain resulting in headaches, dizziness, nausea, sweating, insomnia or excessive sleepiness.

Psychologically, your mood becomes low because you are coming down from an experience and don't want the feelings to go. Due to this some users find themselves re-dosing in order to put off the come down. Once a person 'comes down' from a drug they can be left with feelings of paranoia, anxiety or depression and can sometimes experience hallucinations or psychosis.

### Where can I find out more about drug abuse and support?

[Drugs and Alcohol Northern Ireland](http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info/alcohol/)

[www.drugsandalcoholni.info/alcohol/](http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info/alcohol/)

[NIDacts](http://www.nidacts.org/)

Northern Ireland Drugs and Alcohol Services Directory

[www.services.drugsandalcoholni.info/](http://www.services.drugsandalcoholni.info/)

[Addiction NI](http://www.addictionni.com/)

A registered charity providing treatment and support for people who are dependent on alcohol or drugs

Telephone: (028) 9066 4434

[www.addictionni.com](http://www.addictionni.com)

There is a wide range of voluntary sector groups and organisations that offer support and information on a range of specific problems – please refer to the appendix at the back of this resource for a full list of services in your local health trust area.



### Self-harm

Is when someone deliberately hurts, cuts or injures him/ herself. It's usually a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress and can be a call for help. It should be taken seriously. If you self-harm it is very important that you seek help and support. It might seem that nobody understands what you're going through or that you are alone but remember there is help available.

### Suicide

If you are feeling suicidal, or are having thoughts of ending your life, it is important that you keep yourself safe. Try to remember that thoughts about taking your life are just thoughts. They do not mean you have to act on them, no matter how overwhelming they are. The most important thing to do if you are having thoughts of suicide is to talk to someone.

**REACH OUT TO SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP.  
IT IS OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP.**



### Where can I get support with self harm or suicide?

#### Lifeline

If you, or anyone you know is in distress or despair you can call Lifeline for free on 0808 808 8000. Lifeline counsellors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to listen and help, in confidence.

#### Samaritans

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for anyone struggling to cope. You can call for free on 116 123.

**In Crisis:** Go to or contact the Emergency Department of your nearest general hospital if someone is in immediate danger.

You can also contact the emergency services by calling 999 or 112.

#### Contact your local GP or GP Out of Hours service:

A GP can give you information about the supports available in your area.

#### Self-Harm Intervention Programme (SHIP)

Provides people who self-harm with quick access to support and counselling to help deal with the issues that are causing distress.

Tel: 028 7126 6999

**[www.zestni.org/services/ship/](http://www.zestni.org/services/ship/)**

#### Minding Your Head website

Information on mental health and the supports and services in Northern Ireland

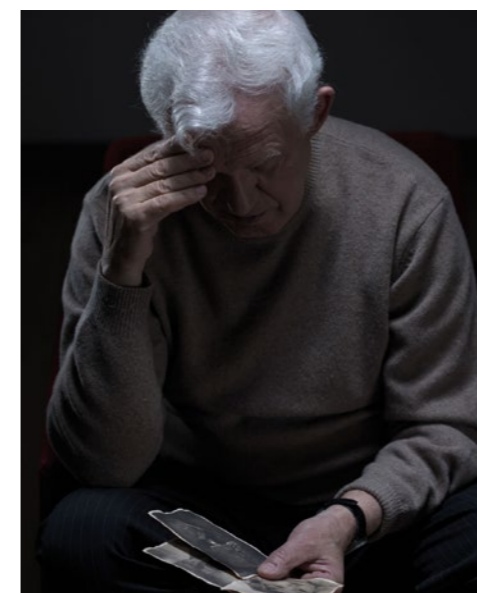
**[www.mindingyourhead.info/](http://www.mindingyourhead.info/)**

Coping with loss is a personal and singular experience - nobody can help you go through it more quickly or understand exactly all the emotions that you're going through but friends or family members can be there for you and help comfort you through this process.

**The best thing you can do is to allow yourself to feel the grief as it comes over you and to seek out support.**

The stages of mourning and grief are universal and are experienced by people from all walks of life. Grief occurs in response to an individual's own terminal illness, the loss of a close relationship, or the death of a loved one or animal. Everybody grieves differently and there are different things that may affect the way people grieve. Knowing these may help to understand yours and other people's reactions to the loss. If someone's reaction is different to yours it does not necessarily mean they care less.

The death of someone we love is likely to be one of the most distressing experiences we will ever face. When someone dies, a relationship is lost, a process of change begins, and we move towards a new and largely unknown situation.



### Where can I find out more about support for grief and loss?

#### Cruse Bereavement Care

Service offering support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies.

Tel: (028) 9079 2419

#### Bereavement Support Network

Information and guidance for those who care for and support dying people and their loved ones around the time of and after death.

**[www.hscbereavementnetwork.hscni.net/bereavement-care/bereavement-support-organisations/](http://www.hscbereavementnetwork.hscni.net/bereavement-care/bereavement-support-organisations/)**

#### Rural Support

Provides a listening and signposting service for farmers and their families across Northern Ireland through its confidential helpline. Freephone Helpline 0800 138 1678 (Mon - Fri 9am to 9pm)

**[www.ruralsupport.org.uk](http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk)**

#### Health and Safety Executive NI

Provide information and advice to farm businesses in relation to farm safety and support where a farm accident has occurred.

**[www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk)**

Telephone: 0800 0320 121

There is a wide range of voluntary sector groups and organisations that offer support and information on a range of specific problems – please refer to the appendix at the back of this resource for a full list of services in your local health trust area.

Everyone has the right to live and work in an environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. Bullying and abuse are very common and can happen to anyone, even in a farm family environment. When somebody does something or fails to do something which results in notable harm to another person, it is called abuse.

Bullying and abuse can occur in many different ways including:

- **Verbal:** name calling, teasing, taunting, insults, and verbal threats.
- **Physical:** hitting, kicking, throwing things at someone or spitting.
- **Social/Emotional:** deliberately ignoring or leaving someone out, putting someone down, blackmailing or forcing someone to do something against their will.
- **Financial or material abuse:** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Sexual assault:** any unwanted sexual contact. It is not just about physical violence. Using fear or threats to make someone do things that they do not want to do is an assault.
- **Cyber/E-Bullying:** Using mobile phones or the internet to hack someone's social media account to post offensive images, spread rumours or send abusive messages; internet stalking; 'hating' on social media sites.

Nobody has the right to hurt you physically or emotionally even if they are in a position of authority or they say they love you. Always refuse to accept abuse and remember that secrecy is an abuser's best weapon, so never keep it a secret. Help is always available. The most important thing is to tell somebody you trust and/ or talk to your family doctor or police.

### Where can I find about support for Bullying and Abuse?

#### [Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline](#)

Support, advice and signposting service for all women and men who have been affected by domestic or sexual violence.

**Freephone: 0808 802 1414**

#### [Nexus NI](#)

Advice and confidential support and counselling for those who have been sexually abused.

**Tel: 028 7126 0566**

#### [Women's Aid Federation NI](#)

Support and advice for women who have suffered or are suffering from domestic abuse.

**Tel: 028 9024 9041**

#### [Victim Support NI](#)

Emotional support for victims of crime.

**Tel: 028 9024 3133**

#### [The Men's Advisory Project \(MAP\)](#)

Support for male victims of domestic abuse.

**Tel: 028 9024 1929**

#### [Action on Elder Abuse](#)

Support and advice on abuse of older people.

**Tel: 080 8808 8141**

#### [NSPCC](#)

Advice on child protection issues and to report child protection concerns

**Tel: 0808 800 5000**

#### [Childline](#)

24-hour helpline for children and young people

**Tel: 0800 1111**

#### [PSNI non-emergency reporting number](#)

**Tel: 101**

Practicing mindfulness can help achieve a better quality of life both mentally and physically. Meditation is a very useful tool that can be used at any time or anywhere by a person to reflect on their emotions, to slow down racing thoughts, and be more 'in the moment'.

Mindfulness is about the person focussing on themselves, their mind, their body and surroundings. Instead of letting the mind get carried away by unhelpful thoughts and feelings, mindfulness meditation encourages the person to take notice of their thoughts and feelings nonjudgmentally.

### Mindfulness exercises to try

**One Minute Breathing:** Start by taking several deep breaths. Fill your belly up with air like a balloon and gently let the air out. Focus on your breath for one minute. Breathe in and out slowly, holding your breath for a count of six and slowly exhaling. As your mind wanders to other things, try to bring your attention back to your breath.

**Mindful Observation:** Pick an object in the room and observe it for one minute. Notice the colour, texture, shape, smell, and size of the object. By focusing carefully on one object at a time you can improve your concentration and slow down your thoughts.

**The Game of Five:** Take notice of five things in your day that usually you don't take notice of by using your senses. Try to hear, smell, feel, touch or see things that surround you. For example when you are out and about look around you and see how you can match your five senses to things and sounds around you. This is a particularly good mindful exercise if you are feeling annoyed, stressed or angry about something.

Trying these mindful exercises can make a difference. Your skills will develop through regular practice and gradually you will feel the benefits.

### Where can I find out more about Mindfulness?

#### [Mind website](#)

**www.mind.org.uk**

#### [Mental Health Foundation](#)

**www.bemindful.co.uk/**

#### [Aware NI](#)

Workshops and programmes on mindfulness.

**www.aware-ni.org/**

Tel: 028 7126 0602



Being socially included is one of the most powerful protectors of human well-being. Feeling that you are part of a family and community is necessary for feeling comfortable at a personal level, 'in your own skin'. We are social beings and we need to be among others with whom we identify in pursuing common interests in work and leisure. Human beings need to feel endorsed and accepted by the people they live and work with.

In rural areas, there are ways of life and strong community organisations that provide people with a sense of belonging. Agriculture involves communities of farm families who live and work cooperatively alongside each other, often for generations. Local sports clubs provide people of all ages with outlets for playing and spectating. Volunteering is alive and well in rural areas and not only helps those in need but is equally beneficial for volunteers. Involvement with others and maintaining good neighbourly relationships are hugely important for well-being and protecting social inclusion.

However, it is also the case that, inevitably, due to sparse populations, rural areas can lack social diversity. Research has found that for some, rural life can be stifling. Those who feel deep down that they don't 'fit in' are socially excluded and their well-being is at high risk. This can be the case even when the person is a member of an organisation but feels deep down that they are not part of it, but rather playing a role. People can furthermore feel 'stuck', unable to escape to alternative ways of living and working. Research highlights that such situations carry a risk of human susceptibility to suicide.

### Minority Groups

Minority groups, such as Lesbian/ Gay/ Bisexual/ Transgender (LGBT) and migrant workers are an important part of rural society. It is important for all members of rural society to seek out membership of groups to which they can feel a sense of belonging and pursue their interests.

### Where can I find out more about Social Inclusion?

- Your local farming discussion group
- Ulster Farmers' Union  
Tel: 028 9037 0222
- NI Agricultural Producers' Association  
Tel: 028 8676 5700
- Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster  
Tel: 028 9037 0713
- Your local Rural Community Network organisation:

[North Antrim Community Network Limited \(NACN\)](#)  
Tel: 028 2177 2100

[Rural Area Partnership in Derry Limited \(RAPID\)](#)  
Tel: 028 7133 7149

[The Antrim Down and Armagh Rural Support Network Ltd NI \(TADA\)](#)  
Tel: 028 3839 8888

[Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network \(CWSAN\)](#)  
Tel: 028 8773 8845

[Community Organisation of South Tyrone and Area \(COSTA\)](#)  
Tel: 028 8555 6880

[County Down Rural Community Network \(CDRCN\)](#)  
Tel: 028 4461 2311

[Omagh Forum for Rural Associations \(OFRA\)](#)  
Tel: 028 8225 1559

[Fermanagh Rural Community Network](#)  
Tel: 028 6632 7006

### [Men's Sheds](#)

Sheds offer a social space for men of all ages to engage in meaningful leisure activities, whilst chatting to other men from their locality. There are over 50 sheds across Northern Ireland.

Tel: 028 9074 9494

### [Cara Friend](#)

LGB&T Switchboard NI offers a listening ear and support to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities.

Tel: 0808 8000 390

Social Farming is an innovative use of agriculture to promote therapy, rehabilitation, social inclusion, education and social services in rural areas. The farm is not a specialised treatment farm; rather the farm remains a typical working farm where people in need of support can benefit from participation in the farm's activities in a non-clinical environment. It also creates the opportunity to reconnect farmers with their local communities through the use of their farms as part of the social support system of the community.

### Who can use Social Farming services?

To date in Northern Ireland Social Farming participants have been individuals with a Learning Disability and individuals recovering from a Mental Health issue. Individuals from both service user groups have benefitted from the opportunity to engage and contribute by choice in farming and related social activities in rural communities.

Individuals from other service user groups can also benefit from participation, including: physical and sensory disability; elderly; elderly with dementia; youth; youth with additional education or supervision needs; long-term unemployed; drug/alcohol rehabilitation; prisoner rehabilitation; refugees and asylum seekers.

### Key elements of Social Farming:

- It is a service that a farmer provides
- It takes place on a working family farm
- It involves meaningful activities
- It is a personal choice for participants to engage

### Benefits of Social Farming services

Social Farming has wide-ranging and far-reaching benefits that are primarily experienced by the participant and the farmer, but which also positively impact rural communities.

- **The participant** – benefits from being in a natural, outside environment; learns new skills; has the opportunity to care for animals and plants; develops new relationships with people; grows in confidence as they achieve and learn on the farm; has a role on the farm and a feeling of doing something worthwhile; is integrated into the local community.
- **The farmer** – experiences satisfaction from supporting participants to learn new skills and grow in confidence; achieves projects/tasks with enthusiastic participants; supplements the farm income; witnesses their family and community play a part in helping others to have a rewarding experience in a farm environment.

### What do I do if I'm interested in Social Farming?

Rural Support coordinate the Social Farming Support Service in Northern Ireland. Whether you are a farmer, service user, staff member, family member/supporter of a service user, you can make contact on the details below.

[Rural Support's Social Farming Support Service](#)

Tel: 028 8676 0040

[www.ruralsupport.org.uk](http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk)





# Addendum

# Take5

steps to wellbeing

**HSC** Health and Social Care



# Take5

steps to wellbeing

Most of us know when we are mentally and physically well, but sometimes we need a little extra support to keep well.

There are five simple steps to help maintain and improve your wellbeing. Try to build these into your daily life – think of them as your ‘five a day’ for wellbeing.



## Connect

Connect with the people around you: family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these relationships as the cornerstones of your life and spend time developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.



## Be active

Go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



## Take notice

Stop, pause, or take a moment to look around you. What can you see, feel, smell or even taste? Look for beautiful, new, unusual or extraordinary things in your everyday life and think about how that makes you feel.



## Keep learning

Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or sign up for a course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.



## Give

Do something nice for a friend or stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time or consider joining a community group. Look out as well as in. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

Adapted from work by the New Economics Foundation commissioned by the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing ([www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)).  
Artwork designed in association with Belfast Strategic Partnership.











# Helplines Network

<p><b>Rural Support Helpline</b></p>  <p>0800 138 1678</p> <p>Monday to Friday 9am – 9pm (voicemail and support options available at all other times).</p> <p>www.ruralsupport.org.uk</p>	<p><b>Samaritans</b></p>  <p>116 123</p> <p>24/7 365 days a year</p> <p>Jo@samaritans.org www.samaritans.org</p>
<p><b>SandsNI Helpline</b></p>  <p>077 4099 3450</p> <p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p> <p>www.sandsni.org</p>	<p><b>Simon Community Central Access Point</b></p>  <p>0800 171 2222</p> <p>24/7 365 days a year</p> <p>www.simoncommunity.org</p>
<p><b>Tax and Benefits Service</b></p>  <p>0800 988 2377</p> <p>Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm</p> <p>www.adviceni.net</p>	 <p><b>NI Helplines Awareness Day</b> 6th February 2019</p>  <p>Project supported by the PHA</p>

[www.helplinesnetworkni.com](http://www.helplinesnetworkni.com)

A SINGLE POINT OF ACCESS TO NORTHERN IRELAND HELPLINE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

OVER 30 NORTHERN IRELAND HELPLINE ORGANISATIONS

EASY TO NAVIGATE

FIND THE RIGHT HELPLINE TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS



Helplines Network NI is a membership-led organisation consisting of over 30 members operating across Northern Ireland. The Helplines Network NI members provide a variety of support services including information, advice, counselling and befriending. Many of the services take place over the phone, via email, text and in some cases, with live web-chat. The Helplines are run by public, voluntary and community organisations and are non-profit making.

The Helplines Network NI membership organisation was brought together by the Public Health Agency (PHA), which has a lead role in promoting health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland. The PHA recognises the value of Helplines as they provide immediate support and information to those with a wide-range of health and wellbeing needs - often for those who are the most vulnerable in our community.

By bringing the Helplines Network NI together under one promotional brand, the Network is able to raise awareness amongst individuals, organisations, communities, health professionals and the media about how best to access the various Helplines more conveniently and meet the requirements of different service users.

Helplines are an invaluable resource that can be accessed from the privacy of home, without appointment and many can be contacted at a time that suits the person in need of support.



**Helplines Network NI**



[www.helplinesnetworkni.com](http://www.helplinesnetworkni.com)

# Helplines Network

<p><b>Action on Elder Abuse</b></p>  <p><b>080 8808 8141</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.elderabuse.org.uk/in-northern-ireland">www.elderabuse.org.uk/in-northern-ireland</a></p>	<p><b>Advice and Advocacy Service</b></p>  <p><b>0808 808 7575</b></p> <p>8am - 7pm 7 days a week 365 days a year</p> <p><a href="http://www.ageni.org.uk/advice">www.ageni.org.uk/advice</a></p>	<p><b>Alzheimer's Society National Dementia Helpline</b></p>  <p><b>0300 222 11 22</b></p> <p>Monday to Wednesday 9am - 8pm, Thursday &amp; Friday 9am - 5pm, Saturday &amp; Sunday 10am - 4pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.alzheimers.org.uk">www.alzheimers.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Autism NI</b></p>  <p><b>028 9040 1729</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.autismni.org">www.autismni.org</a></p>	<p><b>Business Debtline</b></p>  <p><b>0800 0838 018</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.adviceni.net">www.adviceni.net</a> <a href="http://www.businessdebtline.org">www.businessdebtline.org</a></p>	<p><b>Cancer Focus NI</b></p>  <p><b>0800 783 3339</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 9am - 1pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.cancerfocusni.org">www.cancerfocusni.org</a></p>	<p><b>Carers NI</b></p>  <p><b>028 9043 9843</b></p> <p>Monday to Thursday 9am - 4pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.carersuk.org/northernireland">www.carersuk.org/northernireland</a></p>	<p><b>CAUSE: Helpline</b></p>  <p><b>0845 60 30 29 1</b></p> <p>Monday, Wednesday &amp; Friday: 10am - 4pm Tuesday &amp; Thursdays: 12pm - 8pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.cause.org.uk">www.cause.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Child Bereavement Service</b></p>  <p><b>028 9066 8333</b></p> <p>Monday 9.30am - 12.30pm Tuesday 9.30am - 12.30pm Friday 10am - 12.30pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.barnardos.org.uk/childbereavementservice">www.barnardos.org.uk/childbereavementservice</a></p>	<p><b>ChildLine</b></p>  <p><b>0800 1111</b></p> <p>24/7 365 days a year</p> <p>Online 1-2-1 &amp; Email Service Available at <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Christians Against Poverty Debt Help</b></p>  <p><b>0800 328 0006</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 8.30am - 5pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.capuk.org">www.capuk.org</a></p>	<p><b>24 Hour Domestic &amp; Sexual Violence Helpline</b></p>  <p><b>0808 802 1414</b></p> <p>24/7 365 days a year</p> <p>Text 'Support' to 07797805839 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org Live online chat via website: <a href="http://www.womensaidni.org">www.womensaidni.org</a></p>	<p><b>Eating Disorders Association NI</b></p>  <p><b>028 9023 5959</b></p> <p>24/7 365 days a year</p> <p><a href="http://www.eatingdisordersni.co.uk">www.eatingdisordersni.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Family Benefits Advice Service</b></p>  <p><b>0800 028 3008</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 8am - 5pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.employersforchildcare.org">www.employersforchildcare.org</a></p>	<p><b>Family Planning Association Sexual Health Helpline</b></p>  <p><b>0345 122 8687</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.fpa.org.uk/northern-ireland">www.fpa.org.uk/northern-ireland</a></p>	<p><b>Housing Rights</b></p>  <p><b>028 9024 5640</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 9.30am - 4.30pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.housingadviceni.org">www.housingadviceni.org</a></p>
<p><b>Independent Welfare Changes Helpline</b></p>  <p><b>0808 802 0020</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.adviceni.net">www.adviceni.net</a></p>	<p><b>Invisible Traffick</b></p>  <p><b>0808 800 8001</b></p> <p>Tuesday &amp; Thursday 6pm - 10pm Wednesday &amp; Friday 10am - 2pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.invisibletraffick.org">www.invisibletraffick.org</a></p>	<p><b>Kinship Care NI</b></p>  <p><b>0800 022 3129</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.kinshipcareni.com">www.kinshipcareni.com</a></p>	<p><b>LGB&amp;T Switchboard Cara-Friend</b></p>  <p><b>0808 8000 390</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 1pm - 4pm Wednesday 6pm-9pm</p> <p>Live online chat via Website <a href="http://www.cara-friend.org.uk">www.cara-friend.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Crisis Telephone &amp; Counselling Service</b></p>  <p><b>0808 808 8000</b></p> <p>24/7 365 days a year</p> <p><a href="http://www.lifelinehelpline.info">www.lifelinehelpline.info</a></p>	<p><b>NSPCC Helpline</b></p>  <p><b>0808 800 5000</b></p> <p>24/7 365 days a year</p> <p><a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Parents Helpline</b></p>  <p><b>0808 8010 722</b></p> <p>Monday to Thursday 9am - 8pm Friday 9am - 5pm</p> <p>Live online chat via Website <a href="http://www.parentingni.org">www.parentingni.org</a></p>	<p><b>HIV &amp; Sexual Health Helpline NI</b></p>  <p><b>0800 137 437</b></p> <p>Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm</p> <p><a href="http://www.positivelifeni.com">www.positivelifeni.com</a></p>



### **Rural Support**

Estate Building, Loughry College  
Cookstown, County Tyrone  
BT80 9AA

Office: 028 8676 0040

Freephone Helpline: 0800 138 1678

(Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm, voicemail  
and support options available at all other times)

[www.ruralsupport.org.uk](http://www.ruralsupport.org.uk)



### **Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland**

83 Ladas Drive  
Belfast  
BT6 9FR

Telephone: 0800 0320 121

[www.hse ni.gov.uk](http://www.hse ni.gov.uk)

