



Dear Carers,

I am delighted to inform you that I have recently taken up the position of Carers Coordinator for the Western Health and Social Care Trust. I am no stranger to the Carers Support Team holding the role of Development Worker for the last eight years. This experience has set me in good stead to meet the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead and I am very excited to get started.

The aim is to help build a top quality service that strives to meet the needs of carers on a daily basis. And to understand fully what this looks like, we need your help and input.

I want to encourage as many of you as possible to be involved in the planning and delivery of services within the Western Health and Social Care Trust. I am very aware that as carers, your time is precious and limited, so I want to reassure you that involvement can be as little as a one-off phone call or if you have more time to spare, to attend monthly or quarterly meetings.

We are also looking for volunteers to help with our events—this could be helping out during carers day events or manning an information stand at a health fair.

We will help you with any training that you think you may need. For example, we would be happy to show you how to set up or access meetings on Zoom or Teams. We can help with transport to and from meetings and happily provide you with out of pocket expenses. If you would like to hear more details about how you can become involved, please either telephone me on 078 1015 6551 or email me on [geraldineann.mclaughlin@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:geraldineann.mclaughlin@westerntrust.hscni.net)

You don't have to have any formal experience or skills; you are the expert with lived experience. Help us to listen to you and work with you to shape our future services.

Geraldine



Members of the Carers Steering Group

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HSC Values

## Life Story – Verbal's Shared Reading Programme for Carers

Verbal Arts based in Derry/Londonderry utilises the power of story to support a range of social groups to explore and understand their own personal story as well as listen to and respect the diverse stories of others. An up-coming programme funded through the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland is called **Life Story and is aimed at unpaid carers.**



Verbal's approach, called 'shared reading' involves a **facilitator reading short stories and poems to a group,** and asking a series of questions, that provoke thoughts and discussions to stimulate and promote positive mental health.

This approach provides a safe and supportive space for participants to feel enabled to address the variety issues they may encounter such as loneliness, anxiety etc while also providing the space to acknowledge and celebrate the importance of carers for our

For the Life Story Carer's Programme, Verbal's Psychology Team have created a curriculum which details the themes that each lesson should target, teach about and discuss. Themes we'll explore during Life Story includes; understanding loneliness, recognising and managing stress and exploring healthy communication. The Literature Team have selected stories which align with these themes, so that the stories will act as a vehicle between the carer and some of their challenges. The story therefore offers a less direct, but appropriate way of discussing their emotions and experiences in a safe and inclusive environment.

The Life Story programme has several online and in person sessions until September 2024. For further details or to book a place, contact Paula by email [paula@theverbal.co](mailto:paula@theverbal.co) or telephone 028 7126 6946.



### Carers NI - Carer Policy Forum

#### ***Are you interested in sharing your experience of caring and influencing policy development?***

Carers NI's Carer Policy Forum is now entering its second year. With a membership of over 140 carers, the forum has enabled carers to share their knowledge and experience, help develop agreed positions on key policy areas and provided opportunities for carers to engage with Government, decision makers and policy developers.

If you are interested in joining the Forum or would like to find out more information email [angela.phillips@carersni.org](mailto:angela.phillips@carersni.org)

## Benefits Information

At the time of this publication going to press, new benefits rates for April 2024 have not been published. As soon as we receive the new benefit rates we will let you know via our weekly update.

### Social Security Agency Improving Uptake of Benefits Community Outreach Officers

Name	Office Base	Telephone	e-mail
Derek Moran	Enniskillen	Ring 'Make the Call' <b>0800 232 1271</b>	<a href="mailto:derek.moran@dfcni.gov.uk">derek.moran@dfcni.gov.uk</a>
Sharon Scott	Strabane	to make an appointment with a Community Outreach Officer Or contact Carers support who can complete a referral for you.	<a href="mailto:sharon.scott1@dfcni.gov.uk">sharon.scott1@dfcni.gov.uk</a>
Ryan Tierney	Foyle Lisnagelvin Limavady		<a href="mailto:ryan.tierney1@dfcni.gov.uk">ryan.tierney1@dfcni.gov.uk</a>
Thomas Corey	Omagh		<a href="mailto:thomas.corey@dfcni.gov.uk">thomas.corey@dfcni.gov.uk</a>

#### **Not sure what benefits you are entitled to or need a benefits check?**

For independent advice and support contact:

#### **Carers NI**

Tel: (028) 9043 9843

#### **Carers UK helpline**

Tel: 080 0808 7777

#### **Advice NI:**

**Fermanagh** Tel: 073 9492 1753

**Omagh** Tel: (028) 8224 3252

**Advice North West** Tel: 030 0303 3650

For information on other local centres check out the Advice NI website

<https://www.adviceni.net/>

Email: [advice@adviceni.net](mailto:advice@adviceni.net)

**Disability and Carers Service**, Castle Court, Belfast (Administrate Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance, **Tel: 0800 587 0912**  
**Text: 080 0012 1574(for hearing impaired)**)

## **CARERS' WEEK 2024**

You are cordially invited to join us to celebrate Carers' Week 2024

### **Celebration Events:**

**Thursday 6th June – Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh  
(Evening Event 18:30 – 21:00)**

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June – White Horse Hotel,  
Derry/L'Derry (Daytime Event 09.30am - 2.30pm)**

**Thursday 13th June - Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen  
(Daytime Event 09.30am - 2.30pm)**

**\*Please note, not all carers need to register at 9.30am, it will depend on your therapy time.**

***Please ensure you read this information and complete your booking form clearly.***

### **PROGRAMME (Daytime events)**

09.20am - 10.00am Registration  
10.00am - 11.40 Tea/Coffee, Therapies & Stalls  
11.45am - Message from Director/Assistant Director PCOPS  
11.50am - Why hope and well-being matters – Marie Dunne  
12.45pm - Lunch

### **Evening event—Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh 6th June 2023**

*18:30 – 18:55 Registration*

*19:00 – 20:00 Meal*

*20:00 – 21:00 Music and Storytelling with George Murphy*

Places are limited for all events and will be allocated on a first come first served basis so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Patricia Clark Carers NI/Scotland has kindly agreed to present two regional **zoom sessions** for us during Carers Week:

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 7.00pm – 8.15pm: Working Carers Rights**

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June 11.00am – 12.15pm: Carers Rights and Entitlements**

If you would like to register for either of these Zoom information sessions, please email Carers.Support1@westerntrust.hscni.net and we will send you the Zoom link closer to the time.

## Daytime workshop at the White Horse Hotel & The Killyhevlin Hotel

Prioritising one's wellbeing is essential for carers to be able to provide the best possible care for the person you care for. Wellbeing includes not just physical health, but also emotional and mental health.

Marie Dunne will provide an interactive discussion on strategies to help build resilience and hope. This is based on her own lived experience of caring and also from many years of researching the importance of self-care and having the hope tools to do it well, which includes self-compassion and self-acceptance.



## Evening Entertainment – Silverbirch Hotel

*George Murphy is a musician and storyteller who has kept Audiences entertained for over 30 years. Join us for an evening of music, storytelling and fun!*



### **Therapies :**

**AROMATHERAPY BACK MASSAGE** — The therapeutic use of oils from flowers, trees and shrubs and their fruits, blooms, leaves, stems and roots. Essential oils are massaged into the back and neck to be absorbed through your skin.

**INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE**—The aim of Indian head massage is to release the stress that has accumulated in the tissues, muscles and joints of the head, face, neck and shoulders. The client, fully clothed, sits in a chair for the treatment. The therapist uses a range of different movements including application of deep kneading and compression movements over the neck, shoulder and scalp areas.

**REFLEXOLOGY**—A reflexology practitioner uses light pressure to massage each of the points in the toes, feet and ankles to release tension, remove energy blockages, disperse accumulations of calcium and uric acid, stimulate blood circulation and promote healing of both body and mind.

**NAILS** — Your nails are like a fashion accessory for your caring hands and they can be used to express your personal style and sense of creativity. Whether you opt for bold, bright colours or classic, neutral shades, the right nail polish can make you feel like a brand new person.

## Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Support for Chest, Heart and Stroke Carers



Carers are offered support that is **individually tailored** to their needs. This support is both practical and emotional support, is available for you and any members of your family, and there is no time limit to this service. We are on your side and just a phone call away.

You will receive an initial phone call assessment or home visit, ensuring that we can create the very best support plan for you.

### **Our support includes:**

- Information and advice on living life with a heart condition or caring for someone with a chest, heart or stroke condition
- A listening ear and emotional support
- Signposting to other local services
- A key point of contact for you and your family
- Fast-track Referral to Advice Space for support with benefits
- Support in liaising with your healthcare professionals
- Enrol into our self-management programme Taking Control



### **Support for Stroke Carers**

At NICHHS we not only aim to provide the best support and care to chest, heart and stroke clients, but we also strive to provide services which help to support, educate, and encourage their family, friends and carers who may need additional advice.

Our Carers Education Programme is a six-week programme tailored to meet the needs of carers who are providing support and care for someone post-stroke.

The programme is available via Zoom and face to face in some locations and includes Q&A sessions with healthcare experts such as physiotherapists, pharmacists and speech and language therapists. It also provides signposting to other organisations who can give further support and guidance on caring roles. Over the course of the programme, carers have the opportunity to meet others in a similar situation, for moral support and friendship. It also provides a safe and confidential space to ask questions and seek advice from professionals from a wide field of specialities.

Quote from Rita, our physiotherapist, "The Carers Education Programme is a great opportunity to provide carers with information, answer their queries and give them a platform to talk. I have always found listening to carers is essential. The Carers Education Programme is a two-way process- as therapists we have so much to learn from the carer's experiences. Most importantly the Carers Education Programme helps to remind carers of the amazing job they do and reinforces how important it is for carers to look after themselves. Self-care has to be top of the list."

If you would like to refer into any of our services visit our website: <https://nichs.org.uk/referral>

For more information or to speak to a member of the team contact our Head Office:

Tel: 02890320184

Email: [mail@nichs.org.uk](mailto:mail@nichs.org.uk)

## Carer's Walking Groups

Now that spring has sprung, there's no better time to lace up your trainers and get outside. Our carers walking groups offer more than physical exercise – we form friendships, provide support for each other, have a bit of fun all while checking out the best local coffee shops. Contact Geraldine on 028 7135 5023 for details.



Members of the Derry/Londonderry walking group who meet at Sainsbury's on the Strand Road every Thursday at 11am



Members of the Fermanagh walking group who meet every Friday at 11.30am Meeting place varies—contact Geraldine



Members of the Omagh walking/knitting group who meet in the Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital every Tuesday morning at 10am

Caring can be very lonely and I look forward to the walk every week and talking

Being part of the group is a great way to get some exercise and extend your circle of friends

**I joined the group fairly recently and feel that I have been here a lifetime—everyone is so friendly.**

It's so nice being out in company and having lovely fresh scones and a cuppa—it's the small things that make the biggest difference sometimes.

I love being *part of the carers group—speaking to new people and helping each other. It's good for your mental health.*

I have made friends that I will have for the rest of my life—we are all in the same boat caring for our loved ones.

## CARER SUPPORT TEAM



Geraldine McLaughlin  
 WHSCT Carers  
 Coordinator,  
 Rossabbey Office,  
 Abbey Street,  
 Derry/LDerry, BT48 9DN

Tel: (028) 7135 5023

Email: [GeraldineAnn.McLaughlin@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:GeraldineAnn.McLaughlin@westerntrust.hscni.net)



Caroline Rooney  
 Carer's Support  
 Administrator,  
 2 Coleshill Road,  
 Enniskillen  
 BT74 7HG

Tel : (028) 6634 4217

Email : [Caroline.Rooney@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:Caroline.Rooney@westerntrust.hscni.net)

## HELPLINES

### Autism NI - Helpline

Autism NI operates a Helpline Service from Monday to Friday 9am-5pm on [028 9040 1729](tel:02890401729) (option 1). Autistic adults, parents, family members, and professionals use this service to seek access to other services, resources, advice and information on a wide range of issues related to autism pre and post diagnosis. The volume of enquiries we are dealing with indicates the real need that exists to inform, assist and support autistic people and their families.

### Carers UK - Forum

The Carers UK online forum is a community of people who know exactly how you feel. Open 24/7, [Carers Connect](http://www.carersuk.org) is an online forum for Carers UK members. Whether you want to chat with other carers, ask questions or simply get how you're feeling off your chest, you'll find support from people who understand. Our community is open to all carers over the age of 18 and is moderated by Carers UK volunteers and staff. Anyone can browse Carers Connect and read posts, but you will need to be a Carers UK member to post.

Website: [www.carersuk.org/get-involved/join-us/our-forum/](http://www.carersuk.org/get-involved/join-us/our-forum/)

## Springtime Word Search

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

RAINY  
 LADYBUG  
 DAFFODIL  
 TULIP  
 DUCKLING  
 KITE  
 PICNIC  
 UMBRELLA  
 BEES  
 AZALEA  
 GARDEN  
 WILLOW  
 BUTTERFLY  
 BIRDS  
 RAINBOW  
 SUNFLOWER  
 BUNNY  
 BLOSSOM  
 FLOWERS

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/5500439/>

### Useful numbers:

**South West Acute Hospital (028) 6638 2000**

**Omagh Hospital (028) 8283 3100**

**Altnagelvin Area Hospital (028) 7134 5171**