

Committed  
to carer support

# Carers Newsletter

Issue Eight - December 2020

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

## PHONE FIRST - 24/7

Make sure you **PHONE FIRST** before going to Antrim or Causeway Hospital Emergency Departments, or Mid Ulster Hospital Minor Injuries Unit.

**0300 123 1 123**

TEXT RELAY NUMBER: 18001 0300 123 1 123  
or Interpreter Now app

Get directed to  
the right care

Avoid busy  
waiting rooms

Stay safe

Save time



**FOR EMERGENCIES - 999**

Including: stroke, heart attack, loss of consciousness, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding or major trauma

**ALWAYS CALL 999 IMMEDIATELY**

## Inside this issue...

- Online class update
- Latest COVID guidance
- What you've been up to
- Round up of Carers Week 2020

# Welcome!

Welcome to issue eight of the Northern Trust Carers Newsletter. Although we have not been able to meet you in person over the last six months, we hope through reading this newsletter you will know more about the wonderful connections that carers have been making online.

We have been encouraged by the number of carers who have joined the online classes, some have had previous links with us and some have connected for the first time, primarily because they find it easier to connect virtually. We would like to say a special thank you to each carer who has attended an online class. We acknowledge and understand the uncertainty that has come with moving our classes online – it really isn't what we are used to and initially we felt hesitant about the change ourselves however looking back over how the programme has developed, we are encouraged by our growing numbers for online classes and the positive feedback we are receiving.

The development of an online programme has been one positive outcome of the pandemic. Over the years, we have always tried to provide our support programme in central locations and rotate around each area of the Trust and many of you have been happy to make a trip for a morning but we know that some people could not attend because of their caring situation. Moving forward, we will continue to offer online/virtual classes and when it is safe to do so we will provide our usual face-to-face classes in the programme.



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We also want to acknowledge that for some carers, joining a class online isn't an option for various reasons. At the moment, you will understand we cannot have face-to-face classes especially as many carers are looking after those who are particularly vulnerable. Be assured though that we look forward to the day when we can connect in person again.

We would like to highlight that many new carers have signed up to our mailing list during this time and we have issued over 300 carer support packs since July.

Many of you who have joined us have also given feedback and suggestions for what you would like to see in the programme during this time. We have listened and have included as many live classes as possible during September to November and again for our new programme January onwards (included in this mail out). If there is anything in particular you would like to see included in a future programme please do get in touch – it is important to us that our programme continues to be carer led.

You can find all up to date information on the Northern Trust website and on the Carer Hub section <http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/services/carers-service/> we have created a new sub section entitled 'Caring During COVID' which is updated with any relevant advice.

As we enter another season of the year we want to remind you to take time to look after yourself, both your **physical health** and your **mental health**. We would encourage you to get the flu vaccine this year and remember the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing - **Take Notice, Be Active, Keep Learning, Connect** and **Give** and we have some suggestions from other carers later in the newsletter.

The Carer Hub continues to be available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm or by email: [carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net)

If you have been on our mailing list for a while and would like a copy of the Welcome Pack issued to new carers please let us know and we will post one out to you. If your circumstances have changed, if you have moved house, changed email or are no longer a carer please let us know so we can keep our register up to date.



Claire Campbell  
Carer Coordinator



Gillian Bradley  
Carer Support Worker



The Carer Hub has been contacted **4,838** times for advice and support.

**550** carers have participated in our carer support programme.

**8,000** post outs of the carers newsletter and information have been received by carers.

**810** welcome packs have been issued to new carers.

For more information contact the Carer Hub by telephone **02827661210** or email: [carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net)

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# Online Class update



## Be Mindful



At the very beginning of lockdown in March we were faced with the challenge of moving our programme online. This was at a time when we were faced with so much uncertainty, confusion and anxiety - with this in mind we wanted to offer a course that could help you feel more calm, relaxed and centred. Be Mindful offers participants the opportunity to learn about mindfulness and how it could help through breathing, grounding exercises, gratitude and other practical techniques that can be practised daily. This class, held over four weeks,

was our first experience of offering a class via Zoom and we were really pleased with the feedback below.

“I was not sure if I could get linked in having never done Zoom before. After connecting in I found it relaxed and very informative. This was all very apt to what’s going on at present. The time of 4 weeks went very quick. I was in a lot of pain myself so it was good I could do the Zoom call lying down on top of my bed - it meant I didn’t miss out. Thank you.”

**“It was great to attend a class this way as most I don’t get to with caring for my son during the day”**

“I just wanted to say thank you so, so, much for the class. It was great that we could attend a ‘class’ this way as most I don’t get to with being carer for my son during the day. I was nervous before the class, as I would have been going in to a classroom but then definitely looked forward to it, even just to have ‘me’ time. Connecting online was really good, very comfortable with using Zoom and the information provided before classes. I struggle a lot with anxiety so to

take that time to calm and breathe helped, I found the class the perfect length, just the right time to get the information I needed and the videos were sent afterwards helped with support for the classes. By the end of the four weeks, I was honestly sad as even though we didn’t connect face to face I felt a lovely connection with people in the group. Some I would like to stay in contact with. Also, I really appreciated the tutor and her wealth of knowledge on the subject, thank you.”

“I have enjoyed the link with other carers as I only recently signed onto the carers mailing list and have been unable to attend a lot of the advertised events as I work part time (prior to lockdown) or because I always needed to be home for my daughter returning from school. To link into the Mindfulness programme has been my

introduction to some other carers and the part I enjoyed the most was the free flow chat that we could have with each other. I am very grateful for your time in putting it all together for us.”

**“Joining the Mindfulness programme has been my introduction to some other carers”**

“Thoughts before our Be Mindful class - having been provided with worksheet of what would be covered, I printed this off and everything just seemed to be an area that I really needed to look at. It was time set aside for myself and self-care. My experience of connecting online was fine. I do some other Zoom with family and groups, I am grateful that I can fully participate and it’s great to see how everyone is coping at such unprecedented circumstances in their caring roles. Each week provided insight into how people felt from last week and was very inspiring to see support and exchange of contacts available, as well as of course followed up by Gillian/Claire. The whole topic very relevant indeed to our present circumstances highlighted how much we need to be mindful where we are now. The four weeks is excellent - it

gives time for topics to be covered and you then have opportunity to reflect over them. The material was superb – personally, I printed these off and use them depending on how I feel and area I need to look at that day or days ahead. I would and have recommended this course to others - I use whatever may be appropriate at that time whenever I call someone who is lonely, elderly or on lock-down to give them some HOPE particularly when they do not have IT or would be able to access it.

At end of each mindfulness session I felt relaxed, learned so much from it, what I needed to look at in order to get through these very challenging times, knowing we are all in it together and that there is support out there for those who need a little help.”

**“At the end of each mindfulness session I felt relaxed and learned so much from it”**

“It would be wrong not to mention that since the lock-down with my health concerns I have went through a period of feeling very isolated, lonely and fearful of the unknown ahead, as is the case with so many others

from all walks of life and those in caring roles. This weekly session gives me hope as I do struggle with weekends. The class enabled me to still know that was OK, as I was always busy helping, doing and filling

void somewhere along the way. I use these mindful sheets or my WRAP to take Personal Responsibility and not fall into the trap of 'poor me'. I have to honestly say the class took me through many days and on others I just accepted that my body said No today and that was enough."

"Thank you for the Mindfulness Zoom course. EXCELLENT! The weeks have flown by personally I have found these meetings through zoom a real asset. Each week, having something to focus on when

our world has been out of focus. The mindfulness skills and knowledge, the help to redirect my thoughts, these skills help me cope when stress levels run high, I am using the five senses a lot as I relate to these. To learn tips and techniques to equip us carers with ways to reduce our stresses and to create a small but vital window of self-care - this has been priceless. To learn it's okay to not be okay during this time and to care for ourselves not just our loved ones. Thank you."

**"To equip us carers with ways to reduce our stresses and to create a small but vital window of self-care"**

"I cannot THANK YOU enough for this class in this unprecedented time with this C19 virus, lockdown has turned all our world's upside down. The Mindfulness course has actually worked well through Zoom through this video conferencing app we have been able to know okay we aren't alone in this storm. Even though I am on my own my

heart is warmed to know that there are wonderful ladies like you who are doing an amazing job but that you actually care for us carers. To arrange, facilitate, organise, set up and adapt to help us during this time just Wonderful. Massive, virtual hugs and deepest appreciation to you all. Thank you."

**"I came away feeling stronger and happier after each class"**

"Before the classes began I thought I wouldn't be able to relax and de-stress the same online as I did when I completed the course in person. How wrong was!!! I felt totally at ease and after each class I came away feeling stronger and happier. These exercises are very helpful and I can use them when I need to in everyday life! I am very glad I took part in these classes at this time. I needed reminded how to control my breathing during these challenging times.

Perfect timing!! I had met only a few of the carers before but everyone made you feel at ease. We all had a mutual understanding and respect for each other which was nice. I would definitely recommend this course to others it's a lovely way to connect and totally relax! After completing this course I feel I have learnt better coping skills for my down days. I have learnt to be kind to myself and thankful for all that I have. This makes me feel happy."

**"I have learnt better coping skills for my down days and learnt to be kind to myself"**



## Sleep Easy

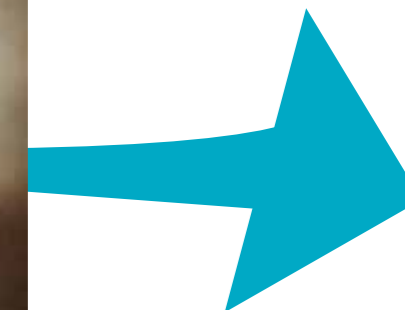
Many carers have told us they often have difficulty getting to sleep or getting back to sleep. "Sleep Easy" was held over three weeks in the evening time hoping to wind us down to get a more restful night's sleep! During this programme we explored some of the science surrounding sleep and techniques that help us to prepare for bedtime more mindfully, thus promoting better sleep. We discussed habits and learned how to dissolve habits that aren't serving you anymore and how to create new rituals to enhance rest and relaxation.

During the classes we discussed sleep stages, hormones and sleep, de-cluttering your bedroom, creating a bedtime routine and stressful sleep thoughts.

At the end of each session participants tried 4 2 4 breathing in for the count of four, pausing for 2 and breathing out for the count of four. Establishing a breathing technique into your daily routine can help aid relaxation and can then be used successfully before bed.



**Did you know that the half-life of caffeine is 3-5 hours with the remainder of the caffeine staying in our body for up to 15 hours? Therefore if we have a coffee at 12noon how much of the stimulant is still present in your body at bed time?**





"I just want to say a massive thank you to yourselves and Michelle for delivering a fantastic course. It has certainly helped me in my quest for better sleep. I've learned things about myself that I had no idea was affecting my sleep patterns so badly. I have taken away many useful hints and tips that I am now practicing myself. I have also passed on some of the knowledge learned to some friends who find themselves at battle with the Zzzz!"

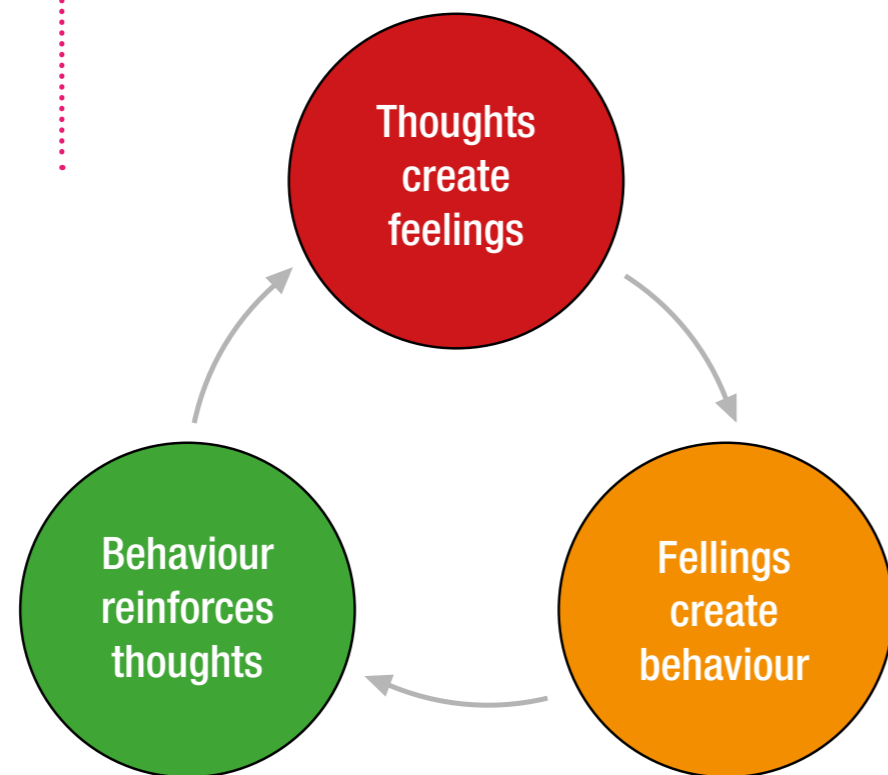
During the lockdown the course also provided much needed social interaction with other humans which I think we all crave at the moment!"

"I found the programme both enlightening and very useful. I've become much more aware of things that I'm doing eg strong coffee, keeping things in my mind or not doing eg getting a bedtime routine going, trying to relax or having nice bath. Simple things can add to the importance of getting enough sleep."



**Some tips that may be useful:**

- Try 4 2 4 breathing - breathing in for the count of four, pausing for 2 and breathing out for the count of four
- Get lots of natural light during the day
- Keep a notebook beside your bed to write down your to do list for the next day or to write down three things that went well that day
- Challenge your stressful thoughts – is this thought helpful? Is this thought true?



# Carers Week June 2020



This Carers Week we're coming together to help Make Caring Visible.

carersweek.org

Carers Week is an annual national campaign to raise awareness of caring. It is also an opportunity for the Trust to recognise the contribution many family carers make across the area. In Northern Ireland it is estimated there are around 220,000 adult carers and across Northern Trust area there are approximately 54,000 family carers. The theme for Carers Week this year was 'Make Caring Visible'.



While we haven't been able to meet face to face, we have had lots available online and through social media and other platforms we have endeavoured to 'Make Caring Visible'.

One of our popular classes **Be Happy Now** was back for Carers Week.





This positive programme explores the key ingredients to creating a happier and more meaningful life focusing on 4 key elements:

- overcoming challenges
- connections
- autonomy
- utilising your strengths

**Did you know.....**

**It is estimated that we have between 50,000 and 80,000 thoughts each day. Of those thoughts how many are positive, compassionate and kind to self?**

Participants considered the positive versus negative ratio of our daily thoughts and how we often tend to focus on the negative thoughts more than the positive ones. Everyone is encouraged to think about five things they like about themselves and use these as positive statements e.g. I am kind, I am caring, I am compassionate. By working on challenging the negative thoughts we can learn how to control our thought patterns.

When negative thoughts are challenged and controlled this can begin a positive change to more helpful thinking, which in turn can help shift your mood and then shift your energy. Everyone has different ways of relaxing and the focus in this class was how the use of meditation to relax the body and mind and laughter yoga to bring more joy into our lives. When we connect better with ourselves we will ultimately improve how we connect with others.

The "Attitude of Gratitude" is another strategy that helps bring joy and happiness to our lives. Participants were encouraged to list three things each day they are grateful for and why. By actively taking the time to notice the things we are grateful for we are encouraging a more positive mind-set.

One of the many benefits of running these courses over a number of weeks is the opportunity it offers to build connections amongst our community of carers.

**List three things that you are grateful for today**

1. ....

.....

2. ....

.....

3. ....

.....

*"I find that seeing other people on Zoom makes you aware that you are not alone coping with your circumstances in these difficult times."*



**Some of the feedback received from this group below.**

*"I enjoyed the programme and found myself looking forward to it each week in a time when there is not a lot to do. It made me think about things that I had pushed to the back of my mind and made me focus more on thinking more positively."*

*"I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the latest course. You were asking about how Zoom is for everyone, well for me it is great because I can't drive and it's so easy to sit down for an hour with my Kindle. In saying that, I do miss seeing everyone in person and getting out for a few hours was always a bonus but I'm really happy with what you are doing and until COVID goes away this is the way it has to be."*

*"When the fourth week ended, I felt like I was really going to miss logging onto Zoom the following week to see everyone. Having the chance to connect online helps intentionally build a routine around the class and overall I have felt well, motivated and happier from being involved in the weekly activities."*

*"We all at times can feel taken for granted, this class helped me realise the contribution I am making to someone else's life and that really made me feel happier."*



**Be Happy Now** was just part of our Carers Week celebration. Keep reading to find out what else we were up to.





# Carer Pathway Steering Group

Our Carer Pathway Steering Group is made up of Carers, Trust staff and representatives from the Community and Voluntary sector. The Steering Group always meets on Carers Week to ensure we promote the role of carers across the organisation. This year we had to meet using Zoom but we were delighted to have so many staff and carers join together to discuss carers issues. The Carer Pathway

Steering Group is carer led, with our Chair, Mr Sam Bell and Deputy Chair, Mrs Virginia Maxwell both being carers. The Steering Group meets quarterly throughout the year. If you are currently a carer and would like to join the Carer Pathway Steering Group we would welcome new members.

For more information email [carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net)



This year we relied on social media more than ever to 'Make Caring Visible'.

Gail, an active member of our Carer Pathway Steering Group made a video of her personal journey for Carers Week. The video is available to watch on the Northern Trust Facebook page or you can watch it on the link below.

<https://vimeo.com/user28617732/review/426205213/426dfd5b88>

We are thankful to have many carers who are happy to work with us to help us develop

supports and promote family carers across the Trust and wider health and social care system.

To make sure you receive accurate information and to see what's happening across the Trust area you can follow the official Northern Trust accounts on both Facebook or Twitter.

 Northern Health and Social Care Trust

 @NHSCT



# Department of Health Updates

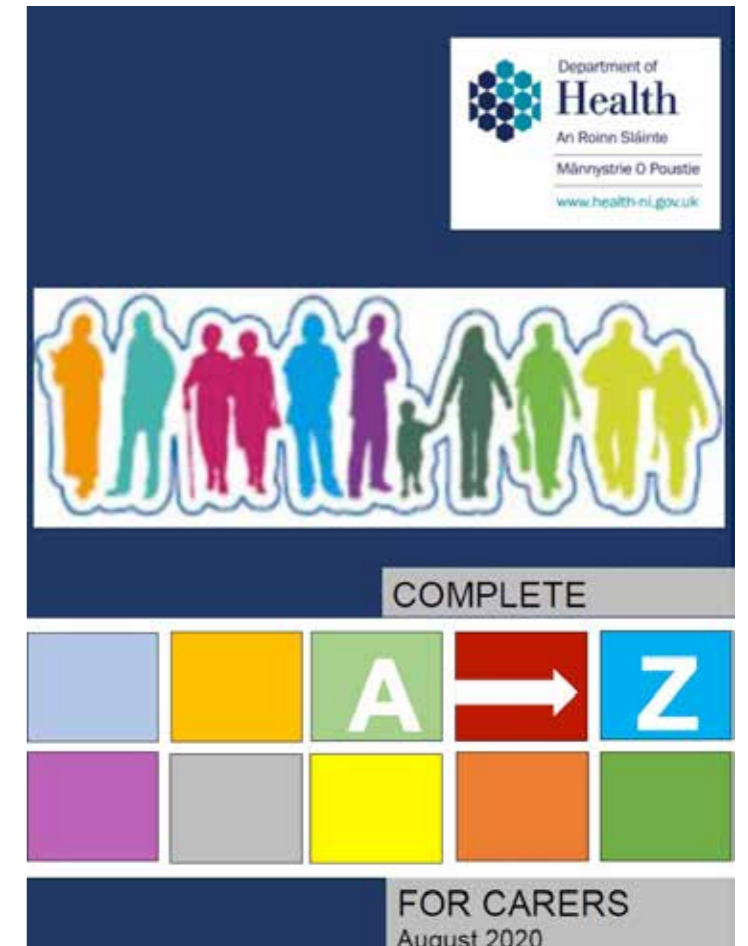
## Carer ID Card

The Department of Health launched a Carer ID card from 8 June 2020. The card is designed to give carers known to services the same access to priority shopping as NHS workers and to allow for additional travel during any period of restrictions. If you are known to services and have not yet received your ID card you can request one by emailing the Northern Trust Carer Hub on [carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net) or telephone **028 2766 1210**



## Carer A-Z HANDBOOK

The Department of Health have updated the Carer A-Z Handbook. This regional guide tells you where you can access information, support and services and directs you to organisations best placed to meet your needs.



We posted a copy of this handbook to you in early September and hope you find it useful. If you are new to the mailing list and would like a copy please get in touch by email [carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net) or Telephone the Carer Hub **028 2766 1210**





# Carer Support Programme

## September to November 2020



### 'Take 5 Promoting Self-care for Carers'



As you will know our entire Carer Support Programme is built around the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' initiative with a class on offer under each theme of the Take 5.

- These are
- Connect**
- Be Active**
- Keep Learning**
- Take Notice**
- Give**

In September, carers embarked on a Take 5 journey of self-care discovery. Self-care resource packs were distributed to the 30 carers who joined the weekly class. Each pack contained multiple items that could be opened up on each of the weeks and demonstrated how simple it can be to take time to look after yourself while caring for someone else.

All too often, we hear that carers feel guilty for spending some time on themselves when they feel they should be 'doing something productive'. Over the duration of the weeks, participants shared ways that they take time to look after themselves and different exercises were used to help reframe how time can be used to help rest and regenerate.



**Remember you can't pour from an empty cup**

Although this class was online, carers had the chance to connect with and get to know each other through small groups in break out rooms while exploring the Take 5 themes. The carers who took part in this class developed their own self-care grid. Check below to see if there are any suggestions under each of the themes that you could do for yourself to help you recharge and take some time for yourself.

### Carers Self Care Grid

Connect	Keep Learning	Be Active	Take Notice	Give
Ring a Friend	Use Carer Website	Go For A Walk	Spend Some Time in Nature	Take an Interest in Others
Talk to a Neighbour	Join Carer Support Programme	Do Some Online Exercise Videos	Sit Down For 15 Minutes and Breathe	Listen to Others
Smile at Someone	Try New Things Online	Keep Your Mind Active Try Puzzles	Go To Bed Early If You Need To	Send Someone a Card
Join Carer Support Programme	Talk To Another Carer	Do Some Gardening	Listen To Your Body	Volunteer
Write to Someone or Use a Journal	Try a New Hobby/ Sport/ Activity	Do Some Housework - Its Exercise and You Feel Better After	Make a Cup Of Tea And Drink It Hot	Pass On Items You No Longer Use

The class was thoroughly enjoyed and we were excited to have a recap session in November for all those participated. It was great to catch up, revisit some techniques and more importantly see everyone again!





# Autumn Stitch-up

The class was thoroughly enjoyed and we were excited to have a recap session in November for all those participated. It was great to catch up, revisit some techniques and more importantly see everyone again! Autumn Stitch-up

We are always thankful to other members of staff who think of suitable classes for carers. Thank you to Nicola Arbuckle from Community Health and Wellbeing who arranged the 'Autumn Stitch Up' class for carers in September with materials provided. This was a craft class where the aim was to sew/stitch a drawstring bag. All the boxes of materials ready to leave the Carer Hub below.

Materials were provided and carers could come to three pick up points to collect them. Once instructions were passed on carers were able to then follow along the live class on Zoom. We really have been amazed at the interest for the online classes and the willingness of those who want to join in to collect materials.

This was a relaxed, fun (and at times lively) class with everyone trying hand sewing. The class was aimed at all abilities and it was great to see so many join who at pickup said "there's no way I can sew!" See below a couple of the finished pieces.



*"Thank you for another great workshop. It was great to get stitching and have something to show for it."*

*"You picked cream of the crop there! It brought me down memory lane and also the fact that I worked London early 70's made it both enjoyable and uplifting listening to the participants, I could identify with them all."*

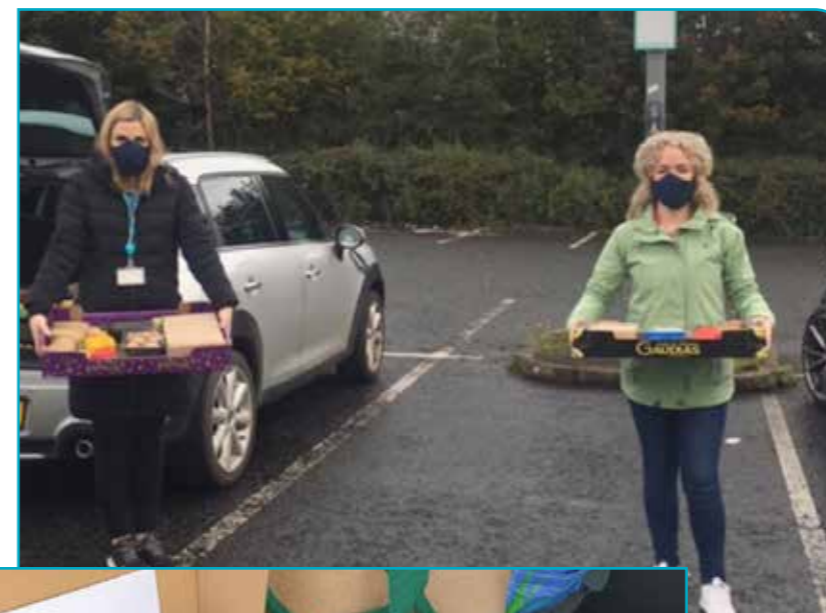
*"What a great time we had this morning at the sewing class. Thank you so much for your hard work in organising it for us."*



# Cook with the Urban Community Chef

In October we were off again delivering materials for the weekly cookery class with the **Urban Community Chef**. We were delighted to bring you four weeks of cookery classes from the comfort of your own home. This was a new format as the class would be a "cook-a-long" joining online direct from your kitchen. We were blown away by the enthusiasm to take part.

As carers from across the Trust area made their way to the collection points they received a box of fresh ingredients, a recipe card and some extra surprises each week.



Each week there was a different theme for the recipe and many were encouraged to try new foods and cook from scratch – on week two participants even made their own noodles.





*"I care for my mother in law. I think it's very practical and important that you included this class in your programme. It's very encouraging and healthy to cook food from scratch for your families. Thanks again for organising it."*



The classes were delivered by the **Urban Community Chef** and everyone who participated had the opportunity to ask questions as the class went on.

*"I have been caring for my daughter for the past 20 years. For me, this has been a really wonderful experience as I had no motivation to cook for myself as I live alone.*

*The ingredients are exciting, fresh and of superior quality. My freezer is now well stocked and lockdown and isolation are less daunting! I want to thank you for this opportunity and my praise and thanks to Mark in his gentle approach to teaching new skills and creating amazing results. It's the first time in 20 years that I feel connected with other carers. Perhaps this pandemic has contributed to connection through zoom and that's not a bad thing".*

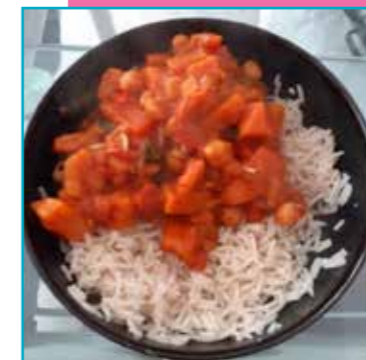
*"Just want to say how much I love the cookery course. Cooking is the only thing that I find relaxing and can switch off from everything else that is going on. I usually bake when I am stressed but now changing this more to savoury cookery since doing the classes with the community chef. I have continued to plan ahead for the week and found this to be very beneficial".*

*"I would just like to say how much I have enjoyed this course from meeting Claire and Gillian with ingredients always smiling whatever the weather at pick up. Chef Mark is fabulous patient, courteous and not only do you learn the recipe you pick up invaluable wee tips along the way as well. The ingredients themselves were second to none the vegetables were always tasty and fresh, my grandson joined in the Indian curry week and both his dad and me agreed we have never seen him eat so many vegetables at once the kale crisps were a big hit! It has definitely made us all think twice about reducing our meat consumption as the meals were so tasty and filling. As a carer for my mum and having recently been made redundant this course has been a distraction and an inspiration in these uncertain times."*

*"I care for my daughter, the class has significantly contributed to my daily meal prep. I have been inspired to cook for the whole family from scratch using fresh ingredients. I have gained confidence in following new recipes adjusting instructions following the advice and tips. I try to plan our meals ahead and have updated my store cupboard! The class definitely encouraged me to take time to do something for myself but also challenged me to improve my cooking skill set. Words cannot describe how good this class was. Not only did it teach me new things and make me do something for me, it also connected me with other carers".*

*"I care for my husband, the sessions with the Urban Community Chef have not only been very enjoyable and a nice change but really helpful in learning some new tips and tasty but easy to prepare recipes and such a good variety. The different recipes which we were introduced to were easy to prepare and will save time and money in the long run. I also found it very effective to prepare extra and freeze left-overs for another time. The classes, without a doubt, have encouraged me to take the time to learn more about cooking and to prepare something nice and tasty for us both - I have always enjoyed cooking but now that I can see how easy it can be and not so time consuming then I am certainly encouraged to do more of it in the future. Many thanks for arranging these very useful and informative sessions".*

*"Just want to say I am so very thankful for everything you have provided this last few weeks and to be taught by the Community chef. What an amazing experience. Loved pizza week and made dough balls for dessert later with chocolate sauce. Plenty of dough left for the children to make theirs tonight after school. This is going to be a regular weekend treat for us all to make our own".*







## Breathe Laugh Relax

*This is another new addition to our support programme. Meeting monthly, this class gives carers the chance to connect and relax with each other following the techniques of the programme and also, not forgetting, to have a bit of fun!*

**Breathing techniques** - through participating in these workshops participants have become aware of how we can hold our breath and engage in shallow breathing without even realising. The breathing techniques covered within this class teach us how to engage in diaphragmatic breathing (or belly breathing) which helps to reduce stress and anxiety.

**Relaxation** – Yoga Nidra is a deep form of relaxation and can otherwise be known as a body scan. It is suggested that 20 minutes of Yoga Nidra is the equivalent of 2 hours rest and restoration for body and mind. Each Breathe, Laugh, Relax session is finished by taking part in this restorative practice ensuring that participants feel relaxed and rested at the end of the session.

Having this class available monthly helps carers to plan ahead and know what is coming up with many suggesting to us that they look forward to the monthly meet up and seeing familiar faces and getting to know new carers.

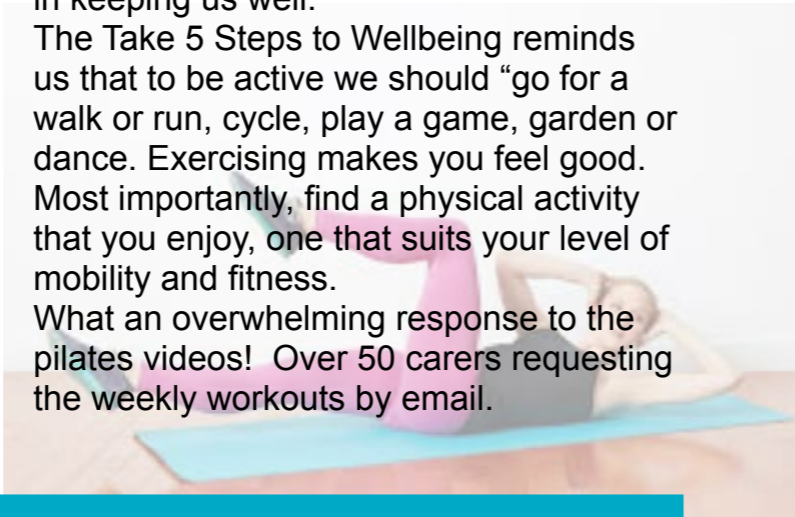
## Be Yourselfie

Earlier this year some carers asked us to arrange classes that would focus on self-esteem and self-confidence. In previous years we have held the Be Yourselfie programme. Thinking about what we have come through this year so far and the impact that it can have on your confidence, this programme can help you develop self-esteem and self-confidence which is an important first step in advocating for yourself and ensuring you get the right help and support.

**Laughter Yoga** – science suggests that our brain cannot tell the difference between a fake laugh or a real laugh. Through engaging in laughter exercises we can trick our brain into believing we are really laughing – in fact by the end of the exercises we really are laughing at ourselves and each other!

## Pilates

As you know being active plays a big part in keeping us well. The Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing reminds us that to be active we should “go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, find a physical activity that you enjoy, one that suits your level of mobility and fitness. What an overwhelming response to the pilates videos! Over 50 carers requesting the weekly workouts by email.



*“Just finished online pilates class - I absolutely loved it tutor explained all the moves so well. I have done Pilates before but learned so much this time. The 5 elements were so helpful. Looking forward to next one!”*



## Carer Connect

*Carer involvement in what we do is so important to us. It is also important that carers have the chance to connect with others. We would like to share with you the story of a carer who lives in our Trust area.*

### Caring During Covid-19 Pandemic 2020

*“Well what can I say.....I’m not buying a 2021 planner until I see a trailer for it.....oh how I wish I had seen one for this year!”*



Being a carer during this highly unusual time has been challenging to say the least. To care for others is a noble (beautiful) calling which is selfless and self-giving; it is giving of our time, our money, our resources, our energy, our strength and ourselves.

Covid-19 in and of itself isn’t actually the problem as we each year have flu outbreaks. It’s the devastating knock on effect on our health service, the more vulnerable among us all and how we function as a community. Covid-19 has revealed to each of us an awareness of the vulnerability of our loved ones, those who we care for deeply. The Covid-19 outbreak has affected our caring role in so many different ways. For some it has given mixed emotions: from happy to exhausted, frustrated to rested, grateful to depressed, grieving to cherishing. While challenging and interesting at the same time, Covid-19 has striped us back to basics. You see, us carers had learnt to ‘fit in’ our self-care time when the kids were at school or mum/dad at day centre or when loved ones were with a care worker for an hour that meant you could get ‘me time’..... precious!

Covid-19 came along and **EVERYTHING STOPPED**...ok bless the NHS didn’t stop but the day to day running of our lives stopped – work, shops (limited number stayed open), schools, day centres, all the different leisure and sports activities and all non- essential services where put on hold.

Carers had learnt wellness tools, coping strategies, self-care techniques to help us maintain and live healthy lives. Suddenly due to Covid-19 and lockdown all of the self-care time and opportunities stopped or were put on hold. It became more challenging as our support networks were withdrawn. Loneliness, isolation, depression and sadness crept in. Yet it also became more interesting as it inspired us to become more resilient and to use ALL of the resources we had left like love, joy and laughter. For some families this became a time to reconnect, for others to learn and develop new skills or to relax and rest.

It caused us ALL to look at our lives and evaluate what we hold near and dear....to come together as a community and support one another.

To develop new computer skills like how to use ZOOM – from “what is that? to Oh now I’m a whizz at it.”, Facebook video calls, WhatsApp videos and how to work from

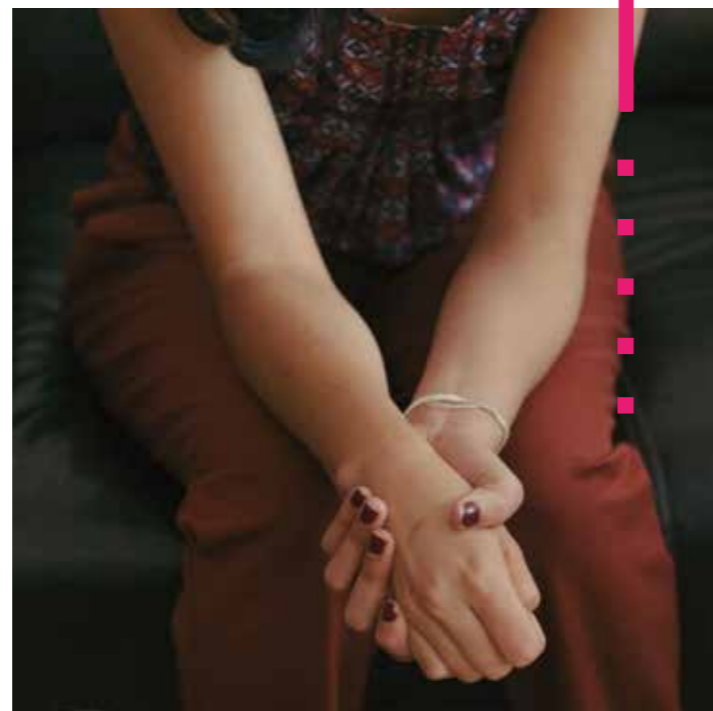
home - modern technology has put many a smile onto an isolated loved ones face and helped to ease their loneliness.

## For me self-care has developed into:

- Quiet mornings, getting up earlier for a cuppa before everyone else wakes up.
- **Going for daily walks/walking the dog – this is now ‘me time’ even if it’s only 20 mins.**
- Family walks/trips out to local nearby parks or the seaside creating precious memories.
- **Coffee/tea with your family and friends (keeping socially distanced and outdoors).**
- Taking a bath to soak away your worries and stressing using aromatherapy oils if you can.
- **ZOOM courses online with lots to choose from in Carer Support Programme and beyond.**
- Learning a new skill/hobby/interest or developing current ones.
- **Carer catch-ups and classes to chat with other carers offering a space to be heard and supported.**
- Availing of mindfulness apps, YouTube videos, learning techniques like belly breathing. Work on our ‘attitude of gratitude’ skills.
- **Being aware of your own mental health needs and wellbeing - when one day isn’t great, remember the next day is a new day i.e. remembering to take one day at a time.**
- Giving yourself praise and a pat on the back for doing a wonderful and amazing job.
- **Giving a wave/helping your neighbours if possible.**
- Remembering to keep safe by washing your hands and wearing a mask if possible.

Through all of the above self-care activities we are developing our resilience and widening our coping skills. Each day, each week the news keeps telling us things are changing.

*Life isn’t the way it used to be and at this present time we don’t know when it will be, so until then we need to keep taking one day at a time!*



## Carers Rights Day 2020 Thursday 26 November

Whether you are a new carer or have been caring for someone for a while, it is important that you understand your rights and are able to access the support that is available to you as soon as you need it. Each year, Carers Rights Day helps us:

- **ensure carers are aware of their rights**
- **let carers know where to get help and support**
- **raise awareness of the needs of carers.**

The theme for Carers Rights Day 2020 was

### **‘Know Your Rights’**

Three years ago, on Carers Rights Day 2017, we launched our designated carers website [www.carersdigital.org](http://www.carersdigital.org) the website has many resources and guides to help you understand your rights. Create an account using the access code **DGTL2770** so you can access the resources and complete the online training. The website has been updated by Carers UK and now includes the following featured sections

**You and Your Wellbeing, Spotlight on Nutrition and Caring, About Me** (building resilience) and **Working and Skills** e-learning for working carers. Any carer in Northern Trust can access the website by creating an account using the code **DGTL2770**. Northern Trust remains the only Trust to offer this specific carer website.

Carers NI will be delivering a **"Rights and Entitlements"** online session by **Zoom** on Thursday 4 February at 10am. If you would like to join telephone 028 27661210 or email [carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net)





## Online feedback platform Care Opinion launched in Northern Ireland

From the 3rd of August 2020 service users, families and carers will have the opportunity to share their experience of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland through an online user feedback platform called Care Opinion.

Care Opinion is an independent non-profit feedback platform for Health and Social Care, supported by Department of Health and implemented by the Public Health Agency, which will enable users, and their families, to give feedback on their care and share their stories with others.

The Health Minister said: *“Care Opinion is an important tool that will help us deliver enhancements but for it to work as well as it can, we need to hear from everyone who has experience of using our health and social care services that includes service users and their families and carers. We want to hear not only about what has worked well, but also about the times when things could have been better. I would encourage people to use the platform and make their voice heard.”*

Care Opinion will share stories but not a person's name with the Trust and a healthcare professional will respond to feedback via Care Opinion in an open and transparent manner. Responses will be person-centred and engage with the experience; giving assurance your story has been heard. Both the stories and responses nearly always appear online for others to read.

Rodney Morton, Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professions at the Public Health Agency, said: “The launch of Care Opinion will provide a platform for improvements driven directly by feedback from patients and their families. It will enable the public to influence health and social care services in new, open and transparent ways. We are really excited about taking this work forward.”

For anyone who has experienced Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland over the past three years, whether good or could have been improved, they are encouraged to tell their story to help improve services.

Care Opinion will treat stories confidentially. The only personal detail shared with Care Opinion is the email address of the person submitting the story, and they will keep this confidential. Stories appear using a screen name on the public website and anonymity will remain protected at all time.

Care Opinion will complement and enhance existing feedback systems within the six Health and Social Care Trusts which includes Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

Feedback can be provided at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk) Stories can also be shared by calling the Care Opinion Freephone number **0800 122 3135** or completing a **freepost feedback leaflet**, you will find a leaflet included in your envelope with this newsletter.

*In September the IQI Team in the Trust organised a festival of appreciation and learning for all work carried out by teams across the Trust during the pandemic. We were delighted that carers had the opportunity to talk about the importance of networking during these challenging times. Of course, this was a virtual festival and carers who participated in our online classes met to record their experience and share their stories.*



*Thank you to the carers who took the time to join us and record their experience of caring and sharing ideas for the carer support programme.*





# Coronavirus and Scams

Be aware of scams and protect yourself and others

## Be aware of people offering or selling:

- Coronavirus testing kits - these are only offered by the NHS
- Vaccines or miracle cures - there is currently no vaccine or cure
- Overpriced or fake goods to protect yourself from coronavirus such as anti-bacterial products
- Shopping or medication collection services
- Offers to clean your home of coronavirus

## Protect yourself and others:

If you are unsure, check with family and friends before accepting offers of help

- Don't assume everyone is genuine. It's okay to reject or ignore any requests. If someone attempts to pressure you into accepting a service then they are unlikely to be genuine.
- Don't be rushed into making a decision, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Only buy goods or services from trusted sellers and think before parting with money or personal information.

## Contact

For advice on scams call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 11 33**

To report a scam call Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040**

Contact your bank if you think you have been scammed.



If you are concerned about someone or have been approached by a scam through email, letter, doorstep, telephone report the scam to Action Fraud 03001232040

# SCAMS



It is important to re-emphasise the increase of scams currently, preying on those who may be older, isolated, lonely or vulnerable.

## Some Facts On Scams

**53% of people over 65 years of age will be approached by a scammer.**

**£5-10 billion is the amount that scams cost the economy in the UK every year.**

**Anyone can be scammed - any age, any profession.**

**Only 5% of people report being scammed.**

**It is important to note that scammers operate in different ways and there are five types of scam:**

**Postal scams** - lottery or prize draw, catalogue scams, inheritance scams there is always a request for money before you receive the prize and beware of fake testimonials!

**Telephone scams** - once scammers realise you are open to conversation they can call up to ten times a day - do not engage in conversation, hang up. Beware of text messages containing links or asking to text back or call a number.

**Email scams** - similar to postal scams most detail an inheritance, or deposits to your bank, refunds, fake HMRC. Look out for inconsistent email address, incorrect weblinks, poor spelling or grammar, pressure to respond and will often contain an attachment or link.

**Doorstep scams** - people physically calling at your door - to make a sale or for any type of exterior work needing done. The work will be unnecessary! Will put you under pressure, insist on cash payment.

**Online scams** - cheap products or deals, online relationships - be aware of anyone asking for money even if you think you have a relationship with them. Scams are the product of organised predatory criminals - protect yourself by not giving out details, don't assume everyone is genuine, don't be rushed, listen to your instincts, stay in control!





# What have you been up to



Through meeting many of you at our online classes and from previous classes we have been delighted to hear how you have been taking time to look after yourself. Many of you have sent us emails and photos detailing different ways that you have managed your caring role throughout the restrictive lockdown period and again when we began to move out of lockdown. Here are some pictures of what you have been up to.



# Community Navigators



The Community Navigators work with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to link older people to services and activities within their local community.

NHSCT Area	NHSCT Area	Contact Details
Antrim Newtownabbey	Stephen Gourley	c/o Barron Hall, 230 Antrim Rd, Glengormley, Newtownabbey BT36 7QX E: <a href="mailto:communitynavigator.an@ageni.org">communitynavigator.an@ageni.org</a> T: 078 1419 6820
Coleraine Ballymoney Moyle	Bronagh McFadden	Building Communities Resource Centre, Unit 22-23 Acorn Business Centre, 2 Riada Avenue, Ballymoney BT53 7LH E: <a href="mailto:communitynavigator@theresourcecentre.org">communitynavigator@theresourcecentre.org</a> T: 028 2766 5068
Ballymena Larne Carrickfergus	Sarah McLaughlin (temporary cover)	Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP), 18 Queen Street, Ballymena BT42 2BD E: <a href="mailto:communitynavigator@meaap.co.uk">communitynavigator@meaap.co.uk</a> T: 028 2565 8604 / 079 2755 0393
Cookstown Magherafelt	Eugene O'Goan	c/o Positive Steps Community Centre, 2C Park Avenue, Cookstown BT80 8AH E: <a href="mailto:communitynavigator.mu@ageni.org">communitynavigator.mu@ageni.org</a> T: 078 1419 6935

### The Community Navigator can:

- Take referrals from individuals, healthcare professionals and the community and voluntary sector for people over the age of 50
- Support community groups to sustain their activities to build capacity through promotion, information sharing, signposting towards funding and training opportunities
- Help raise awareness of older people's issues through attending and participating in relevant forums, meetings, events and consultations

Examples of services the Community Navigator can signpost you to include:

- Home safety check
- Benefit entitlement check
- Handyperson scheme
- 'Good Morning' call
- Community transport







# Action for Children Young Adult Carers Service

Action for Children launched a new support service for young adult carers aged between 18-25 years old in March 2020. A young adult carer is someone aged between 18 and 25 who looks after a member of their family or a friend. The **Action for Children Young Adult Carers Service** provides practical and emotional support to young adult carers when they need it most.

The service was launched as lock down was approaching and the team had to get creative with online support and virtual fun to engage with all our young adult carers.

The Young Adult Carers Team really wanted to do something to mark Carers Week 2020. With the theme around **'Making caring visible'**, we thought we would make ourselves visible to our young adult carers for a 24 hour period! We needed to have things planned to keep us all engaged (and awake) so we put together an itinerary and thought about how we could make it interactive...that's where the activity packs came from. They were delivered the day before and contained lots of little "bits" that would come in handy over the 24 hour period.

Our 24 hours were jam packed, starting with meal times and competitive quizzes. We hosted the "Great YAC Bake off", scavenger hunts and even took a wellbeing walk 'together'. The highlight of the evening was our popular bingo slot followed by

hot chocolates and ghost stories. The graveyard shift was full of laughs, colouring in and helping each other stay awake. The 5am slot featured a special furry guest, who just couldn't keep her eyes open, while her owner was forced to stay awake, it really is a dog's life! We made it across the finish line at 11am with a smile and lots of memories.

We had a blast with our young adult carers and can't wait to do it all again next year.

*If you would like to know more about the **Young Adult Carers Service** contact **Colleen McSorely** by email [colleen.mcsorley@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:colleen.mcsorley@actionforchildren.org.uk) or telephone **Action for Children** on **028 90 460 500** (ask to speak to a member of the **Young Adult Carers Team**)*



# Believe in children



## Barnardo's Northern Ireland

# Barnardos Young Carers Service

The Project Workers in Barnardos have been focussing on 'keeping connected' to support young carers with their well-being and encouraging young carers to practice self-care.

The Barnardos Young Carers Service works in Northern Trust area to support young carers aged 8 to 18 years who are negatively impacted by the caring role. There are four project workers across the Trust who have been kept very busy responding to individual needs and

challenging situations as they arise as well as being a voice for how young carers have been impacted by the pandemic.

'Mental health and wellbeing packs' were assembled and all packs differed slightly and were very individual depending on each young person and their age. Each pack contained activities to promote the **Take 5 steps to Wellbeing**, including arts and crafts, puzzles, competitions, physical activities and challenges, pamper products etc.







As with other services, many activities had to move to online platforms to keep up connections. Young carers without access to a phone or tablet were provided with one by Barnardos to allow them to get involved with Zoom and video calls and keep connected with their project worker as well as support online schooling. In some cases emergency food vouchers were provided to those young people in crisis.

Some Zoom cooking classes were held and some socially distanced nature walks including some crab fishing took place over the summer.



## Barnardos launches new service 'See, Hear, Respond'



### Is Covid-19 making you worried or sad?

Nervous about being back at school?  
Are your family finding it tough?  
Are you anxious for yourself and loved ones?

### Barnardo's NI See, Hear, Respond can help you

For more information go to <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/northern-ireland-see-hear-respond> or call 0800 157 7015 12-7pm Mon - Fri

*See Hear Respond is a partnership funded by the Department for Education to help children, young people and families cope with the Covid-19 crisis.*

*The See, Hear, Respond Partnership will quickly identify and support children, young people and families who are struggling to cope with the impacts of coronavirus.*

### See, Hear, Respond

will ensure vulnerable children, young people and families who are at risk, don't slip through the cracks.

[www.barnardos.org.uk/see-hear-respond](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/see-hear-respond)



**Believe in children**  
Barnardo's



*Return to school booklets were also produced for young people to explore anxieties and uncertainties about the return to school. Staff have been liaising with schools to support young carers in the return to school.*

For more information you can contact  
Barnardos Young Carers Service  
on 028 79631344

Barnardos Young Carers Service  
36A Westland Road  
Magherafelt  
BT45 5AY





# FLU Vaccination

Flu occurs every year, usually in the winter. Sometimes flu can lead to serious illnesses or make existing conditions worse. The best way to protect yourself is to get the free seasonal flu vaccine if your GP offers you the vaccine.



## People who should get the vaccine

Some people are at greater risk from the effects of flu and should get the vaccine. There's an increased risk if:

- *you're pregnant*
- *you're aged 65 or over, even if you feel fit and healthy*
- *you live in a residential or nursing home*
- *you're the main carer for an elderly or disabled person - ask your GP if you should be vaccinated so you can continue caring for the person*



<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/flu-vaccine-adults>

# COVID Latest



To keep up to date with the latest advice for **COVID-19** you should visit the Public Health Agency website

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

Everyone can help stop

## COVID-19

spreading by:

- *Avoiding touching your face and washing your hands as soon as you get home.*
- *If you go outside stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people.*



# StopCOVID NI

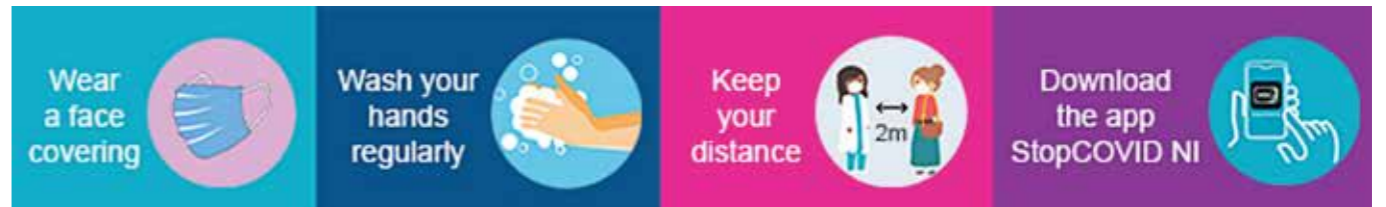
DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW



The Public Health Agency website has the most up to date, reliable information so if you have any concerns or queries you can visit the site.

Find out all you need to know at

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/covid-19-information-public>







Age NI is here to help you stay connected and its freephone Advice and Advocacy service provides older people and their family or carers with information, advice and support around care, housing, benefits as well as signposting to other services.

Our wellbeing services such as First Connect, Check In and Chat are available for carers. These services can help family members with transitions or just be a kind voice at the end of a phone call. Our 'Staying Sharp' service (which is available in Ballymena and surrounding area) can also support those living with mild cognitive impairments as well as those who care for them.

A recent carer using our services said, "It's good to know that someone is there for us."

Please call our Advice & Advocacy service on **0808 808 7575**

Our trained advisors are here to help. You can also find lots of information on our website **www.ageni.org**

## The Consumer Council is here to help



### What we do

The Consumer Council promotes and safeguards the interests of Northern Ireland consumers. We provide free, independent support and advice for all consumers and businesses in Northern Ireland. We have powers to investigate complaints about energy, water, transport, postal services and private car parking charges. We also undertake research to understand local consumer issues and lobby decision makers for improvements to make things better.

### What this means for you

If you are worried about the accuracy of an electricity bill, or you have received a private car parking notice, get in touch with us. Have you experienced a flight delay or cancellation and are unsure of your rights? Our dedicated team can give you advice and support on these types of issues and many more.

### Additional support

The Consumer Council also works with utility companies to ensure consumers who require additional support receive it. For example, did you know that Northern Ireland Water has a Customer Care Register to provide additional support if you are an older consumer, have a serious medical condition or need extra help for any other reason? Likewise, Northern Ireland Electricity Networks has a Medical Customer Care Register so anyone dependant on electricity equipment is provided additional help during a power cut. Get in touch with us to find out how to join these registers.

### Why pay more when you can pay less?

Another important part of our work is giving you the tools you need to shop around for the best deal, to help make your household budget go further. For example we know that home energy bills are one of the biggest financial worries for consumers in Northern Ireland, yet 76% do not shop around for their electricity and gas and 69% do not shop around for home heating oil.

The Consumer Council has a free and independent online Energy Price Comparison Tool to help you compare the best deals for electricity and gas. We also have a free online Home Budgeting Tool, to help you see where your money is going and where savings can be made. We compile weekly online surveys that compare prices for home heating oil and petrol and diesel prices, to help you shop around for the best deal. In addition, we have guides on how to make your home more energy efficient, and how to save money on your food shopping. All this information is available on our website. However if you prefer, you can call our Consumer Protection Team who can provide advice over the phone, or email/write to us and we will send the information to your home.

### Stay safe from scams

We are proud to be members of the ScamwiseNI partnership. Remember – always check ID of callers to your home; never provide personal details over the phone; your bank will never call you to ask for a PIN number or password; if in doubt – bin it, delete it or hang up; if you haven't bought a ticket you can't win it; and, never click on links/files in emails unless you know the source. We have more tips and scams information on our website, or call us to request free copies of our scam guides.

### How to contact The Consumer Council

For free help and advice, contact us:  
 Telephone: **Freephone 0800 121 6022**  
 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)  
 Website: **www.consumerCouncil.org.uk**  
 Email: **contact@consumerCouncil.org.uk**  
 Write to: **Freepost THE CONSUMER COUNCIL**





# tide (together in dementia everyday)

is a network of present and former carers of people with dementia. We are based in Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England. We are working towards a world where our society reflects and responds to their rights.

Like many others, we've been pretty busy over the past few months. A lot of our support, at the moment, is online but we also talk on the phone and can mail out information.

## We can offer you the following:

### Information

The tide website provides up to date information. There is information on the different activities we are offering: <https://www.tide.uk.net/activities/> There is also a range of resources that may be useful: <https://www.tide.uk.net/resources/>

Information is also emailed or mailed regularly to tide network members about what is being offered to carers in Northern Ireland.

### Connection

Our Facebook page provides information on loads of different areas: <https://www.facebook.com/tidecarers/> We've also a closed Facebook page so carers can contact directly each other. This

means only the people in this group can see what is written. All topics are welcome in this group and this group isn't only here for coronavirus advice. Please feel free to talk about what is concerning you now. You can request access here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tidecarerssupport>

We have a range of zoom sessions to offer: Weekly we've a chat with Northern Irish carers and a wider group of carers from the 4 nations.

Monthly we have more focussed session for those caring for someone with young on set dementia, for someone in residential care, receiving support through home care and for those who are former carers.

### Well-being

We also have regular webinars on well-being and self-care; how to get your voice heard and on living grief and bereavement. We also have one off sessions on a range of different issues.

### Influence

We are working with different partners to ensure that the rights of carers of people with dementia are heard. This includes work on the impact of COVID19, experiences of care homes, of home care, legislative changes and of grief and loss.

### Finally

The term unprecedented has been well used. What was difficult for carers before this pandemic has become even more difficult. We all need to put in place the small but significant things that we can to keep us going. If you fancy chatting and listening with other carers – please join us. If you like to get involved and want to make a difference – please join us. If you want to learn more about your rights – please join us...

So, if you are a present or past carer of someone with dementia; whether you care at home, support someone in their own home; your loved one is in residential care or whether you used to care for someone – consider the tide network has a place for you.

To join or for more information you can go to the website [www.tide.uk.net](http://www.tide.uk.net) or contact Fiona on [Fiona@tide.org.uk](mailto:Fiona@tide.org.uk) / 07841 457596



LOTTERY FUNDED







## Some useful apps & website links

### Headspace

If you find your mind is always racing and have difficulty switching off you might like to try a mindfulness app such as Headspace

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

### First Aid

First Aid at your fingertips – the British Red Cross have developed two apps which means you are only two taps away from learning how to help someone in a first aid emergency.

#### First Aid app:

Download from Google Play: <http://simplefirstaid.org/app>

Download from the Apple Store: <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/first-aid-by-british-red-cross/id483408666>

#### Baby and Child First Aid app:

Download from Google Play: <http://simplefirstaid.org/babyandchildapp>

Download from Apple Store: <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/bab-and-child-first-aid/id646471621>

### Healthy Recipes

Public Health Agency Healthy Recipes – try cooking some of the health recipes featured on the Public Health Agency website [www.pha.site/recipes](http://www.pha.site/recipes)

### Exercise

Keeping active is important for our physical and emotional health. If you would like to try something new you can visit <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/> for a variety of exercises to suit all levels. If you have an underlying health conditions, please check with your doctor/health care provider before taking part in any exercise.

### Libraries NI

Many carers have told us how useful they have found the online Libraries NI resources. Through the Libraries NI website and apps you can access as many books as you would in branch. Download the Libraries NI apps for more information.



## New 'Phone First' service for Emergency Departments

A new 'Phone First' service for Northern Ireland which is being rolled out to cover Causeway and Antrim Area Hospital Emergency Department and the Minor Injuries Unit in Mid Ulster Hospital, with effect from 10.00am on Tuesday 1 December 2020.

The 'Phone First' service will ensure patients can get direct access to the right care, avoid busy Emergency Departments and stay safe. Welcoming the pilot, Health Minister Robin Swann said that changes to urgent and emergency care are vital at this critical time for our health and care service. He said: *"Prior to Covid-19, there was clear evidence that our urgent and emergency care services were under increasing pressure. Unfortunately in recent weeks we have witnessed people facing long waits to be seen in overcrowded EDs. The impact of Covid-19, and the focus on infection prevention and social distancing, has driven home the urgent need for change. We need to protect our patients and staff. We cannot allow our EDs or hospitals to continue to see this level of crowding in future. 'Phone First' is one of a series of actions we will be taking to protect patients and services over coming weeks and months. Our aim is to roll 'Phone First' out to other areas across Northern Ireland, and this pilot will help us learn how to do that safely and in a way that benefits our patients and staff."*

The 'Phone First' number to ring is

**0300 123 1 123**

The 'Phone First' text relay number is

**18001 0300 123 1 123**

The service is designed for patients including children who are feeling unwell and considering travelling to the Emergency Department with an injury or illness which requires urgent treatment but is not immediately life threatening.

For all emergencies that are life threatening always call 999 immediately. This can include: Stroke, heart attack, loss of consciousness, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding or major trauma.

It is important to note that Emergency Departments will always be a safe place for patients, and if they attend an ED without ringing first, they will not be turned away. If their condition is not life threatening they may have to wait longer or be signposted to another service.

Patients who Phone First will be directed to the appropriate service for their needs. Those who are directed to attend ED will be assessed and prioritised based on their condition.

Head of General Medical Services at the Health and Social Care Board, Dr Margaret O'Brien explained how the new service would work:

*"The 'Phone First' service aims to keep our EDs for emergencies, whilst ensuring rapid access, assessment and treatment on a 24/7 basis for patients who need urgent care. When you call the 'Phone First' service, you will be directed to a health care professional who will clinically assess your condition or the person you are phoning on behalf of."*



They will then make arrangements for you to access to the most appropriate service to your needs. This may mean offering you an appointment at the Emergency Department, organising further investigations or redirecting you to your local GP, GP Out of Hours or nearest Minor Injuries Unit."

"The introduction of the Phone First service will improve patient safety in terms of preventing overcrowding and reducing long waits in our EDs. It will also help reduce the risk of Covid-19 infection and transmission. "We need your help at this extremely difficult time and I encourage patients to please 'Phone First' if your condition is not life threatening. But remember, if it is an emergency, if the situation is critical or life threatening then ring 999 immediately."

Dr Fergal Dunn, a consultant in Emergency Medicine at Causeway ED added:

# PHONE FIRST - 24/7

Make sure you PHONE FIRST before going to Antrim or Causeway Hospital Emergency Departments, or Mid Ulster Hospital Minor Injuries Unit.

## 0300 123 1 123

TEXT RELAY NUMBER: 18001 0300 123 1 123  
or Interpreter Now app

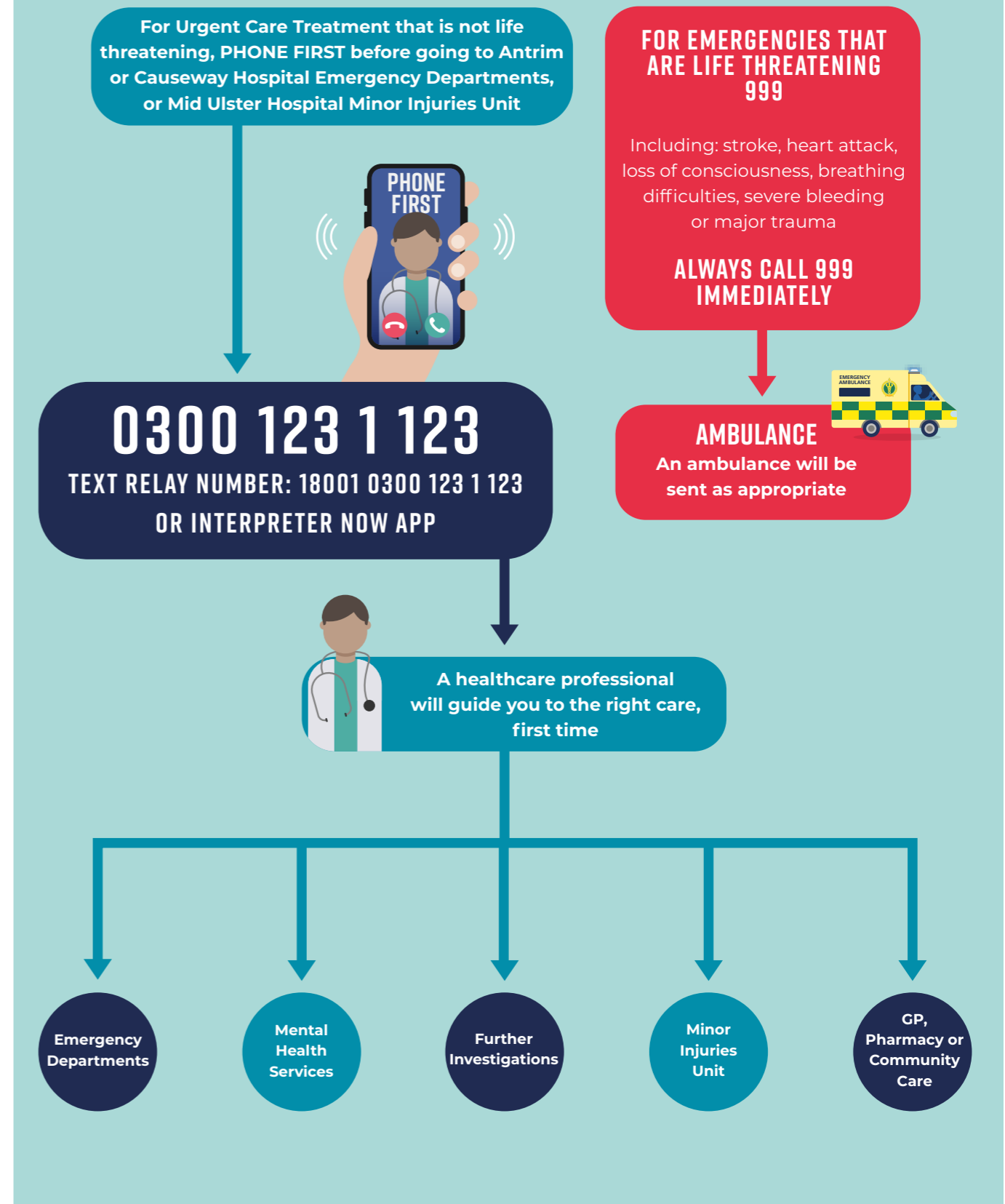


Get directed to the right care  
Avoid busy waiting rooms  
Stay safe  
Save time

**FOR EMERGENCIES - 999**  
Including: stroke, heart attack, loss of consciousness, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding or major trauma  
**ALWAYS CALL 999 IMMEDIATELY**

# How to access Urgent and Emergency Care Services







# Word Search

Occupational Therapy Department

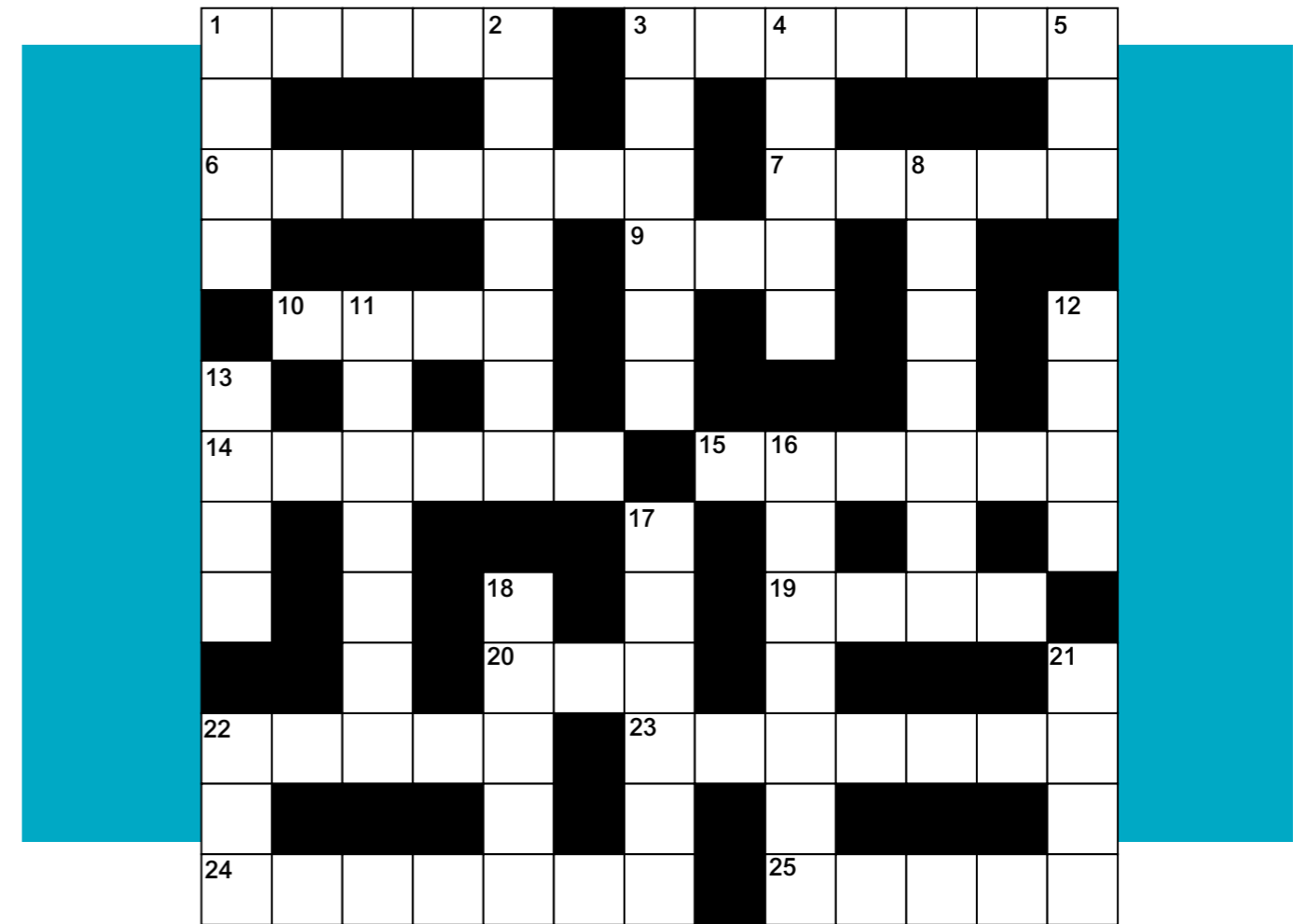
H	N	I	G	H	T	S	R	I	G	H	T	B
B	O	R	G	E	N	V	E	L	O	P	E	S
D	N	U	O	S	S	O	L	E	G	K	S	S
C	O	C	S	R	B	O	T	O	N	E	N	A
R	E	L	I	E	F	E	L	I	C	K	U	F
A	D	K	L	M	G	L	F	C	C	A	S	T
Y	I	C	O	O	T	E	A	O	N	E	L	E
O	V	O	I	T	T	R	R	V	R	X	N	R
N	L	N	S	E	K	T	A	E	O	E	R	N
B	G	K	T	R	I	B	E	E	H	R	A	O
A	L	H	E	W	A	T	E	R	H	W	E	O
G	R	E	A	T	L	O	B	M	Y	S	L	N
A	P	O	L	O	G	I	Z	E	C	A	E	P

access	crayon	knees	night	rock	symbol
afternoon	doll	knife	notice	rough	tone
apologize	envelope	knock	peace	silo	tribe
before	going	learn	peer	sole	veer
bloom	great	lick	relief	sound	video
cast	heart	local	remote	steal	water
close	house	lottery	right	sunset	where



# Crossword Puzzle

Occupational Therapy Department



## Across

1. Large oval tropical fruit (5)
3. Meat Pies (7)
6. Water Flask (7)
7. Juice from cooking meat (5)
9. Beverage (3)
10. Sweet drink containing carbonated water (4)
14. Frankfurter served on a bun (6)
15. Often used with a cup (6)
19. Consumes (4)
20. Hard-shelled seed (3)
22. Very thin crisp brown toast (5)
23. Spicy sauce made from red peppers (7)
24. Small prickly cucumber (7)
25. Plant having hollow cylindrical leaves used for seasoning (5)

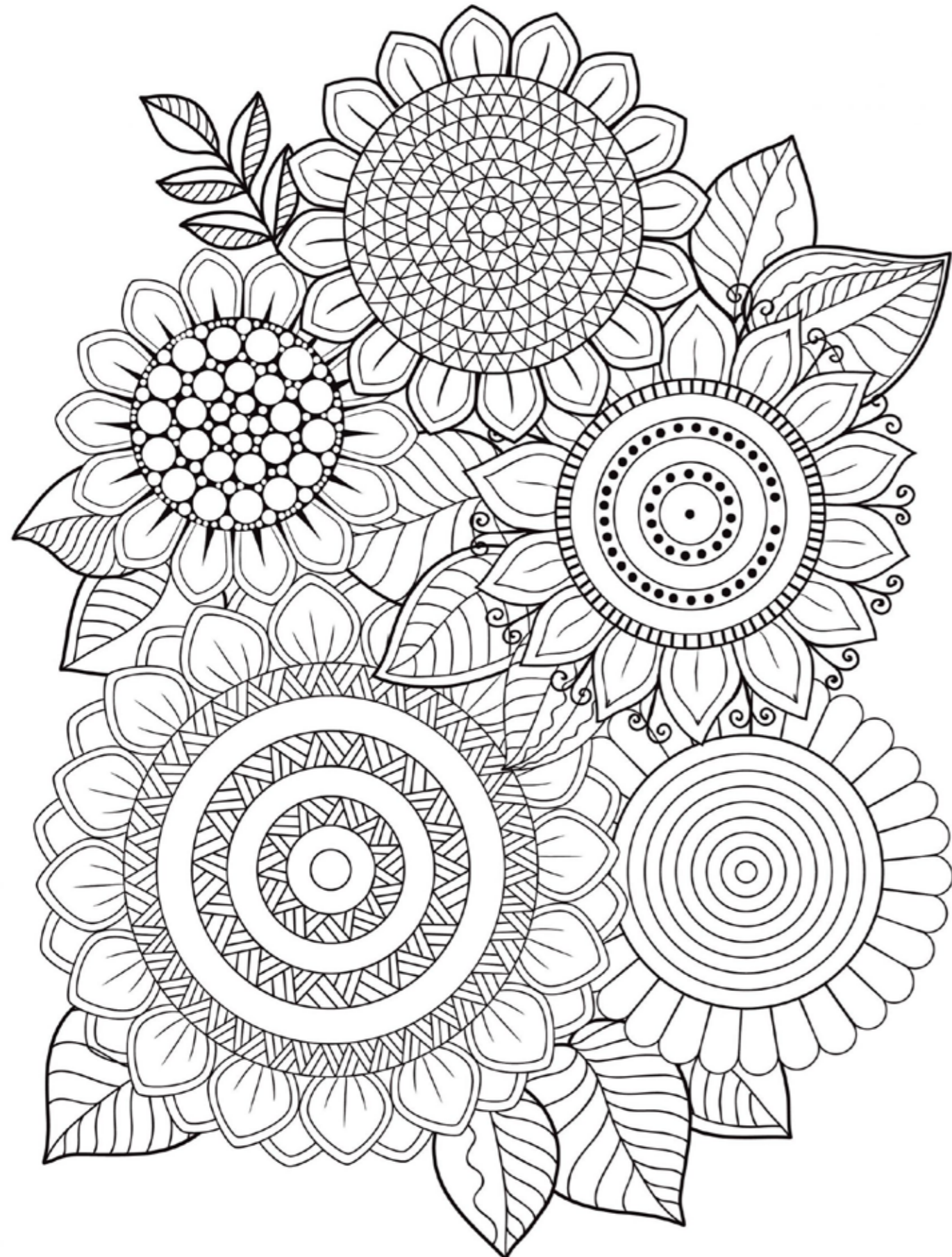
## Down

1. Spice made from nutmeg seed (4)
2. Aromatic herb with pungent leaves used as seasoning (7)
3. Larder (6)
4. Sweetener (5)
5. Sauce made from fermented beans (3)
8. Downy fruit resembling a small peach (7)
11. Kind of porridge (7)
12. Meat from a domestic hog or pig (4)
13. Professional cook (4)
16. Sour or bitter in taste (7)
17. Meat from a mature domestic sheep (6)
18. Light meal (5)
21. Edible flatfish (4)
22. Drinking vessel with handle (3)

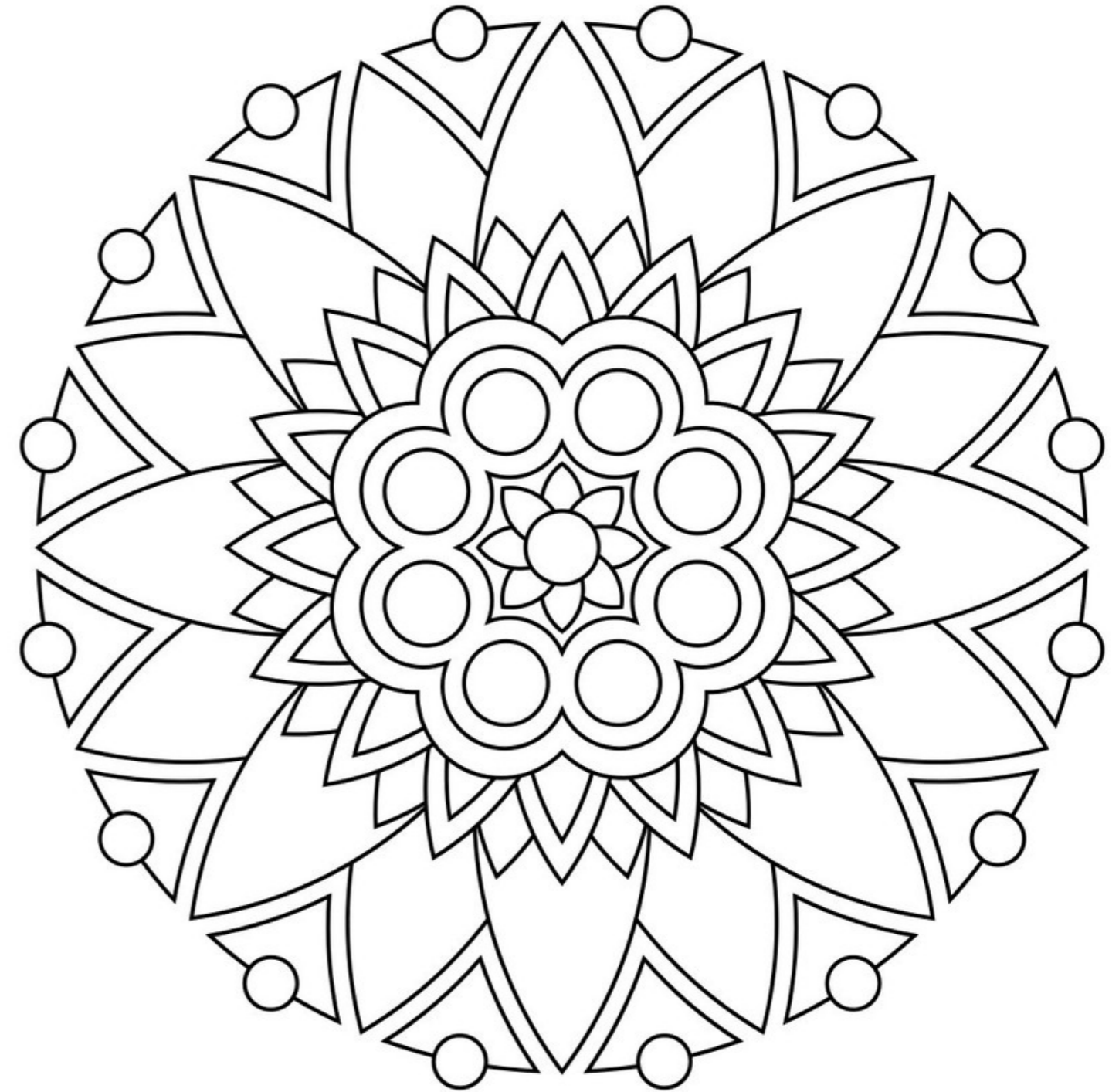




# Mindful Colouring



# Mindful Colouring





Protect yourself and others from getting sick

## Wash your hands



- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste



World Health  
Organization

# Remember

Wear  
a face  
covering



Wash your  
hands  
regularly



Keep  
your  
distance



Download  
the app  
StopCOVID NI

