

Involvement Annual Report

2021 – 2022



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Foreword



Welcome to our Involvement Annual Report for 2021/22. This Report outlines how we are involving service users, carers and communities in the planning and delivery of services and details how we are taking forward the Department of Health's Co-production Guide.

This has been another extraordinary year. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that yet again we had to respond to a continually evolving situation and rapidly reconfigure services and provide care in new and different ways. Even now, we are still far from how things used to be, and it is becoming clear that some things will never go back to how they were before.

I believe that engaging and involving the people who use services and their carers is as important as ever. Over the last year we have continued to be restricted by the guidance on physical distancing and shielding, nonetheless, we have been committed to engaging with service users, carers and the public in a meaningful way during these challenging and exceptional times.

People are at the centre of everything we do. We know it is by working together that we can make a positive difference in the lives of the individuals, families and communities we serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Welsh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Welsh
Chief Executive

Foreword



I believe the health and care system must listen and learn from the people and communities it serves and I have worked with the Trust for many years to make sure the service user and carer voice is heard. You have the right to be involved, directly or through representatives, in the planning of healthcare services and in the development and consideration of proposals for change. You have the right to an open and transparent relationship with the organisation providing your health and care services.

Involvement and Co-production is achieved through working together and I look forward to the first meeting of the Trust's Engagement Advisory Board which will strengthen links and support the Trust to shape services to meet the needs of the local community. This comes at a time when there is an opportunity to make real progress as health and social care services change their models of care to adapt to the current pressures and changing needs of their populations. Service users, carers and communities working alongside health and social care staff builds trust and strengthens relationships which can lead to meaningful change.

Thelma Dillon
Chair of Older Peoples Panel
and Trust PPI Representative

Governance and Assurance

Governance and Assurance



Wendy Magowan
Director of Operations
chairs the Trust's
Engagement, Experience,
Equality and Employment
Group (Quad EG),
providing assurance to
Trust Board that we are
abiding to our statutory
duty to fully engage our
service users and carers.



Suzanne Pullins
Executive Director of
Nursing and User
Experience and responsible
for patient and client
experience (PCE) including
10,000 More voices and
Trust implementation of the
online user feedback
platform of Care Opinion.



Glenn Houston
Non-Executive Director
continues to be the Non-
Executive Involvement lead
and plays a key role in
embedding involvement into
the culture and practice of
the organisation.



Alison Irwin
Head of Equality and
operational lead for
service user and carer
involvement including
patient client
experience, personal
and public involvement
and co-production.

Involvement Team



Leigh Morgan,
Engagement Manager

I have been a nurse for 12 years mainly working in Acute Surgical Admissions Units in a number of acute hospitals both in England and Northern Ireland. I trained and worked in Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust during the Francis Inquiry . It was here that I learnt the power of the patient voice, and so began my passion for patient experience and service user involvement.



Lynda Elliott,
PPI Co-Ordinator

I have been working within the Equality Unit for 18 years, managing the Trust's Interpreting and Translation Service and supporting staff in effective service user engagement and consultation. How can we develop or change anything within the health service without asking those who have been through the service and experienced it first-hand.



Sarah Arthur,
PCE Facilitator

I have been nursing for 30 years, working in orthopaedics, plastics, coronary care and the community. My passion for patient experience was ignited when I became a patient myself, I wanted to ensure the patients voice, experience and what mattered most to them was heard and shared with staff, to help influence change and improvement

Governance and Assurance

By working together, listening and respecting each other we continue to ensure service user and carer involvement is at the heart of all planning and delivery of our services. Working in partnership we can meet the many challenges facing our communities and health and social care services today.

Effective involvement is a priority outlined in the Department of Health's (DOH) Health and Wellbeing 2026 – Delivering Together Strategy. Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) has been a statutory requirement since 2009 and has been further enhanced by the DOH Co-Production Guidelines which were published on 2018. Patient and Client Experience (PCE) standards have been in place since 2009. PCE includes patient experience questionnaires, 10,000 More Voices and Care Opinion. The DoH tasked Trusts with the creation of a single plan, which builds on and brings together existing PPI, Co-production and patient experience work.

To implement the joint plan the Trust has integrated the structures for PCE, PPI and Co-production. Within Northern Trust, this includes Patient Experience Standards, the Patient Experience Collaborative/real time feedback and 10,000 More Voices, Personal and Public Involvement and Co-Production – now referred to collectively as Involvement.

The creation of a central Involvement Team will support a consistent, coordinated approach to involvement.

Governance and Assurance

We have a range of governance, management and reporting mechanisms in place to support our involvement work.

Our Engagement, Experience, Equality and Employment Group (Quad EG), chaired by Wendy Magowan, Director of Operations seeks assurance that the Trust is compliant with its statutory requirements. Membership includes all divisional directors, non-executive directors and the Patient Client Council. The Quad EG reports directly to the Trust's Assurance and Improvement Group, then through to Trust Board.

Within each of our services we have a number of Involvement Champions who continue to provide support and promote service user involvement across the organisation. Specialised training is provided throughout the year and staff continue to be provided with the information and resources required to mainstream effective involvement activities. Over the years the Trust has established and supported a number of service user panels in partnership with service users, carers and the community and voluntary sector. These partnerships ensure an effective network for on-going stakeholder involvement and coproduction in our work. Each panel is user led, chaired by a service user or carer and provides an opportunity for stakeholders and their representatives to be involved in the developing and planning of services.

We continue to support and value the networks we have already established, and work in partnership with them to ensure everyone has the opportunity to be involved.

10,000 More Voices

10,000 More Voices encompasses the fundamental principles of PPI, promoting meaningful engagement with patients, clients, service users, carers and their families. The method used to gather views focuses on the person's personal story. This form of engagement values the voice of the respondent, providing the opportunity to express what mattered most to them throughout their journey.

This year our main focus is the Experience of Social Work project, however as we return to full capacity there are a number of projects in development which will launch during 22/23 through 10,000 More Voices.

Programmes of care focused on throughout this project are,

- Looked after children
- Safeguarding
- Family Support
- CAMHS/Autism
- Children Disability
- Physical Health and Disability Services
- Learning Disability Services
- Older People's Services
- Mental Health Services



YOUR EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL WORK

Improving and Safeguarding Social Wellbeing in Northern Ireland

Share your experiences of social work services through our 10,000 More Voices project.

You can access the survey at www.10000morevoices.hscni.net or request a printed version and stamped addressed envelope by contacting us:

☎ **02895 362868**
✉ **10000morevoices@hscni.net**

SHARE YOUR STORY, SHAPE OUR SERVICE

The poster features a central illustration of diverse people (a woman in a wheelchair, a man, an older woman, a man, and a child) holding a sign with the '10,000 More Voices' logo. In the top left corner, there is a circular diagram with segments for 'Prevention', 'Support', 'Intervention', and 'Protection', with 'A Strategy for Social Work' in the center.

Service User Feedback

The Trust encourages complaints, enquiries, comments/suggestions and compliments and views them as a positive opportunity for learning and improving services. The total number of formal complaints received this year was 823 (including 109 follow on complaints). Services across the Trust receive many compliments; these can range from written letters and thank you cards, verbal feedback and donations to our Charitable Trust Funds in recognition of the service provided. This year the Chief Executive received a total of 3557 compliments.

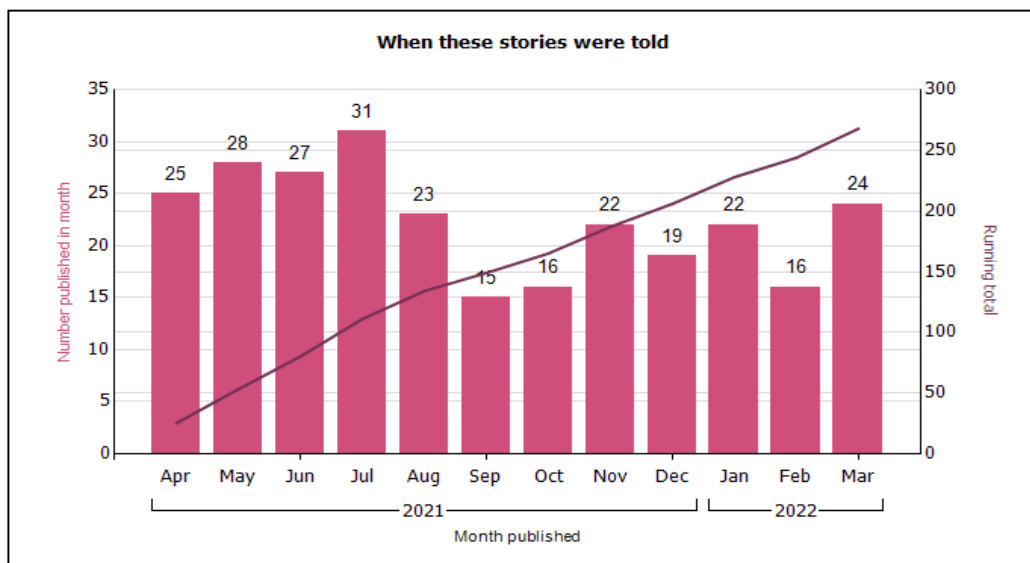
Feedback from our service users, carers and members of the public/visitors using our services or facilities helps us to identify areas where high quality care is being provided, and where this is not the case we will make changes to improve service quality and safety.

Feedback can be given directly to the service involved either verbally or in writing or by sending your feedback directly to the Chief Executive. **Complaints, enquiries, comments/suggestions and compliments can be sent in writing, by email telephone or calling in person to Complaints/Service User Experience Office**, Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Bush House, 45 Bush Road, Antrim, Co Antrim, BT41 2QB , Tel: (028) 9442 4655 Email: user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net

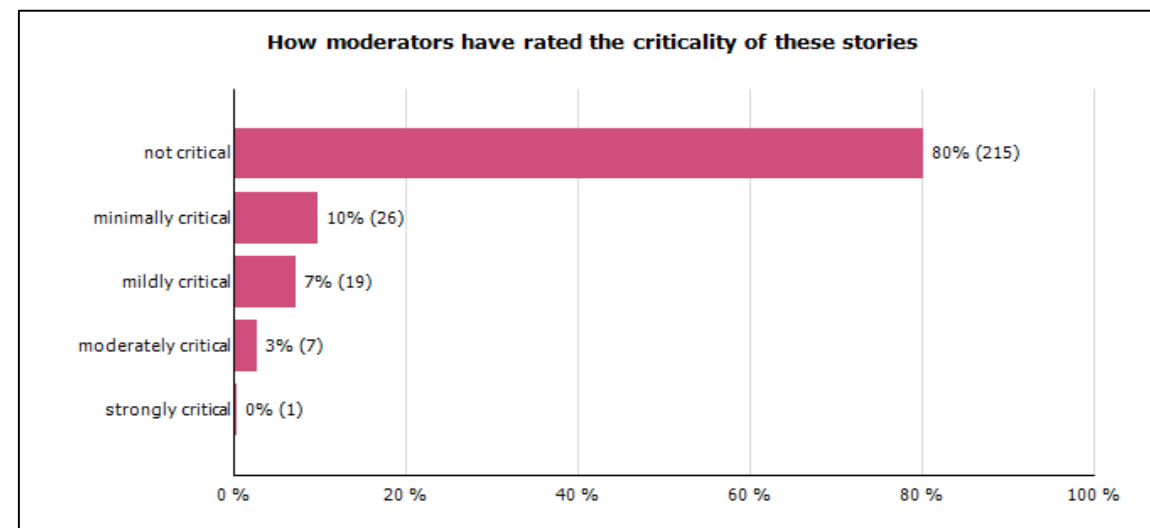
Care Opinion

Care Opinion was launched in Northern Ireland in August 2020, providing a platform where service users, families and carers can share their experiences of health and social care. The overarching aim of Care Opinion is to enable impactful engagement with patients and the public in a fully open and transparent way and drive sustainable and measurable service improvement.

For the year 2021/2022, The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has received 268 stories through Care Opinion.



Of the feedback received through Care Opinion, 80% of feedback received was positive. This has helped staff morale through the challenging times of the Pandemic



Care Opinion



The following story and responses show how Care Opinion allows staff to hear what could be improved. In this case the story author was able to respond to the staff involved proving how valuable feedback is, and that by listening to those with lived experience, improvements can be made to better the experience of others going forward.

" Pre assessment swabs "



CHANGE MADE



This story led to a [change](#)

About: Northern Health & Social Care Trust / Covid-19 Testing Centre

Posted by [Our story](#) (as a relative), 10 months ago

It's funny how the pre assessment for surgery can be very scary... and now there is a new dimension of going for COVID test. Mum was very anxious about her surgery but even more anxious about the process to be tested for Covid. We went to the drive through unit at the Woodside Road in Ballymena and it was so well organised- it is to be commended at the respect and efficiency of the team conducting the test and how calm they were conducting the tests.... which look extremely uncomfortable for someone, but when the staff are efficient and reassuring it makes all the difference. The only improvement would have been to advised us that the nurse would conduct the test.



Most of mums anxiety related to the fact she thought she would have to do it to herself and she wasn't sure she could.

We are very grateful for the service and delighted the results were negative (efficiently informed by text message 24hours later) and mum is safely in for surgery. As a family we are very grateful for the role this team is played

Story summary

What was good?

efficient reassuring

How did you feel?

anxious calm delighted grateful

uncomfortable

Activity

11 staff members have read this story

Who has Care Opinion told about this story?



Response from Collette Fitzgerald, Nurse Manager, Childrens Services, NHSCT 10 months ago

We are preparing to make a change

Thank you for your kind words and taking the time to share this feedback.



I'm glad that your mother found it a positive experience but I do acknowledge that it can be an anxious experience. Our aim is to provide as pleasant a situation as possible.

By way of explanation, some patients receive a phone call to book in to the clinic and some patients receive a letter.

Normally we explain the process in the phone call. I will check the detail in the letter and ask that text is added to explain that a nurse will conduct the test.

I will share your feedback with the team.

Regards Collette



Response from Collette Fitzgerald, Nurse Manager, Childrens Services, NHSCT 9 months ago

Changes have now been made to the letter to offer further explanation to service users.



We hope this is helpful.

Regards Collette

Our story thinks this response is helpful

Was this response helpful? **Yes** | **No**

Update posted by [Our story](#) (a relative) 7 months ago

Thank you so much for taking the time to reply to my feedback. It is reassuring to know you have read it and that hopefully will help people in the future who are attending for tests. No doubt we will have to live with COVID for a while longer and your service is very valuable



Care Opinion and District Nursing

Care Opinion is now firmly embedded as a feedback medium for District Nursing in the Northern Trust. Care Opinion has an added dimension compared to other types of feedback, in that it gives the general public, staff and senior managers (both in the Trust and the PHA) a glimpse of the professional work carried out by the District Nurse, Senior Community Staff Nurses, Community Staff Nurses and Senior Nursing Assistants. Inevitably much of this holistic care and co-ordination is carried out at an emotional and essentially a private time for patients, carers and families.

The stories reveal humanity that District Nursing as a profession are proud of but not too proud to change.

Condition Management Programme

The Condition Management Programme has invited its clients over the last year.

In that time, many clients have taken the opportunity to tell us about their experience of using the Condition Management Programme. Staff have found the feedback encouraging and it has given staff a morale boost to hear that their input has been meaningful and valuable to many of our clients as they try to return to work.

Staff have gained a clearer idea of the elements of the Programme that clients find most valuable and have been given some good ideas regarding developing the Programme further.

Opportunities and Support for Involvement



Involvement Network

Over the last year we have seen our Involvement Network go from strength to strength. Members have received 66 involvement opportunities and 232 members have attended more than 13 engagement events. This has helped to shape a number of service improvements including the My Journey Initiative which has been set up to help services communicate more effectively with service users and carers. If you would like more information or to become a member of our Involvement Network, please contact InvolvingYou@northerntrust.hscni.net or phone (028) 2766 1453


Engagement Advisory Board

Given the challenges faced by health and social care we are always open to new ideas and ways of working and have publicly advertised the opportunity to become a member of a new Engagement Advisory Board. Over 60 expressions of interest have been received and after final interviews members of the EAB have been appointed to reflect the communities we serve. Members will work with Trust staff to ensure we are approaching our engagement in a way that meets the needs and interests of all communities, with a focus on targeting the most hard to reach groups.

Get Digital

Tweet, message, post and comment; there are loads of ways you can connect with us. We continue to use our Facebook page and Twitter account to circulate any opportunities for involvement to over 35,000 people. We use YouTube as a platform to provide service users, carers and the public with a variety of information including informative videos and audio interviews.

You can follow us on Facebook and Twitter as follows:

 Northern Health and Social Care Trust

 @NHSCTrust

Knowledge and Skills

Knowledge and Skills

It is important that service users, carers and staff have the appropriate training and support to achieve effective service user involvement.

Plain English Training

This year we decided to run some specialist training to help staff engage more effectively with service users and carers. We held a number of Plain English Training sessions throughout the year which provided a knowledge of what Plain English was and why it is so important when communicating with service users and carers. This training was designed to help staff think about their language and how to simplify it when writing reports and developing documents to support better engagement.

Facilitation Training

We want to ensure our staff have the necessary skills to plan and facilitate involvement events with service users, carers and the public. We held four training sessions this year, which were full to capacity. These sessions were designed to look at creating a safe and interactive group space, what facilitation tools, tips and meeting designs would work best in different situations. As we were very much in our lockdown stage of the COVID pandemic we also looked at the use of technology to support facilitating discussions.

Involvement Training

From April 2021 – March 2022 a total of 647 staff have taken part in our involvement training programme. We continue to raise awareness and promote involvement at every opportunity. This year due to the continued COVID restrictions and keeping everyone safe we have delivered our training in a virtual classroom.

Knowledge and Skills

Northern Improvers QI Training

The Northern Improvers Quality Improvement (QI) Training programme has a service user specific project alongside meaning that co-production will be more achievable than ever before. The training allowed our service users to not only provide experience and expertise to our Safety Quality North course, but also forge closer relationships with one another.

The course provided a fun way to learn about quality improvement but also obtain a sense of satisfaction that they have helped to shape the Trust's services. On completion they attended a virtual graduation ceremony which was also an opportunity to share their learning.

The following elements were covered through blended learning

- Introduction to the Trust
- Model for Improvement and expectations
- Personal and Public Involvement (PPI)
- Measuring success
- Human Factors
- Getting your project started

Citizen Space

Citizen Space is an online tool which we use to design questionnaires and surveys. It continues to be very popular as a method of engagement and feedback. 257 accounts have now been set up and staff have received the relevant training and support. Citizen Space was designed in collaboration with government, specifically for public sector use.

Engage

We continue to work in partnership with staff, service users and carers in the ongoing development of Engage to ensure there is a wide range of tools available to effectively involve service users and carers.

Engage is accessible by everyone to find out about involvement opportunities and training.

Check out Engage at <http://engage.hscni.net>

Involvement in practice across the Trust

The following pages highlight some of the involvement projects carried out over the last year

Involvement in practice across the Trust

Acute Frailty Service User and Carer Engagement Event

An engagement event was held, with a number of service users, carers and representative groups using Zoom on 27 October 2021. This event provided the opportunity to share information about the development of a new model for Frailty Care in Antrim Area Hospital. Participants were provided with a detailed presentation on Phase 1 of the Frailty Model which has seen the launch of a 10 bedded Acute Frailty Unit in mid-2020, with the aim of providing specialist management of frail patients.

The Trust welcomed the opportunity to engage and discuss developments and future plans for the Acute Frailty Unit as well as discussing the vision for the wider Frailty Model. The event was extremely positive and beneficial and the many valuable contributions, questions and feedback received from those present will help to inform communications and planning moving forward. [A detailed outcome report of the event is available.](#)



Post Covid Recovery Support Group

Service users from the Clinical Health Psychology Post Covid Syndrome Service were integral to the development of a Recovery Support Group.

A focus group took place, via Zoom, on Thursday 3 February 2022 with a group of service users who took part in the Post Covid-19 Rehabilitation Programme and Post Covid-19 Clinical Health Psychology. The focus group gave us the opportunity to talk with the service users about their experience of Rehabilitation and Clinical Health Psychology.

Service users also gave feedback via the Specialist Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programme for those living with Post Covid Syndrome. They highlighted the benefits of hearing from others experiencing similar symptoms and recovery journeys. These benefits include a reduction in isolation and an increase in hope and understanding of recovery post Covid.

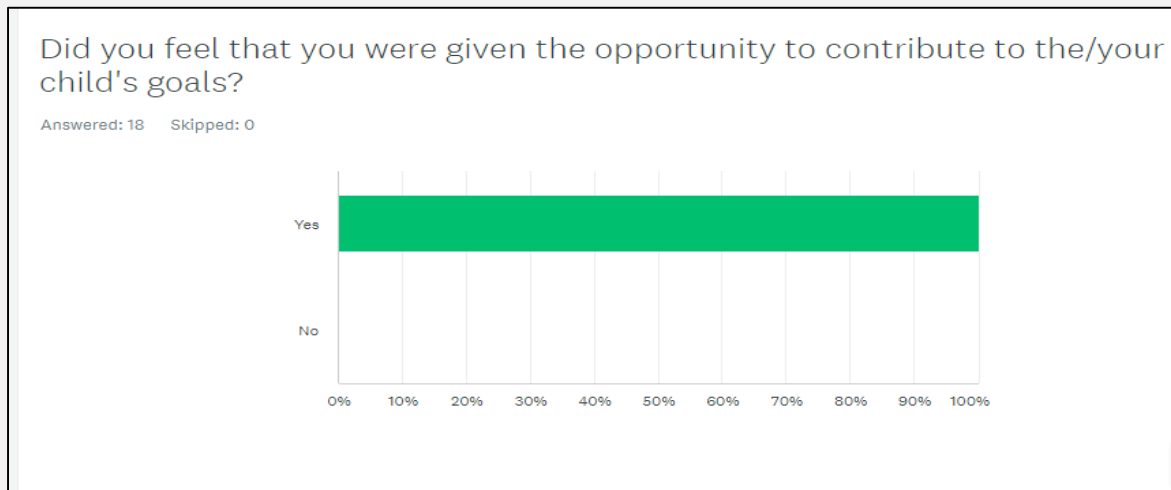
The Recovery Support Group was established and held its first meeting in March 2022. The Group meet online every month, facilitated by Clinical Health Psychology.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

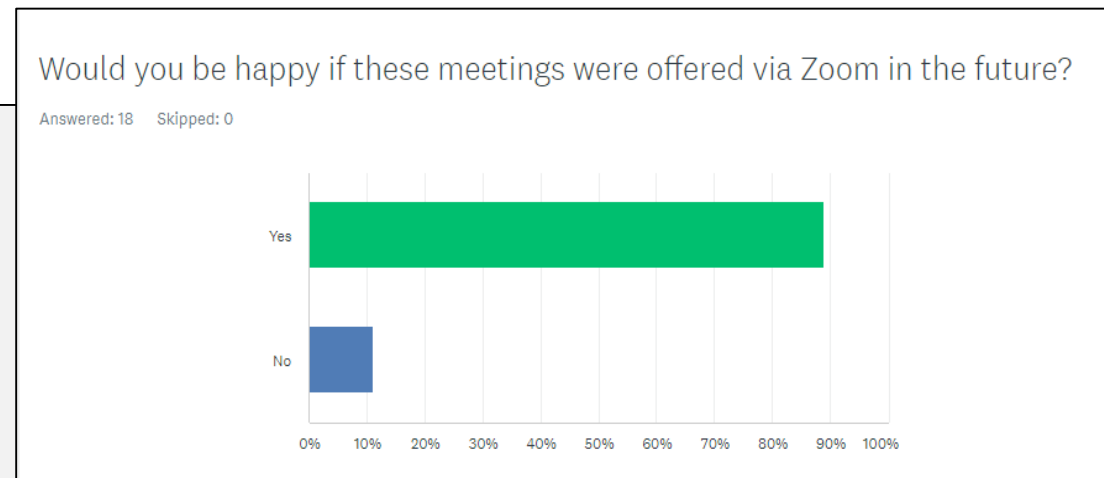
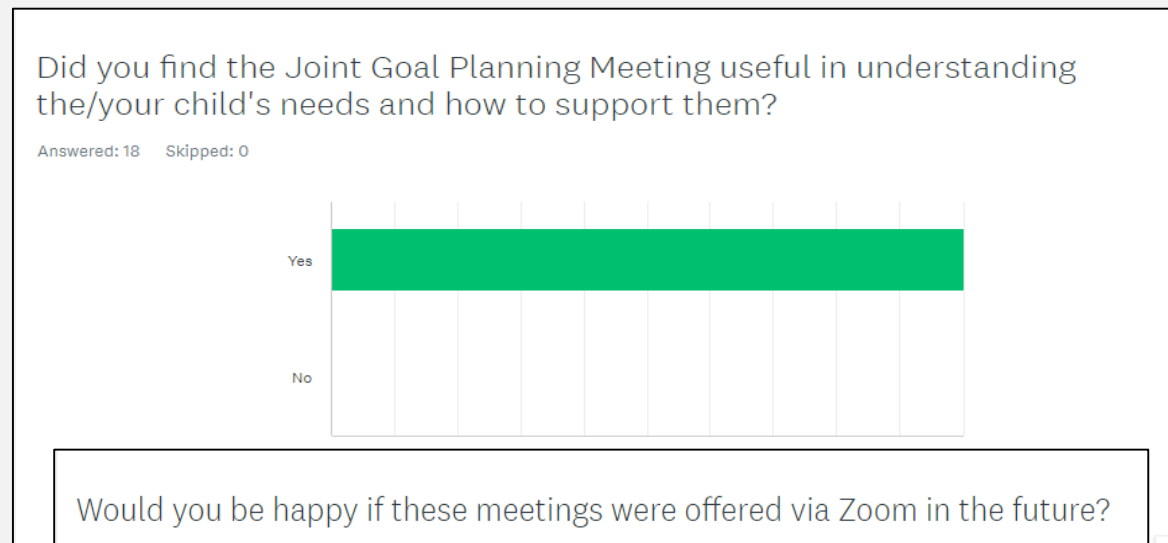


RISE NI NHSCT Joint Goal Planning Meetings go 'Virtual'

RISE NI NHSCT is a mainstream school based service supporting children with needs, which impact on their ability to learn. Given the school closures imposed by COVID and social distancing restrictions, we found it difficult to hold face to face, joint meetings with parents and teachers to agree goals and the way forward for RISE NI NHSCT support. We had to think differently and embrace the 'virtual' world. However, in the longer term, would this meet the needs of our service users? We decided to engage with parents and teachers who had recently completed Joint Goal Planning Meetings via Zoom and this is what they told us:



Parents also commented that the flexibility afforded by meeting on Zoom, allowed them to attend these meetings without having to take a lot of time out of work. There are also many efficiencies for the RISE NI service in terms of travel time and costs. These 'virtual joint goal planning meetings have now been mainstreamed in the service delivery model...a positive outcome of COVID!



Involvement in practice across the Trust

Dying Matters Event

The Trust's Palliative Care Service Improvement Team held a webinar on Wednesday 12 May 2021 with 177 attendees. This was hosted on project ECHO facility which was fantastic support.

There was engagement from a variety of stakeholders, including community groups, service users, local choir with a great variety of presenters with a lot of positive interaction in the zoom chat. Key presenter included, Dr Elaine Kasket, author of *All the Ghosts in the Machine: The Digital Afterlife of Your Personal Data* (2020), Counselling Psychologist and Professor of Psychology at the University of Wolverhampton. She engaged the audience on a very topical subject, of why everyone needs to prepare for their 'digital afterlife'. A service user, Margaret Rowlandson, recited from her collection of poems about the lived experience of life following bereavement of her husband. To conclude the event, St Agnes choir sang an uplifting song.

'Comfort when you need it most'

The Palliative Care Service Improvement Team have been working in collaboration with members of the public to continue to provide 'Comfort Packs' to support anyone who may be very ill or dying in hospital and who are unable to access toiletries. This is needed now more than ever, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff are very grateful to receive packs and give their patients toiletries to enable them freshen up.

Over 100 packs are given out per month to acute and community hospitals.

The Team has also been engaging with members of the public and community groups to knit face cloths to be included in these packs.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

Macmillan Carol Service

The Macmillan Unit Annual Carol Service was held virtually this year again and was released on the 10th of December at 7.30pm via social media. The programme was co-produced with patients and relatives who were also engaged in the recording. This reached a wide audience throughout the Trust area and the feedback was very positive.

Palliative, End of Life and Bereavement Services Booklet

This Booklet was revised during 2021. Staff worked alongside service users to review the content of the booklet and engaged with external stakeholders to ensure the content was accurate and reflective of the patient with palliative care needs and their family.

Palliative Care Week Service User Story

The All Ireland Institute of Hospices and Palliative Care created a range of videos for Palliative Care Week. These are shared during this week but are also available on their website for awareness raising and training events.

Alison Craig was filmed telling the story of a young Macmillan Unit patient whose goal was have peace of mind at end of life by getting a tattoo of her child close to her heart.

https://youtu.be/YUmgwnCUb4o?list=PLd_maP4B2N3Gx4-QpBvCNYckqJ8CsQ1uo



Involvement in practice across the Trust



Advance Care Planning Event

The first ever Advance Care Planning week was held from 4 – 8 April 2022. The Northern Trust Palliative Care Service Improvement Team hosted an event in the Seamus Heaney Home Place on Tuesday 5 April 2022 at 7pm. This event was promoted via various platforms and 68 people registered to come along and engage in the short sketch 'Sure I'm only 76', written for the team, by local author Emma Heatherington.

A panel of experts included a service user, Heather Lennox, who talked about her profound personal experience of loss and bereavement and how it's so important to plan ahead, ensuring you leave a positive legacy for your loved ones.

Health and wellbeing

Virtual Health and Well-Being events are regularly provided for people living with a variety of cancers. Several service users with advanced cancers told the Palliative Care Service Improvement Team that these are generally aimed at people with curative cancers. They felt they did not fully meet their needs, as they continue to live with their illness. The Service Improvement Team and the Palliative Care Multi Disciplinary Team are now engaging with a number of individuals and a support group who are helping us shape the content and delivery of these resources to ensure they are tailored for this group.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

Mental Health Inpatient Facility



Artist impressions



Plans for the New Mental Health Inpatient Service which will be constructed in Antrim, are well underway. This is a modern, purpose built mental health inpatient facility that will enhance the patient experience in an improved therapeutic environment

A Service User Reference Group was established at the beginning of this project. Service Users and carers who have had direct experience of inpatient services in the Northern Trust continue to be engaged at every level in the project, with members attending an on site visit to the grounds. The Reference Group has been set up to actively influence, support and work together with the Trust on the design and development of the inpatient service on the Antrim Area Hospital site. The overall aim of this group is to be an advisory group that will ensure that the voice of the service user and carer is heard throughout the rebuild project. The Reference Group meet with members from the Capital Development Core Team on a monthly basis. The meetings are chaired and directed by our Service User Consultant (NHSCT), which maintains a patient led approach.



Reference Group members during the site visit

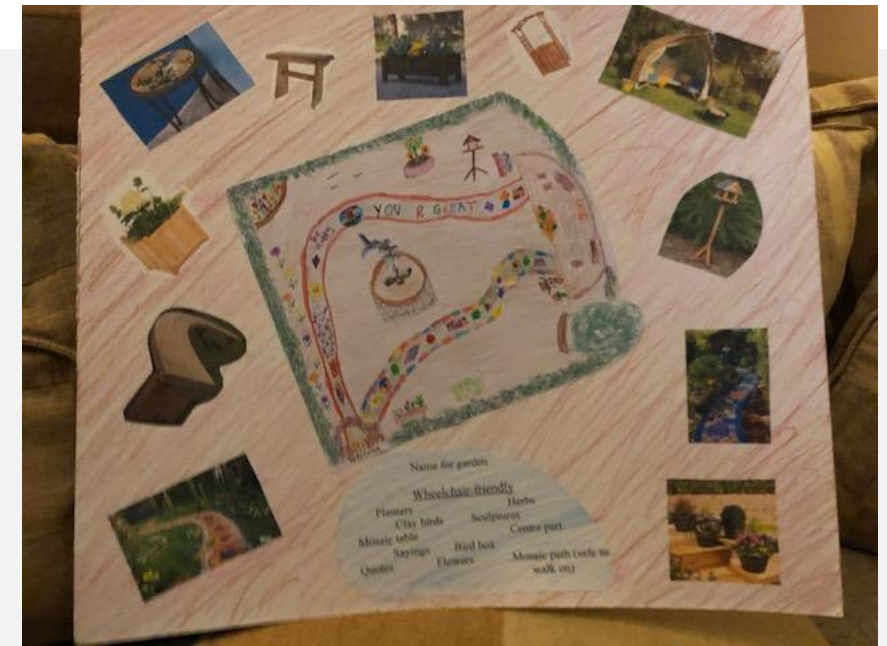
Meetings and workshops follow our co-production ethos and approach to design considerations and decision-making. Service user representation at these meetings has been invaluable and their engagement has provided great insight, identifying gaps and providing learning opportunities. We have also engaged with inpatients in Holywell and Ross Thomson Unit, to gain an understanding of their priorities and concerns for external spaces for the new building. There will be further engagement sessions with inpatients as the design stages progress. Our collaborative working partnership and shared vision helps us ensure that our new service will be a centre of excellence and will make a meaningful difference to help change the landscape in the world of mental health.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

Service User/Arts Care Garden Project

Service users attending the Arts Care Group in Whiteabbey Hospital have embarked on a creative journey that will provide a beautiful garden space for all service users, staff and visitors to the site. What started out as an idea for a table top mosaic design has blossomed into a mosaic garden path that will be the focal point of a landscaped garden space with benches to sit on and share a cup of coffee with a friend or take a moment alone to practice mindfulness while being surrounded by nature and breath-taking views of Cave Hill in the distance.

Service users worked collaboratively with our Artist-in-Residence to design the garden space (see Mood Board). The main purpose of the project, as described by the group, is to provide a safe space to promote positive mental health. Willow arches welcome you to the mosaic path, incorporating representations of local flora and fauna such as robins, bees, dragonflies and hares, that will be placed among branches of oak that run continuously through the path. There is a bench surrounded by a leafy hedge and plans for another covered wooden bench to protect you from the unpredictable Northern Irish weather. Conservation volunteers planted a border of holly and willow that will provide shelter from the wind as it matures. This is a grand endeavour and the service users involved have shown great determination and dedication to continue their efforts to see the project to completion.



Involvement in practice across the Trust

Climate Change Group

The Climate Change Group was formed in late 2021 and is made up of service users and staff from Psychological Therapies Service and Estates. As this is a new group, we are in the early stages of thinking about ways to reduce our carbon footprint and tackle climate change.

Some of the proposals we have been working on together include rewilding, planting trees, kitchen gardens, energy saving audits, waste audits and the introduction of 'chatty benches'. We are at the early stage of project design, and have been exploring how to transform green spaces around the Trust. Another brilliant idea created and designed by a service user in our group includes a screensaver to promote awareness and provide tips on ways to save on energy.

The climate change group meet on a bi-monthly basis through zoom. We deeply value the input of service users within this group and are always keen to have new members join with fresh ideas!

PPI and Co-production for the MS Fatigue Management Programme

Fatigue has been identified as one of the main symptoms of MS which greatly impacts quality of life. Due to an increasing demand for fatigue management in this client group the Occupational Therapy Neurology Outpatient Service developed an MS Fatigue Management Programme, as a pilot with a small group of service users. The initial pilot proved very successful and was positively evaluated by service users. Following on from the pilot, the service sought to engage with service users to help inform and further develop the programme.

Service users who took part in the initial pilot programme were invited to participate in a focus group using Zoom on 6 May 2021. Prior to the focus group session a citizen survey was also completed with participants to gather feedback on their experience. The session then provided the opportunity to discuss further and in detail the findings from the survey, helping to shape what the future programme will look like.

The service user group also supported and co-produced the programme information leaflet which is now shared with all new clients coming onto the programme.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

HSC Northern Health and Social Care Trust

CARER PEER SUPPORT

What we see and value as carer peer support in our carer roles

- Recognising your identity as a carer and learning about support available to you early in your carer journey.
- Meeting other carers who care for similar conditions who can understand your world.
- Events and activities offer social opportunities to connect with other carers.
- Support is organic and comes from getting to know other carers.
- Support can happen in many different ways both face-to-face and remotely.
- Support can be varied: practical, educational and emotional.
- At the heart of peer support is listening, empathy and meeting likeminded people.
- Support is informal but also has the Carer Hub service co-ordinating carer connections.

Want to learn more?
Contact our NHSCT Carer Hub
Telephone: 028 27 66 12 10
Email: carer.hub@northerntrust.hscni.net

Carer Peer Support

The Carer Support Programme runs throughout the year offering carers the chance to connect with each other through classes that support their wellbeing. The programme is co-produced with carers and based on the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing initiative. While attendance at the classes over the last two years has been fantastic, 1171 carers joining in the 63 classes throughout 2021/22 alone, we have also noticed that many carers are supporting each other. Providing the opportunity to meet someone in a similar role, the classes can run monthly or in some cases weekly for 4-5 weeks. This longer period gives carers the chance to really build relationships and get to know one another. In November 2021 when considering a peer support model for carers, an engagement event was held. Carers had the opportunity to discuss peer support, what support looks like and how it looks different to everyone and what the benefits are of connecting with others. The group of carers identified many areas of how connecting to the programme has helped them, a few are mentioned below:

- Recognise their role as a carer
- Meet others who understand their role
- Realise different types of support whether in-person, online being either practical, educational or emotional

These suggestions and more helped developed the Peer Support infographic which has been printed into a leaflet to share with new carers and others who have been caring for longer but perhaps don't engage with the programme.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

Rheumatology Physiotherapy service for patients with Axial Spondyloarthritis

The Trust's Rheumatology Physiotherapy Team proposed the development of a more co-ordinated service for patients with axial spondyloarthritis or inflammatory back pain in line with current guidelines and recommendations. There are variations in this service between Trusts and also nationally and as physiotherapists within the Rheumatology MDT we felt low back pain was an area where we could provide expert treatment.

As a team, the Rheumatology Physiotherapists, with the help of the Trust's Involvement Team, held a focus group via Zoom with a number of service users with Spondyloarthritis. Service user thoughts, opinions and suggestions about this yearly one stop clinic to chart the progress of their condition were explored. Results were collated going forward we plan to establish this clinic and address the concerns raised for patients with this condition and to ensure their needs are met following best practice guidelines.

Child Development Centre Project

Working across divisions all staff contributing to the child development centre clinic appointments in the Trust were involved in a service improvement project. Six families using this service were interviewed as part of the project to inform the services how to better deliver the clinics.

Questions were asked about the following:

- The information received and expectations
- The first appointment
- The review appointment,
- The Multi Disciplinary Team discussion and
- What could be done better

The information from these interviews was shared with the multidisciplinary team to further inform the service development.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

MSK Physiotherapy Low back Pain Webinar

A low back pain webinar is currently being developed by the Trust's MSK Physiotherapy Team. Since the start of the pandemic waiting times within our service have increased so we wanted to develop a webinar to enable service users with low back pain to have access to timely information / key health messages while they await face to face contact with the Physiotherapy team.

Prior to the commencement of this project, the team engaged with 50 service users currently on the waiting list with low back pain to gain an understanding of key information they required to help manage their condition. From this service user feedback the content and delivery of the webinar was designed and includes information and management of low back pain, physical activity guidelines and when to seek further urgent investigation. We are currently in the process of recording the webinar and rolling it out to our service users.



Diabetes Prevention Programme

A service user experience video was co-produced alongside My Journey with a participant who had successfully completed the 9 month Diabetes Prevention Programme. The aim of this video was to include service user feedback and personal experience of the programme, highlighting their individual success and health improvements since embarking on the programme. The video has been successfully shared to date across a wide range of audiences including the Northern Healthy Lifestyle Partnership. It has also been instrumental in supporting new service users in their journey of the programme.

Take 5 Animations

Take 5 Animations were co-produced with key stage 2 children. Three schools were contacted from the Causeway and Mid and East Antrim locality. Pupils from primary 6 and 7 were asked to comment on the script and also help decide on the character design. These pupils helped to support the development of six 'take 5' animations and they are now available to watch on page tiger (<https://view.pagetiger.com/animations/ks2>)



Questions asked:

- What did you think?**
The children liked all of the scripts and enjoyed the humour.
- Did you have a favourite part?**
 - Be active by doing something you love
 - Connecting is better when you have more people
 - The accents!
 - The tongue twister for keep learning
- Were there any words that you didn't understand?**
 - Scripts were easy to understand for the key stage 2 level.
 - TMI abbreviation (Too much information)
- What was the important point of the script?**
 - The children generally understood the key messages in all 5 scripts.
 - They did not grasp that when you 'give' the benefit is also for the person giving. A line was added into the script to explain this
 - Additional line also added into the be active script to further explain how to feel good our hearts need to beat faster.
- What were you imagining?**
 - Character visualised as an alien. They felt that the scripts were showing him as an Alien things that he didn't already know.
 - Use of different eye colours

These animations were then used to create supporting resources including lesson plans and worksheets all with the aim to increase awareness of the Take 5 steps to wellbeing message. These resources were piloted in March 2022 across 12 schools.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

Keeping Connected

The Covid-19 pandemic has understandably brought about challenges in keeping connected with active and inactive volunteers. During this period the Volunteer Service has maintained regular communication with all volunteers whilst also recognising their contribution via a quarterly VolUnteer Newsletter and through timely communications and the provision of up to date information.

In addition, connecting with volunteers virtually via Zoom through a number of workshops and coffee and chat sessions was also trialled, however, unfortunately the uptake of these workshops and sessions was lower than anticipated which prompted the undertaking of a survey.

A Keeping Connected Survey was completed in February 2021 by telephone to explore how best to keep connected with volunteers. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Connect with and involve volunteers in shaping how the Volunteer Service engage with the collective volunteer audience.
- Carry out a digital audit to help explore the potential of improving engagement with online events for volunteers.
- Enable the Volunteer Service to identify individual communication preferences of volunteers.
- Explore volunteer interest in the provision of health and wellbeing information.

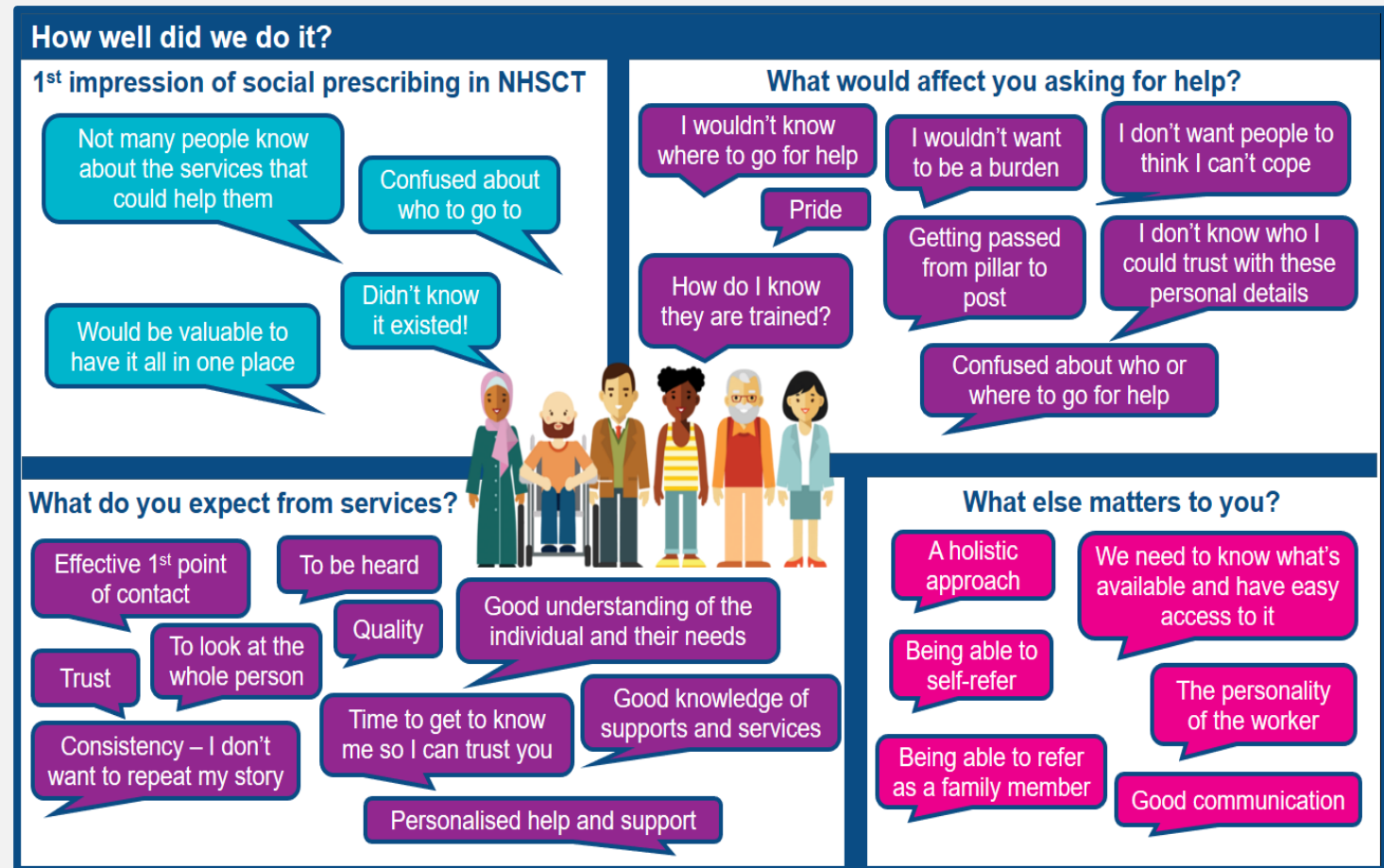
The results of the survey have been instrumental in informing and supporting the Volunteer Service in their endeavour to keep connected with all volunteers.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

Connect North: Your pathway to wellbeing

Service users have directly informed the design and naming of a new and integrated service for social prescribing, navigation and signposting in the Northern Trust – Connect North: Your Pathway to Wellbeing.

A number of sessions with service users, carers and their advocates were facilitated to learn about what matters to them in accessing and engaging with social prescribing services. A Steering Group to progress this work also includes a number of service users keen to keep us on the right path so that Connect North can support others on their own pathway to wellbeing!



Involvement in practice across the Trust

Health Literacy



A [health literacy toolkit](#) was created for those who provide health and care information and services. Service users were asked to comment on the impact this toolkit and its content might have on their experience of a health and care encounter. The service user perspective helped to validate the content and themes within the toolkit.

If your service provider practiced everything in this toolkit would your **experience** be different?

How?

- I would feel **listened to**
- It would be more **engaging**
- It would be more **positive**

Yes

100%



Eat Well To Be Well

The Northern Healthy Lifestyle Partnership (NHLP), working in partnership with the Trust's Dietetics Services, supported the development of four "Eat Well to be Well" animated videos. The material for the animated videos was co-produced with 12 young people from Portstewart Primary School. The young people had the opportunity to participate in voice overs for the animated characters in the videos.

Eat Well To Be Well videos include the following:

- [Eat Well To Be Well - Key Stage 1 - Keep Learning](#)
- [Eat Well To Be Well - Key Stage 2 - Keep Learning](#)
- [Eat Well To Be Well - Key Stage 1&2 - Take Notice](#)

The Eat Well videos have been successfully developed and shared widely both within the Trust and across NI with other statutory, voluntary and community organisations. The animated videos have been shared with the Education Authority to circulate in primary schools.

The aim and objectives of the animated videos was to enable schools to educate primary school children on good nutrition and the little improvements they can make every day to be healthier.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

The Northern Area Autism Forum

The Northern Area Autism Forum, chaired by the Trust's Director of Mental Health, Learning Disability and Community Well Being Services includes a wide range of organisations, departments and service users who work closely together to deliver the targets in the DoH Interim Autism Strategy at local level. The Northern Area Autism Reference Group makes sure that the services provided for all autistic people are appropriate and equitably, whilst working to reduce any stigma attached to autism. This Group is committed to encouraging best practice and continuous service improvement.

Examples of work taken forward through the Northern Area Autism Forum working groups include the following.

- The Transitions Working Group focused on support to navigate transitions (including primary to post-primary, post 18+, into work and University) delivered a seminar in April 2021 in partnership with the Northern Regional College. It provided parents/carers/professionals with information and support based on needs identified.
- The Health and Wellbeing Working Group identified the need for GP training and as a result 3 GP Training videos have been co-produced by Trust staff and service users focused on autism awareness, services available and how to support autistic patients.
- The Northern Area Autism Reference Group has compiled a list of books that have supported them through their journey as an autistic individual and/or a parent/carer, and these will form part of the extension of The Read Yourself Well Initiative into a number of community venues. (Read Yourself Well provides free access to a range of health books in accessible community settings, with the aim of enabling people to better understand and manage their health and wellbeing through self-help reading)

Involvement in practice across the Trust

REACH /Enhanced Care Response Team

On 8th September 2021, the No More Silo's Implementation Group held an engagement event via Zoom, with a number of care home representatives and community and voluntary groups to share information on the support currently provided and that which has already been provided to Care Homes. This was an opportunity to highlight the collaborative work with the local care homes, to feature other local initiatives available and to focus on the potential for future collaborations to support the residents care home experience.

The challenges faced during the Covid pandemic opened up opportunities for inspiring and inventive ways to support care home residents. Reflection and learning of the event identified key areas to build on this creative model of co-production. The suggestions included expanding on intergenerational work with care homes and schools, communication and connection projects, arts and crafts, connecting care residents through technology, musical performances and concerts for residents and re-establishing occasions to have day trips or outings in a safe manner. This event has also established a communication engagement network to take further pieces of work forward.

The Enhanced Care Response Team also have engaged with a local care home to explore piloting a partnership approach to evaluation of their service to care home residents, staff and family utilising Care Opinion. Work is ongoing with implementation and feedback from activity co-ordinators and manager has been very positive to ensure a rounded review of input to care home and residents and encourage easily accessibility for continued feedback from carers and families.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

Care Opinion and discontinuation of a premium rate telephone number for the Central Referrals Management System

A range of community services including district nursing utilise the Central Referrals Management System (CRMS) for the management of their referrals. Through Care Opinion, the online social platform for feedback for service users and carers, the use of a premium rate number ended.

The District Nursing Service received feedback from a patient's daughter who highlighted her concern at incurring a costly premium rate charge when contacting CRMS. Although the Trust had introduced a local rate telephone number in 2017, the premium rate number was still live. The involvement of the carer was instrumental in uncovering the problem and setting in motion the necessary steps to get the premium rate number stood down and communication sent out to all relevant areas.

"Thank-you so much for looking in to this matter and putting the procedures in place for the changes you have instigated. The changes should certainly make things easier for people in future"

The Care Opinion story has achieved a green icon on the social platform, formally acknowledging that the Trust has made a change and therefore an improvement.

CHANGE MADE



This story led to a change

 Northern Health and Social Care Trust 

Central Referrals Management

028 2563 5521



OPENING HOURS
9am – 5pm
Monday – Friday
(Except Public Holidays)
Out of Hours Calls to
Dalriada Urgent Care (028 2566 3500)



Involvement in practice across the Trust

Patient Feedback used to Shape Cancer Service Development

Cancer Services

During 2021-2022 the Cancer Services Team continued to engage with patients virtually. Virtual events were developed and refined to improve the patient experience and included educational videos, virtual fatigue management workshops and health and wellbeing webinars. DVDs are available for those patients unable join virtually.

It is clear from patient feedback that stories from patients have a positive impact. As a result we have now created 3 patient story podcasts which have been launched this year on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google. These virtual resources have been vital in the provision of information and support for patients and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the last year Cancer Services have carried out a number of patient experience surveys to ensure our services are meeting the needs of our patients.

Breast Oncology Nurse-led Review Clinic

The Breast Oncology Nurse Practitioner supports the visiting Oncology Team from Belfast to review patients. Due to COVID the follow up reviews were delivered as a telephone clinic. Patient feedback indicated that the majority of patients were satisfied and felt that this minimised their risk in relation to COVID-19, reduced waiting times and saved transport / travel costs. While we know that telephone reviews are a viable option for many patients, some patients require or prefer face to face appointments.

PICC Service for Patients Receiving Chemotherapy

Laurel House on the Antrim site is the Trust's Chemotherapy Unit. It delivers chemotherapy to a wide range of patients and to ease delivery of their treatment many patients require a PICC line inserted. The team developed a survey to ensure the service was meeting the needs of patients and identify any areas for improvement. The survey achieved a 65% return rate. While the majority of patients were very satisfied with the service, some suggestions were made to provide additional written information or a video prior to attending..

Teenage and Young Adult (TYA) Cancer Service

In 2021 the local TYA team lead on the development of a regional electronic survey which asked patients who had been diagnosed with a TYA cancer about their experience of the service. 101 young people completed the survey. The feedback indicated that the majority of patients felt their questions were addressed, they had been given appropriate information and they had great confidence and trust in their team. Comments provided are being used by the local and regional team to make improvements.

Involvement in practice across the Trust

Flavours of Culture

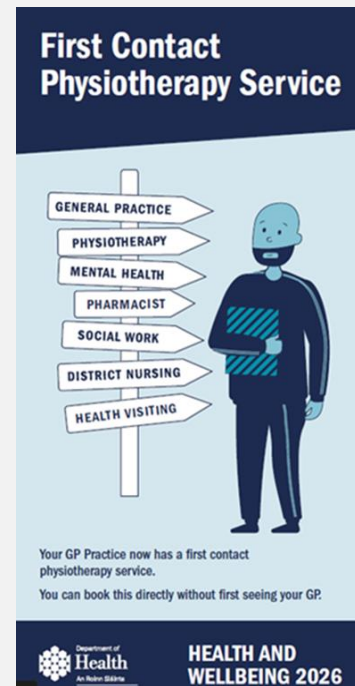


“Flavours of Culture” was the first slow cooking project of its kind. It was co-designed with a multicultural group alongside Dietetics and Social Work with funding from the Northern Healthy Lifestyle Partnership.

As part of the programme development the Cook It! Team carried out an involvement exercise with volunteers from the Threads of Culture multicultural group in Portstewart and Ballymoney Communities Resource Centre.

The focus group helped to plan and direct the focus of the pilot project and gathered information on what nutritional content the group wanted covered within the programme and to decide on recipes which represented different cultures including Syrian, Pakistani, Irish, American, Polish.

First Contact Physiotherapy Service in Primary Care in the Causeway Federation



First Contact Physiotherapists triage, assess, diagnose and make a clinical decision on the best management pathway for patients presenting with musculoskeletal conditions.

In August 2021, a patient satisfaction survey was carried out to evaluate the service with 100 service users completing the survey. A very high level of satisfaction was reported, and nineteen service users provided their contact details to get involved further with the service evaluation.

A service user engagement event took place with those 19 service users to hear their views and experiences of using the service and to hear about their ideas on how we could improve the service. The event confirmed that service users find that early access and intervention very beneficial and that they are delivering an appropriate and meaningful service, providing a positive impact on health and well-being.

Involvement in practice across the Trust



The **Hard to Swallow** project is an excellent example of partnership working and co-production within the local community to raise community awareness of eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties. The Dysphagia Support Team collaborated with Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP), a range of voluntary organisations and people with lived experience of eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties throughout the project. A service user information booklet and a 4 week social medical campaign were co-produced in 2021 with the aim of raising community awareness of eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties and to highlight the professional support available within the Northern Trust for those living with dysphagia.

Work to raise public awareness of eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties continues. On Swallow Awareness Day, 16th March 2022, a new community poster, co-produced by MEAAP, the Dysphagia Support Team and the Public Health Agency was launched and has been shared across the region.

A further extension of the 'Hard to Swallow' project has involved reworking of content of the original Hard to Swallow service user information booklet to create 8 'Easy Read' factsheets. 'Easy read' refers to the presentation of the text in an accessible, easy to understand format. It is often useful for people with learning disabilities or those with other conditions affecting how they process information.

The Adult Learning Disability (ALD) Speech and Language Therapy Team has worked alongside the a Service User Forum to co-produce this series of easy read factsheets. The factsheets highlight important information relating to safe eating and drinking, managing nutrition and hydration for people with swallowing difficulties and medication management. A few examples are shown below:



Hard copies of Easy Read information leaflets, the Hard to Swallow poster and the original 'Hard to Swallow' service user information booklet can be obtained from the Dysphagia Support Team Dysphagia.SupportTeam@northerntrust.hscni.net

Involvement in practice across the Trust

The Northern HSC Trust Foster Panel

The Northern Trust Foster Panel was set up to ensure consistency of the approval process for all foster and kinship carers. The role of kinship care has expanded immensely in recent years and is now the largest part of the Foster Panel's business. The role of the foster carer on the Panel however is relatively new. It had long been accepted that independence was very important and we have recruited our own independent foster carer. In addition to the independence, foster carers also bring the "lived" experience and can provide excellent insight into the discussion. The foster carers received the appropriate training and each observed a Panel prior to becoming a full member.

The involvement of a care experienced young person is a recent development within the Foster Panel. In December 2021, after training and support a young person has become a full voting member of panel. She brings a very different and valuable perspective and gives us the opportunity to see things from the young person's viewpoint.

Staying Safe Leaflets



Following significant engagement with the Learning Disability User Forum in 2021 a number of Staying Safe leaflets were developed.

These were co-designed by the Adult Safeguarding Team in partnership with the Speech and language department, and following on from engagement and consultation with the Learning Disability User Forum these were finally endorsed and now include the User Forum logo. These leaflets are now in circulation and available.





CARF Accreditation

Brain Injury Service Interview Panel

Within the Brain Injury Service a service user has been involved in the recruitment and selection process since 2020. Two service users completed the face to face training recruitment training alongside Northern Trust staff in November 2019.

In 20/21, a service user sat on a panel for Band 4 Transitional Therapy Assistant, conducted over zoom. The service user worked along with panel members at the question development stage, asked a question at the interview and was fully involved in panel discussions leading to a successful appointment to post.

CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) Accreditation is an indication of the commitment to improving the quality of a service, by conforming to international standards.

In August 2021, 3 groups of service users including carers spoke with the international surveyors (based in Dubai and Mexico) via zoom. They spoke about their experience of Brain Injury Service rehabilitation, family support and the Service User Forum. This involvement, during the 2 day survey of the Brain Injury Service, supported the Service immensely and the Service received a 3 year accreditation. The Accreditation Report stated:

“Service users expressed satisfaction with and gratefulness for how they were treated by the staff since the first contact, how team members address their needs and expectations and listen to their concerns, and the progress they have achieved with the programme services”

“The caregiver programme is commended for making available a wide variety of comprehensive educational materials to be used for family members. “This service is breath of fresh air” and “it is always easy to reach and it has helped us gain confidence” are expressions made by its users”

Involvement in practice across the Trust

My Journey

My Journey is a new initiative set up in the Northern Trust to help services communicate with their patients and service users. Podcasts, webinars and video production are being offered as part of a one year pilot project called "My Journey," where the Trust is offering online resources to support service users' recovery journey. The aim of the project is to trial the use of these three forms of digital media to make educational and clinical information available to patients and service users, in support of, or as an alternative to, existing care pathways for users' healthcare journey. Digital content will be promoted via social media, the Trust website and patient correspondence, as well as being linked to various platforms including Spotify and Youtube.

An engagement event took place, over Zoom on 8 September 2021 with a number of service users and carers interested to hear more about the My Journey pilot. The session gave us the opportunity to explore the different platforms and think about how we can further develop online resources to support the service user journey. Following on from this engagement event we were able to work together to ensure our information is accessible and actively promoted.



Acknowledgement

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who continues to be a champion of Involvement. Your commitment will help shape our future services.

Please contact the Involvement Team for further information on our work or if you wish to join our Involvement Network.

Tel: (028) 2766 1453

Email: InvolvingYou@northerntrust.hscni.net