



# CARE ZONE

COMMUNITY



COMPASSION



HOPE



## UPDATE 2022

Progress on Recommended Actions & Developments  
in the 2019 Care Zone report.

# CARE ZONE



## UPDATE 2022

Progress on Recommended Actions & Developments  
in the [2019 Care Zone report](#).



## Background

The Care Zone project formed part of the agreed actions to be taken forward from the Future Search workshop 'Building Hope: Working Together to Prevent Suicide' September 2016. The project was established as a community development pilot to tackle poor mental health and reduce suicide in the Oldpark area in north Belfast. It brings together a number of key stakeholders that are active in the area, including statutory, voluntary and community organisations and local residents. The Care Zone project has a community development approach at the heart of its operational and strategic actions. Care Zone partners worked with communities during 2019 and 2020 to support them to identify local public health challenges and to increase understanding of the underlying causes. A number of recommended actions to address these challenges were outlined in the first Care Zone Report launched by the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Sir Michael McBride and the then Lord Mayor, John Finucane MP, north Belfast in October 2019.

That report highlighted the severity of the health challenges of local residents and together with the statistical profile offered a compelling picture of both the positive and negative factors influencing local residents' health and well-being and the daily personal challenges experienced by residents that have a direct effect on levels of mental health in the area. It also highlighted that the fractured responsibilities of public service provision and the increase of short-term strategies have often limited the effectiveness of any investment made in the area.

The [Care Zone Profile](#) highlighted that a higher proportion of people in the area report poor or very poor health, compared to the Belfast North Assembly Area or Belfast as a whole. Male life expectancy in the Care Zone project area is 74.8 years, which is 3.6 years lower than the Northern Ireland average. The standardised preventable death rate amongst the Care Zone population is more than 70% above the Northern Ireland average. All major illnesses are more prevalent amongst the Care Zone population compared with Belfast and NI as a whole, including cancer, respiratory and circulatory diseases. These adverse health outcomes indicate that urgent action is required in order to improve the health and well-being of people living in the Care Zone area.

This report outlines activities and progress on the recommended actions as outlined in the [2019 report](#). The Covid 19 pandemic had a significant impact on the work of the Care Zone, like other initiatives across the city but the programmes continued to support families, young people and older people and much progress has been made at the local level.



## Planning delivery of the recommended actions

To deliver the recommended actions within the Care Zone report, it was envisaged it would be necessary to secure strategic level support from public sector organisations and government departments. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, meetings were held in early 2020 with the Department for Communities (DfC) Ministerial Advisory Group, Department for Infrastructure (DfI), Belfast HSC Trust, Public Health Agency (PHA) and Belfast City Council (BCC) with a view to forming a Strategic Advisory Group. A meeting with the Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health (DoH) resulted in the development and submission of a Parish Nurse funding proposal to include two nurses working across the community at a local level. With the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic in early 2020, public sector bodies and government departments' priorities shifted to address the impacts of the pandemic and work within the Care Zone was prioritised to address local need accordingly. Support was forthcoming from these bodies for individual projects within the Care Zone.

The Care Zone Steering Group continued to meet during 2020/2021/2022 prioritising actions during the pandemic and delivered several projects to support local residents with the support of the Community Champions. The restrictions on movement of people, maintaining a 'social distance' from one another, during the pandemic resulted in isolation for many. It was therefore important that activities during this period, focused on reducing social isolation.



## Delivering Actions

From the Priority Actions and the Recommended Actions in the Care Zone 2019 report, a number of areas were prioritised:

- Living in the area;
- Social Connections;
- Support to access Health & Well-being services;
- Support to access Mental Health & Well-being services
- The Built Environment

Some of the actions taken addressed a number of these areas.

# ACTION:

## MOBILE INFORMATION UNIT

### **Living in the area:**

To trial a mobile information hub which could be used in different areas of Care Zone on a rolling basis

### **Support to access health & well-being services:**

The employment of a mobile health advice centre, consider a 'street doctor' model.

### **Support to access Mental Health Services:**

The development and promotion of an easily understandable roadmap for accessing mental health and addiction service

Having had a number of meetings with Belfast City Council, and Inspire, it became apparent that one of the recommendations in the Care Zone report to secure a mobile unit could actually become a reality. A proposal to the Inspire Board to transfer assets for a mobile unit they had in their possession, which was no longer being used for the needle exchange programme, was made. Given the community development model adopted in the Care Zone, to reach out to local people, it was agreed the transfer should go ahead. Eamonn Holmes was delighted to be invited to launch the Mobile Information Unit on 12th March 2022.

Funding through Urban Villages will:

- Carry out essential works to the vehicle to ensure it is fit for purpose
- Provide necessary licensing to drive the vehicle
- Resource 3 pilot information events in the local area

The Mobile Information Unit will become a resource to the local area and events held in it will be promoted through Community Champions, Churches, local primary schools and local organisations.



## The Mobile Information Unit was launched by Eamonn Holmes on 12th March 2022



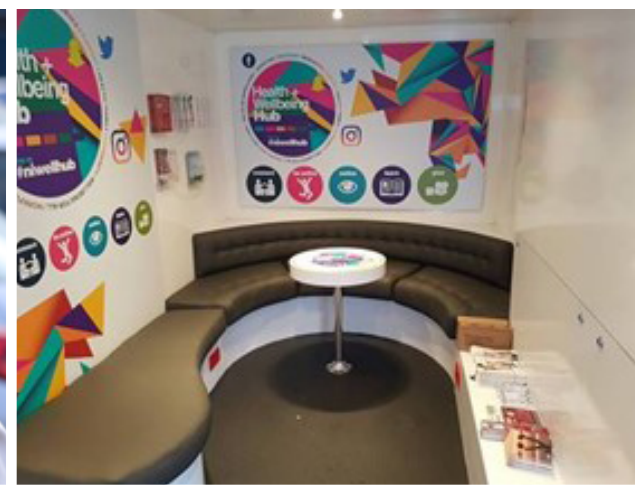
Eamonn Holmes pictured with Jo Murphy, Care Zone Management Committee, Sean Devlin, YEHA (Youth Education Health Advice) and Alex Bunting, Inspire.



Eamonn Holmes pictured with Joe Hinds and Gary Vernon from Urban Villages



# Eamonn also met the Community Champions, members of YEHA and members of the local community





# ACTION:

## COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELL-BEING CHAMPIONS COMMUNITY – CO-PRODUCTION & CO-DESIGN

### **Living in the area:**

The setting up of a residents' committee to act as a taskforce for developing and promoting regular events to bring local residents together.

### **Support to access health & well-being services:**

The deployment of a team of community champions that can serve as a source for in-depth knowledge on health services and other programmes and activities available in the local area.

One of the most precious legacies coming out of the Care Zone has been the transformation of a core group of residents to the role of Health & Well-being Community Champions<sup>1</sup>. They came together from various backgrounds within the community, have played an active and key role in bringing knowledge, skills and community intelligence on issues, and needs within the community. The Care Zone Management Committee continue to work with and support the Community Champions who make a vital contribution to health and wellbeing in highlighting and identifying the needs within the Care Zone area. They have been key to the success of the Community Information Days.

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<sup>1</sup> Community Champions are volunteers who, with training and support, help improve the health and well-being of their families and communities. Their role is to motivate and empower people to get involved in health promoting activities, create groups to meet local needs, and direct people to relevant support and services. Community Champions provide insight into community needs and working in partnership, collaborate with others to deliver sessions to local people.



Community Champions have have received training on a number of issues including:

- Benefits Advice
- Falls with Older People
- Dementia training
- Cook it on a budget/sessions training
- Autism training
- Event management training
- First Aid Training
- Understanding the Health Care System
- TV licences and Scams targeted at older people
- Bach flower remedies
- 'It's good to talk'

Focus groups have been held on Self-care and Stress management. The Community Champions have also provided support and guidance in the implementation of the Road Safety project, delivered in three local primary schools funded by Department for Infrastructure.

*“Conversations can lead to actions. They can have a ripple effect of good will and hope.”*

# ACTION:

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION & FAMILY CONNECTION DAYS, 2020 - 2022

### **Living in the area:**

To investigate how existing facilities can be made available for community use.

### **Support to access Health & well-being services:**

Explore the use of school facilities for a range of activities in after school hours.

### **Support to access health & well-being services:**

The setting up of a programme of health promotion events in local schools.

Information days have been held in the Sacred Heart Primary School and the Parish Centre.

During 2020 and 2021, the purpose of these days was to reduce social isolation and ensure local people remained connected. Information packs providing information on services available during 'lockdown' were included as well as telephone numbers of organisations that could provide telephone or on-line advice and support. The following events were held:

- Health & Well-being Day, Oldpark Ave, May 2020
- Delivery of Covid Information packs, August 2020



# Health & Well-being day May 2020



*Inspiring hope with residents during the Covid 19 pandemic*

*Mrs Smyth, Principal, Sacred Heart Boys PS and Jo Murphy, Care Zone providing a gift to the youngest person in Oldpark Ave on the Health & Well-Being Day,*



A number of Information Days/sessions were held during 2021/22 and included:

- Information sessions in Sacred Heart Boys' Primary School & Sacred Heart Parish Centre, December 2021
- Family Connection Day 2021
- Information Sessions in Sacred Heart Boys' Primary School and Sacred Heart Parish Centre, September 2022

The September 2022 Information sessions were held over a number of days. Blood pressure checks were carried out by Belfast Trust and as a result, a number of people were advised to follow up with their GP. Information was also provided by Cancer Lifeline; YEHA on young people's mental health; diabetes; RNID on hearing impairment; benefits; and Newington Credit Union.

A uniform shop sponsored by local donations and a range of information and 'goodies' were also provided by the Belfast Health Development Unit. Leaflets were circulated in the neighbouring streets and in some local venues, a few days prior to the sessions to encourage participation and to encourage local residents to take ownership of their health and well-being.

## Information Day December 2021



*A number of organisations provided information to residents attending the Information Days targeted at young and older people in Sacred Heart Boys' Primary School and in Sacred Heart Parish Centre. Fionnuala Dunleavy, New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership; and Moira McCallan, Cancer Lifeline are pictured above.*



## Family Connection Day August 2021



Lord Mayor, Cllr Kate Nicholl with the Care Zone Community Champions, YEHA and Belfast Healthy Cities staff at the Family Connection Day, August 2021 held in Deanby Gardens School & Church grounds



**CARE ZONE**  

COMMUNITY CONNECTION HEART  

**Come along for your Health check at Sacred Heart Boys' Primary School**

 **MONDAY**  
12th September  
1.30-3.30pm BENEFIT ADVICE YOU COULD BE MISSING OUT ON WHAT YOU'RE ENTITLED TO

 **TUESDAY**  
13th September  
1.30-3.30pm BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS WITH A NURSE

 **WEDNESDAY**  
14th September  
1.30-3.30pm DIABETES RISK CHECK- FIND OUT IF YOU ARE AT RISK OF TYPE 2 DIABETES

 **THURSDAY**  
15th September  
1.30-3.30pm CANCER LIFELINE GET INFORMATION ON SUPPORT SERVICES

**YOUR HEALTH IS YOUR WEALTH**  
come along you're worth it

Local residents received blood pressure checks with Catherine Magennis, Public Health Nurse, Belfast HSC Trust at the Information Session in Sacred Heart Boys' Primary School, September 2022.



## City Health Profile

In 2022, Belfast Healthy Cities produced The Data Behind the People and The City report which uses a number of data sources from NISRA; Department of Health; Queen's University Belfast; and Ulster University to provide a picture on the health and well-being of the citizens of Belfast and reinforces the evidence of people who are at highest risk of poor health and well-being outcomes and of experiencing health inequalities.

As part of their coverage of the report, BBC Northern Ireland came to the Care Zone to see the work being undertaken in the area to improve the health and well-being of local residents. The BBC report was featured across their news media on TV, radio and online.



*Lisa Fahy, Care Zone Community Champions*

# ACTION:

## ROAD SAFETY PROJECT

### The Built Environment:

Piloting of alternative travel to school arrangements including walking buses.

### The Built Environment:

More pedestrian crossings on Oldpark and Cliftonville Roads

Three Primary Schools in the Care Zone areas participated in the Road Safety project, funded by Department for Infrastructure.

- Sacred Heart Boys' Primary School
- Cliftonville Integrated Primary School
- Our Lady's Girls' Primary School

Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain PS participated later in the project, in the active travel survey and in Road Safety Week.

An art poster competition was held to encourage children to participate. The leaflet advertising the competition was circulated to four primary schools in the area and posters, poems and videos were received from three primary schools promoting messages on road safety. In total 28 winning posters from the three schools were awarded with a voucher.



Some of the posters from the Arts competition held in local primary schools





## Road Safety Week

Discussions were held with the Community Champions on how to manage Road Safety Week with Covid restrictions in place and to provide initiation for the project. Community Champions give permission for their children to walk to school during Road Safety Week. Wizard of Oz characters participated across three of the schools on alternate days, mornings and afternoons and generated great excitement for the children and encouraged engagement and participation of children and parents. A poster was designed and displayed on two billboards for two weeks in the local area, one of those weeks being Road Safety Week. Road safety posters were designed based on children messages in the poster competition and promoted outside schools during Road Safety Week. Road safety awareness sessions were conducted with each year group in two primary schools during Road Safety week by YEHA staff.

The week was an excellent example of partnership working and innovation in engaging parents and children in road safety messages. An active travel survey was developed and circulated across the schools and the Community Champions, YEHA and BHC staff conducted the survey with parents during Road Safety Week, with Covid restrictions in place.



*Video: [A video with a parent and the Principal of Sacred Heart Primary School was produced to highlight the road safety issues in the area.](#)*



## CARE ZONE UPDATE 2022



Minister Nichola Mallon launched the Road Safety project.



Children from the four local primary schools displaying their winning art pictures in the Road Safety poster competition.



## Active travel survey

The final survey was forwarded to four schools for circulation to parents with a draw for vouchers being offered to submit a completed survey. A total of 179 survey responses were received with awards provided for completion of surveys. A report of the survey responses is available and an action plan was developed to take forward the actions suggested. One of the actions resulted in the Walking Bus project.

# ACTION:

## WALKING BUSES, 'WALK TO SCHOOL WEEK'

### **The Built Environment:**

Piloting of alternative travel to school arrangements including walking buses.

### **The Built Environment:**

More pedestrian crossings on Oldpark and Cliftonville Roads

The Walking Bus project originated from the active travel survey, conducted as part of the Road Safety project. A partnership involving Belfast Healthy Cities, Expert Advisors to Department for Communities, Ministerial Advisory Group, local charities, Community Champions, and three primary schools, jointly developed a walking bus pilot in two schools, supporting a further school that was already trialling a Walking Bus. Walking buses involve teachers or parents supervising a group of children to walk to school. The start of the route is usually located less than one mile from the school, in a suitable alternative drop-off location for those that normally use the car. Walking buses also provide support for children who may be too young, or feel the walking environment is unsafe, to walk to school. The overall aim is to increase physical activity among children and improve air quality through reducing car use.

The Wizard of Oz Characters led the way during the pilot week. Three primary schools took part in the Pilot and approximately 300 pupils provided feedback. From this, 133 pupils (38%) highlighted the walking buses helped them to walk to school, and 200 pupils (67%) wanted the walking buses to continue. Teachers and parents identified key benefits of the walking buses as support for children to walk; increased exercise and creation of good habits; socialising with and making new friends; more alert and ready for class; arriving to school on time; improved attendance; and reduced congestion near the school. Two of the primary schools continue to provide walking buses. Teachers also gained support from political leaders for additional crossings to improve road safety along the routes, and the community champions undertook a walk assessment to identify further improvements.

The Pilot successfully brought together stakeholders at the strategic and community levels to work in partnership to support children to integrate walking as a daily habit, to influence improvements to their local walking environment and, to support residents with reduced traffic congestions in their neighbourhood. Belfast Healthy Cities and the partners involved, seek to support the schools to continue to independently provide regular walking buses; to work with politicians and government departments to make infrastructural changes to increase the safety of children walking to school.



CARE ZONE UPDATE 2022



Walk to School week: Our Lady's Girls' PS, Sacred Heart Boys' PS and Ballysillan PS with Wizard of Oz characters, leading the way with their Walking Buses

[Walking Bus Pilot Video](#)



# ACTION:

## OLDER PEOPLES PROJECT

### **Social Connections:**

Sessions to be established in community facilities that allow (elderly) residents to come together for activities of common interest.

During the pandemic, due to Covid 19 restrictions and the number of deaths with older people, there was increasing awareness of isolation of older residents in the Care Zone area, including decreased access to normal medical services, health and social care support as well as reduced local social networks. To establish safe ways to contact older people, socially distanced meetings as well as telephone conversations were held with key members of the local community, with older people living in Folds, Housing Associations and Care Homes to identify the needs of older people to deliver appropriate services and develop new communication channels.

A poster campaign was developed and promoted throughout the Care Zone area with the involvement of local photographers, schools and youth groups to deliver positive messages to and about older residents. A survey and positive message postcards were devised and delivered to 500 local people and a number of ways as a result of the survey were identified to communicate with older residents, as well as highlighting some changes older people would like to see in the built and green environment.

Useful information and resources were obtained from those with specific responsibility for older people and were delivered locally through church volunteers and the Community Champions. Royal National Institute for Deaf people provided a welcome collection service for servicing and cleaning hearing aids and provided batteries for them.



CARE ZONE UPDATE 2022



*Eddie Lynch, Older Peoples Commissioner, NI with Cllrs Dale Pankhurst and Paul McCusker with members of YEHA and the Care Zone Community Champions displaying the positive messages developed to showcase the role and contribution of older people.*



# ACTION:

## “KEEP WARM – KEEP WELL” DECEMBER 2022

### Social Connections:

Sessions to be established in community facilities that allow (elderly) residents to come together for activities of common interest.

**Event Aim:** *“To work in partnership with a range of organisations/partners to create a safe, welcoming and inclusive space for our elderly population to come together and feel valued and cared about.”*

**Event Objectives:** *“To encourage our seniors/older population to avail of help, advice and assistance where needed”*

Following on from the four-day health event in September 2022, the Community Champions organised an event for the older population within the Care Zone area. With this in mind and continuing with the co-production and co-design ethos of the Care Zone, they met with North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum staff to gauge the most pressing needs of their members and the type of event that they would benefit most from.

Valuing our Elderly Population – Spreading a bit of ‘Christmas Sparkle’  
Meetings with Olaf Hvattum, project worker with the North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum revealed that the elderly generation in the area were facing particular challenges coming out of Covid. As this generation are generally not comfortable with social media, readjusting back to the “new norm” is particularly difficult for them, with fear, anxiety and loneliness the biggest challenges. Added to this, the more recent challenges of the cost of living and fuel crisis was adversely impacting the health and well-being of our elderly population.

Thought and planning went into creating an event that reflected back to happier times and to an atmosphere of hope and friendship and companionship. The theme of the event was, ‘Keep Warm - Keep Well’. The event was designed to celebrate the importance of coming together, valuing kindness and friendship and to introduce health and well-being in a gentle way whilst respectfully acknowledging the sense of pride within our older generation.

The event was advertised in the local Parish Bulletin and Christmas cards were distributed in the wider community. The card theme was that Christmas was about “Giving Time to Someone” and not “all about giving presents” and included local helpline numbers.



## CARE ZONE UPDATE 2022

The Community Champions worked in partnership with YEHA who linked up with Mercy College to create opportunities for intergenerational engagement. Young people helping with the preparation of the event, attended the day, interacted with participants through board games and serving food and drinks.

The Public Health Agency provided 40 “warm packs” containing a fleece, blanket, thermals and vests. These were distributed with additional packs created by the Care Zone and the North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum to ensure all older people attending received a pack, which included scarfs, flasks, mindfulness colouring books and a deck of cards. Follow up phone calls with seniors will identify which of items were most useful.

Belfast Trust’s District Nursing and Public Health Nurse again supported the event and provided blood pressure checks throughout the day with follow up health evaluations agreed as appropriate.

The Consumer Council as well as a Benefits Advice Worker attended the event speaking to participants and gently offering advice and guidance throughout the event with follow up conversations to be held with some individuals.

Despite the icy conditions, a large number of older people attended. The success of the event has generated an interest to host more intergenerational events in the area that offer practical advice and support.

*“I had a wonderful time and can’t thank you all enough for all the goodies”*

*“Feels like Christmas has come early”*

*“It was lovely to see young people helping out and being here today”*

*“The refreshments has set me up for the day “*

*“It was great getting my blood pressure checked” (it has been so long from I have had it checked with Covid and all)*

*“The Nurses were just lovely”*





CARE ZONE UPDATE 2022



*Kindness and friendship is a Magical Gift*

**Carezone Christmas Event**  
**Wednesday 14th December**  
**10.30am-12.30pm**  
 Sacred Heart Parish Centre  
 18 Glenview St

Blood pressure checks  
 District nursing staff  
 Warmer homes information  
 Consumer council  
 Benefit Advice worker for senior citizens

Refreshments and freebies for all






## Care Zone Management Committee

<b>Joan Devlin</b>	Belfast Healthy Cities, Chair
<b>Sean Devlin</b>	YEHA
<b>Cecilia McCloskey</b>	Community Champions
<b>Jo Murphy</b>	Care Zone

## Care Zone Membership Group

<b>Justine Brown</b>	Belfast HSCT
<b>Joan Devlin</b>	Belfast Healthy Cities, Chair
<b>Sean Devlin</b>	YEHA
<b>Fionnuala Dunleavey</b>	New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership
<b>Lisa Fahy</b>	Community Champions
<b>Tanya Graham</b>	NIHE
<b>Kerry Haddock</b>	Community Champions
<b>Tori Haveron</b>	Active Communities Network
<b>Claire Henderson</b>	Public Health Agency
<b>Joe Hinds</b>	Urban Villages
<b>Olaf Hvattum</b>	North Belfast Seniors Forum
<b>Bryan Irwin</b>	Cancer Lifeline
<b>Tomas Maguire</b>	Active Communities Network
<b>Moira McCallan</b>	Cancer Lifeline
<b>Cecilia McCloskey</b>	Community Champions
<b>Bill McComb</b>	Marrowbone Community Association
<b>Mickey Meehan</b>	TAMHI
<b>Jim Morgan</b>	Belfast Health Development Unit
<b>Jo Murphy</b>	Care Zone
<b>Gerard Rosato</b>	Clanmil Housing
<b>Caroline Scott</b>	Belfast Healthy Cities
<b>Laura Smith</b>	Belfast City Council
<b>Joanne Smyth</b>	Sacred Heart Boys' PS

## Care Zone Community Champions

**Lisa Fahy**  
**Kerry Haddock**  
**Joanne Hardy**  
**Margaret McAlister**  
**Cecilia McCloskey**  
**Emma McMeekin**  
**Bridget Irvine**



Northern Ireland  
Executive

