

# Equality Bites

Edition 13: February 2024

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of Equality Bites, which showcases the ongoing equality work happening across Belfast Trust.

At Belfast Trust, our work to promote Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations is always ongoing. This edition showcases some of the work that has been happening over the last

six months. This includes our 2023 Christmas Appeal, another new more visible location for Shopmobility @RVH, our Every Customer Counts project and our new professional officer for ethnic diversity.



Alastair Campbell  
Director of Planning, Performance and Informatics



Handing over our annual Christmas appeal donations to Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid and the Welcome Centre

This edition also highlights our up and coming Equality Screening Masterclass which is taking place in March and is a must for anyone who undertakes equality screenings ([link](#)).

We hope that this newsletter helps to raise awareness and share best practice on some of the initiatives that we undertake to facilitate access to safe, effective, responsive and compassionate services.

If you would like further information or the content in a different format or have suggestions for other stories or topics featured, please contact [equality.team@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:equality.team@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

## Christmas Appeal 2023

This year, again, Belfast Trust staff have gone above and beyond for Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid and The Welcome Organisation. There was a mammoth effort by our staff; we collected a huge amount of toys, clothes, toiletries and vouchers and financial donations. The Chief Executive and Finance Officer from Belfast and Lisburn Women's



Aid, Kelly Andrews and Liz Johnston and Kieran Hughes from The Welcome Organisation came to the Trust to receive the donations on Thursday 14th December. Kelly told us how it has been a difficult year for many and they have noticed a reduction in donations from elsewhere, so the astounding effort by our staff is so greatly appreciated. Kieran told us the items donated were just what they needed to make up gift parcels for the homeless. A huge **THANK YOU** to all our staff who donated so generously despite the difficult financial climate.



## Our Domestic and Sexual Abuse Support Service for Staff

Each year 15,000 calendars are designed and disseminated across the Trust to promote the Trust's Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Support Service and to list contact details of 24/7 support services readily accessible and visible for any member of staff or concerned manager or team member to use.



The Trust has a dedicated email address and telephone number for the Staff Support Service.

Telephone – 028 9504 8667

Email – [domesticandsexualabusesupport@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:domesticandsexualabusesupport@belfasttrust.hscni.net)


Click [here](#) for our support toolkit




Belfast Health and Social Care Trust  
caring supporting improving together

### Domestic & Sexual Violence & Abuse

Click here to start



I'M A WINNER!



**You aren't alone and please don't suffer in silence...**

This toolkit aims to:

- Provide support and information to staff affected
- Raise awareness
- Assure staff it is safe and acceptable to raise concerns

WARNING

would you know what to do?

2:18 / 2:39

## Equality Screening Masterclass

The Planning and Equality Team are delighted to announce two Equality Screening Masterclasses (one online and one in person) which will demystify the Equality Screening process, be interactive and hopefully answer all your queries so that you feel so much more confident with this legal requirement which can ultimately improve decision making – as well as meeting our legislative equality duty! We will also consider our rural needs duties especially relevant when changing regional services.

### Why should you attend?

Belfast Trust has a legislative duty to consider the equality impact of new and revised strategies, plans and policies. Not doing so or doing so poorly can lead to a judicial review. However, it is not simply a legal requirement - equality screening helps to improve decision-making and ensure inclusivity from the outset.

### Who should attend?

If you are a Policy Author or are accountable for the Equality Screening of any Modernisation Proposal / Service Changes / Relocation that may impact staff and/or service users/patients/carers this masterclass is for you!

### When?

The session will be delivered by the Planning & Equality team

- 12th March at 11am-1pm via MS TEAMS
- 5th March at 2pm-4pm Post Grad Lecture Theatre.

Click [here](#) to book or contact [Michelle Growcott](#) for more details.



## Improved location for Shopmobility@RVH

Shopmobility provide a vital service to our patients who may struggle with attending appointments or visiting family on the RVH site. They provide a free hire service with scooters and wheelchairs available to those with mobility issues.

To find out more about Shopmobility [click here](#) and for Belfast Trust staff [click here](#).

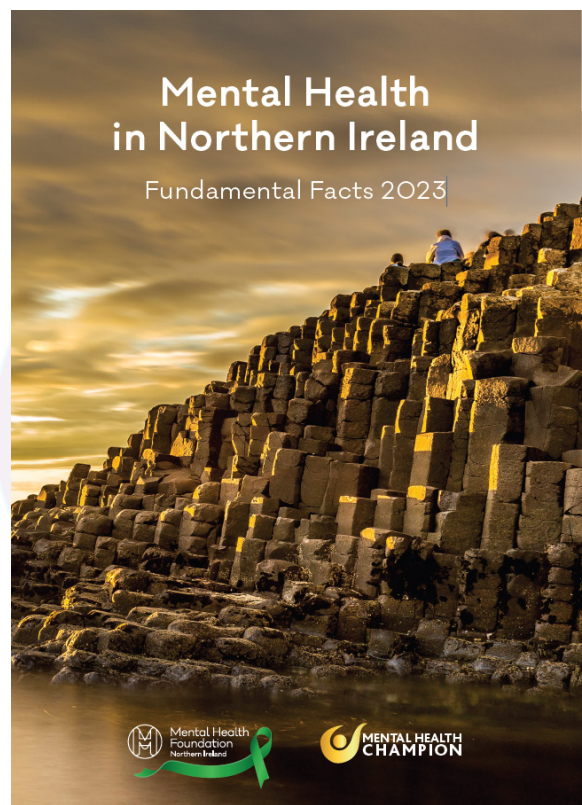
This service has been in place in the carpark for some time now. We are now delighted to have a presence in the foyer of the main RVH hospital building. This new location will complement the car park service and be more visible, with the intention of many more using the service to access clinics, on discharge from wards, whilst visiting loved ones etc. The sighted guide service can also be booked through Shopmobility@RVH.



## Mental Health in Northern Ireland - Fundamental Facts 2023

In October 2023 the Mental Health in Northern Ireland: Fundamental Facts 2023 report was launched. This new report, in conjunction with Northern Ireland’s Mental Health Champion, Siobhan O’Neil, brings together population data on mental health, the social determinants of mental health and key inequalities data.

Professor Siobhan O’Neill tells us *“the report highlights how early adversity, trauma, poverty, experience of education and exposure to violence can have such a huge impact on mental health. It also identifies important groups who are at higher risk, including carers, disabled people, people with health conditions, and LGBTQIA+ people. The report helps us understand the needs of those from minority ethnic groups, refugees and asylum seekers.”*



### Every Customer Counts - Regional Fertility Centre

The Regional Fertility Centre on the RVH site took part in the NI 'Every Customer Counts' Campaign which the Trust have signed. Project staff looked at the service and how patients access the clinic. To gain a deeper understanding staff asked patients to complete a questionnaire to provide a baseline of how accessible the service is, both in terms of physical access and communication.



The communication processes such as letters (including electronic), information packs and information on the Trust website were reviewed and updated to ensure they were more user friendly and accessible. There was a walk around the building to see if there was any difficulties for patients with mobility difficulties and finally, a service user 'mystery user' was organised which allowed the service to get first-hand knowledge of the patient experience.

The results of this project have enhanced the experience for patients and staff are excited about the further changes proposed for the service, which will make a huge difference to the lives of our patients, service users and families who could otherwise struggle to access this service.

If you are interested in your service being part of the Every Customer Counts Campaign which seeks to improve access for disabled service users/patients, please contact the Equality & Planning Team on [equality.team@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:equality.team@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

### Autism NI

Autism NI is Northern Ireland's longest-serving autism charity and works to provide life-changing services for over 35,000 autistic people currently living in Northern Ireland. Autism NI's vision is to build an inclusive society where autistic people can achieve their full potential, and the Charity strives to inspire local people, communities, businesses, and government to support this vision.



Autism NI offer many local support services including a Helpline that receives over 8,000 calls a year, 20+ Support Groups throughout local communities in Northern Ireland including one that supports the PSNI and the Charity has provided over 3,000 early supports including a Mental Health & Autism Project for 11–18-year-olds via BHSC.

The Charity is the main 'change driver' within Northern Ireland and has lobbied for not one, but two, pieces of autism legislation within the past ten years, including the passing of the Autism (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 at the NI Assembly, with unanimous cross-party support.

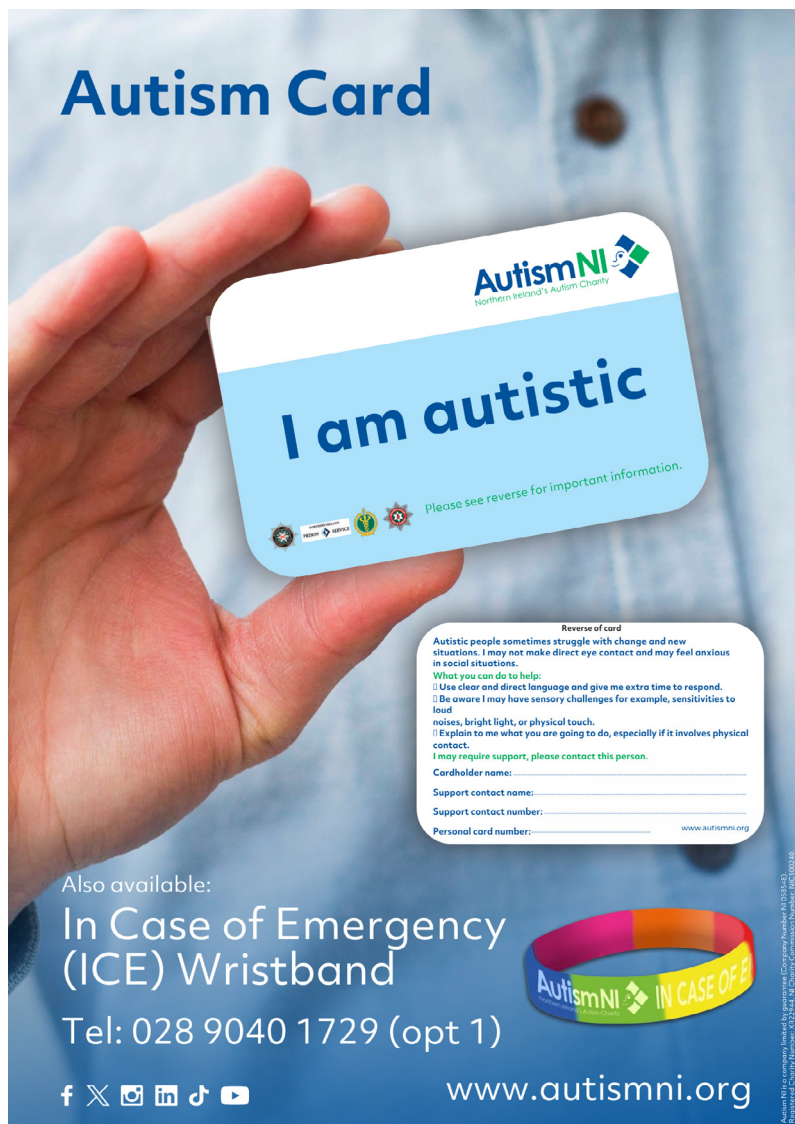
Autism NI has developed some fantastic resources for autistic people including the Autism Card and the In Case of an Emergency Wristband.

The **Autism Card** is a tool to support autistic people communicate their needs in a wide variety of situations, developed in partnership with statutory services and produced to give awareness of the issues that autistic people face. The Autism Card will only be issued to adults and children with an autism diagnosis, and it will inform others, if necessary, of an appropriate person who can be contacted. This support contact should be someone who knows the child or adult well. The information is retained by Autism NI, and with each individual's informed consent, can be shared.

**In Case of Emergency (ICE) Wristbands** are also provided by Autism NI. This wristband has a space to write an emergency contact number so that you always have the telephone number of someone you trust to call if you are worried about something or feel unsafe. For example, if you were to get lost or separated from people you know, you or someone who is helping you can call your emergency contact number to advise where you are.

To find out more, or to download a registration form for an Autism Card and/or ICE wristband please visit, [www.autismni.org/autism-card](http://www.autismni.org/autism-card)

Alternatively, you can call Autism NI's Helpline on 028 9040 1729 (available Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm), or email [info@autismni.org](mailto:info@autismni.org)



**Autism Card**

Autism NI  
Northern Ireland's Autism Charity

**I am autistic**

Please see reverse for important information.

**Reverse of card**  
Autistic people sometimes struggle with change and new situations. I may not make direct eye contact and may feel anxious in social situations.

**What you can do to help:**

- Use clear and direct language and give me extra time to respond.
- Be aware I may have sensory challenges for example, sensitivities to loud noises, bright light, or physical touch.
- Explain to me what you are going to do, especially if it involves physical contact.

**I may require support, please contact this person.**

Cardholder name: \_\_\_\_\_

Support contact name: \_\_\_\_\_

Support contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal card number: \_\_\_\_\_ [www.autismni.org](http://www.autismni.org)

Also available:  
**In Case of Emergency (ICE) Wristband**  
Tel: 028 9040 1729 (opt 1)

[f](https://www.facebook.com/autismni) [X](https://www.x.com/autismni) [i](https://www.instagram.com/autismni) [in](https://www.linkedin.com/company/autismni) [t](https://www.tiktok.com/@autismni) [y](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC00046)

[www.autismni.org](http://www.autismni.org)

Autism NI is a company limited by guarantee. Company Number N 231843. Registered Charity Number: 622344. NI Charity Commission Number: R1C10046.

## New Professional Officer for Ethnic Diversity - Biji Jose

NIPEC (Northern Ireland Practice & Education Council) is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the access to education for the ethnically diverse workforces of nurses, midwives, AHPs and their support staff in Health and Social Care Trusts.



Biji Jose is now the Professional Officer responsible for Ethnic diversity and Inclusion with the NIPEC. Biji commenced this role in November 2023 and is the Professional Officer for the Belfast HSC Trust. Biji is helping NIPEC with the following projects:

- The Access to Education for the Global Majority (Ethnically Diverse) Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health Professionals & Support Staff survey for January – February 2024. This survey monitors the Trusts compliance against the recommendations of the Task & Finish Group in 2021. You can view the March 2023 report [here](#)
- The development of a video clip to encourage staff to complete the HRPTS Equality monitoring form to ensure the Trust has up-to-date data to help improve career opportunities. Click [here](#) to find out more information on this and be reassured that all monitoring data collected is confidential
- An inaugural meeting of the NIPEC Regional Collaborative on 28 Mar 2024 – more information about this will be available on NIPEC website in the coming weeks. A Project Board co-chaired by Beena Tharun, Belfast Trust & Cathy Lavery, Southern Trust will be established to progress the work of this project.

### More about Biji:

Biji was born in a village in Kannur District, Kerala, India and has worked in Saudi Arabia, under the Ministry of Health, Safdarjung Hospital in New Delhi and the AKG Memorial Co-Operative Hospital in her home village Kannur, Kerala. Biji has completed a BSc (hons) in Health & Wellbeing at the University of Ulster in 2015. Biji then went on to complete NMC V300 Independent/Supplementary Prescribing course in addition to Master of Science in Diabetes Care at master's level in 2020. Biji has worked in various nursing posts in Belfast HSC Trust and also with the District Nursing Team in the South Eastern Trust. Her most recent clinical post was in a General Practice in South Belfast.



Biji has also achieved the following awards in 2023:

- The Nurse Exemplar award from Kairali UK
- The Humanitarian Nurse award from British Malayali Charity Foundation (BMCF)
- Best Nurse Recognition from NI Indian Nurses Association

Biji enjoys helping ethnically diverse minority groups, especially refugees, and the more disadvantaged groups in our society. Biji is an active member of the Friends of St. Theresa, also St. Vincent de Paul Society and local community groups. Biji is also currently



undertaking voluntary work for the British Malayali Charity Foundation (BMCF) as their secretary.

Biji's motto: Life is good when you are happy, but much better when others are happy because of you.

*"Don't allow anybody to make you feel that you are nobody"*

Martin Luther King jr.

NI's top tech event for people affected by sight loss is just around the corner – and you're invited!



**RNIB**  
Northern  
Ireland

See differently



**RNIB Technology  
for Life Fair**

RNIB's Technology for Life Fair on 28 February will be the biggest showcase of assistive technology products for blind and partially sighted people in Northern Ireland, bringing the industry's leading suppliers of technology related products and services all together under one roof.

Enjoy tech talks on the advantages of smartphones and tablets, demos of the latest magnification and screen reading applications and tutorials on making the most of the internet and online tools.

Advances in technology continue to open up the world around us, enabling people with sight loss to live independently, access information, grasp opportunities and be creative. Whether your interest in assistive technology stems from personal independence, education or employment, whether you're new to tech or a tech for life pro, you'll find something to interest you.

The biggest names in assistive technology including Optelec, OrCam, Dolphin, Sight and Sound, Human Ware and, of course, RNIB will be on hand to guide you through the latest in accessible apps, products and tools designed for those with a vision impairment.

This free, unmissable event takes place on Wednesday, 28 February 2024, from 11am to 7pm at the Europa Hotel, Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AP. For further information, please contact [rnibni@rnib.org.uk](mailto:rnibni@rnib.org.uk).



British Deaf Association  
**SIGN LANGUAGE WEEK**

Promoting BSL & ISL

18 - 24 March **2024**



### Sign Language Week 2024 Toolkit

[Click here for the link to this video.](#)

This year Sign Language Week will take place on **18th – 24th March 2024!**

Sign Language Week is the BDA's (British Deaf Association) flagship awareness week which they have organised since 2003. That week holds immense significance for the BDA, particularly this year, as they launch the **#TakingBSLForward** campaign. This campaign aims to empower, support and encourage the UK Deaf Community to take ownership of our shared BSL futures, and incorporate BSL into all stages of life.

The BDA is the national representative organisation of BSL in the UK under their membership with the World Federation of the Deaf and European Union of the Deaf. Their mission is to 'Promote, Preserve and Protect' BSL, so the theme for Sign Language Week 2024 will be Promoting British Sign Language as an indigenous language of the UK.

Take a look at the [resources to download](#).

For more information on Sign Language Week go to [signlanguageweek.org.uk](http://signlanguageweek.org.uk).

**REMEMBER!** It is essential that you book a sign language interpreter for service users or patients who are sign language users – this is for both in person and remote interactions...it is the law! To find out how to book a sign language interpreter click [here](#).

# SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING

British Sign Language (BSL) & Irish Sign Language (ISL)

**Health & Social Care professionals, make sure you book an interpreter for appointments with Deaf people**

### Face-to-Face / In-Person



Emergency Departments (ED), Apointments, Clinics, GP Surgery, Assessments... etc.

### Online / Remote



On-demand, Pre-booked  
Remember to use HSCT Wi-Fi for best results

**AVAILABLE 24/7**  
**One Number - One Email - One Form**  
 Telephone: 0333 344 7712  
 Email: [bookingsni@signlanguageinteractions.com](mailto:bookingsni@signlanguageinteractions.com)  
 Webform: [signlanguageinteractions.com/hscni](https://signlanguageinteractions.com/hscni)



**Webinar-style information sessions**  
 Book your free place here:  
[signvideo.co.uk/hscni-webinar](https://signvideo.co.uk/hscni-webinar)

**Equitable, Accessible Communication**  
 Regional Communication Support Service for Health and Social Care:  
 BSL and ISL interpreting in-person and over video  
 Live captioning and electronic note-taking  
 24 hours | 7 days a week

**Book service here**  
[bookingsni@signlanguageinteractions.com](mailto:bookingsni@signlanguageinteractions.com)  
 Telephone: 0333 344 7712

## Jackie Awards

### 5th Annual Northern Ireland Wheelchair Service Annual Wheelchair User and Carer Celebration Event: The Jacqueline Magee Memorial Award

In December 2023, the Northern Ireland Wheelchair Service held the 5th Annual Jacqueline Magee Memorial Award at Titanic Hotel Belfast. This award is presented to Wheelchair Service Users and Carers across Northern Ireland who have shown excellence in Personal and Public Involvement activities in the delivery of the Northern Ireland Wheelchair Service. This annual event is sponsored by the Department of Health in tribute Jacqueline Magee, former HSCB Personal and Public Involvement Lead who sadly passed away in 2019. Attendees at the event include the award winners and their families and representation from the Department of Health, SPPG, Public Health Agency, Health & Social Care Trusts, Ulster University and MLA's.



Dean Doherty (Western HSCT) and Andrew Greer (Southern Eastern HSCT) were acknowledged for their work with the Occupational Therapy led Wheelchair Skills Clubs for Children across Northern Ireland. At these clubs, Dean and Andrew use their life experience as adult Wheelchair Users to act as positive role models to the children who attend. Prior to the event, Dean and Andrew each created films to highlight their work in these clubs and explained how they share their own unique tips on managing their wheelchairs in everyday life. These films were shown at the celebration event to demonstrate to those attending their life journey as wheelchair user and how their involvement in the children's clubs helped their own personal development, giving them confidence and purpose through helping those involved. They both highlighted how much they enjoy being part of the Regional Occupational Therapy Wheelchair Skills Training Programme.



**L-R: Lorraine Abernethy (Occupational Therapist, NHSCT) Emma Regan (Regional Occupational Therapist, NI Wheelchair Service, Dean Doherty (Award Winner, Service User WHSCT), Louise Hill (Dean's Girlfriend)**



**L-R: Emma Regan (Regional Occupational Therapist, NI Wheelchair Service) Dr Alex Greer (Andrew's Father), Beth Greer (Andrew's Mother), Andrew Greer (Award Winner, Service User SEHSCT), Carol Grills (Occupational Therapist, SHSCT), Paul Hannon (Lough Neagh Wheelers Wheelchair Skills Buddy, SHSCT)**

The last award was presented to three Wheelchair Service User's from Belfast HSCT. Jason Browning, David Spence and Chris Meneilly were recognised for their contribution to the development of a new Occupational Therapy Regional Wheelchair Assessment document. These Wheelchair Users are part of a working group with Occupational Therapists who worked together to create a new interview as part of a revised Occupational Therapy Wheelchair Assessment process. The interview allows the Occupational Therapist to engage the Wheelchair User in a conversation about their lifestyle as well as open discussion about the Service User's needs and wants, which will influence the wheelchair selection and design. Jason, David and Chris produced a film for the event outlining their involvement in this service improvement project. The film explained how they wanted the wheelchair assessment process to move from a medical model to a social model. The aim of wheelchair provision should not only meet their physical and medical requirements but also allow them to have purposeful engagement in society. The working group advised they were excited to continue to work with Jason, Chris and David in stage 2 of the project that includes roll out and staff training.



**L-R: Emma Regan (Regional Occupational Therapist, NI Wheelchair Service), Dr Jackie Casey (Occupational Therapist, Ulster University), David Spence (Award Winner, Service User BHSCT) Lauren Wallace (David's Girlfriend), Jason Browning (Award Winner, Service User BHSCT) Molly Kearley (Jason's Partner), Alan Browning (Jason's Father), Susan Browning (Jason's Mother), Jessica Agnew (Occupational Therapist, SHSCT). Absent from photograph: Chris Meneilly (Award Winner, Service User BHSCT)**

### Men’s Health Podcasts

Paul O’Kane from the Health Improvement Team manages the [Belfast Men’s Health Group website](#) and chairs the Belfast Men’s Health Group. This group is made up of staff from a wide range of organisations in the community, voluntary and statutory sector across Belfast who all have an interest in supporting the health and wellbeing of men and boys.

Each year, [Men’s Health Week](#) (in June) and [International Men’s Day](#) (in November) is celebrated and we work in partnership with other organisations throughout the year to further raise awareness of the key issues.

Paul also hosts the Belfast Mens Health Group podcast where he chats to people from Belfast and beyond about their lives, work, health and more in a series of fun, light hearted conversations with very important messages.

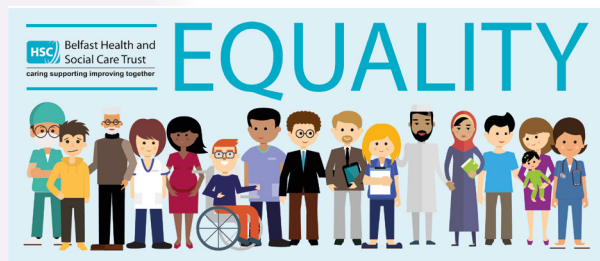
[Home \(belfastmenshealthgroup.org\)](#)

[Podcasts \(belfastmenshealthgroup.org\)](#)

**Follow us on Twitter @bfastmenshealth (now X)**



Belfast Men’s Health



If you have any comments or if you require this newsletter in alternative formats or translated into another language please contact: The Equality & Planning Team at [equality.team@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:equality.team@belfasttrust.hscni.net) or Michelle Growcott on 028 9504 6060



Working together



Excellence



Openness & Honesty



Compassion

HSC Values