**Communities in Transition Health and Well Being Programme**

**Creating caring & compassionate communities**

Ashton Community Trust has been awarded the contract for a Communities in Transition Health and Wellbeing programme situated in the North Belfast areas of New Lodge and Ardoyne. The contracting Authority for the CIT programme is the Executive Office and Co-operation Ireland is the Executive Offices Strategic Partner. Co-operation Ireland will support the overall delivery of the CIT Project and will be responsible for overseeing and managing the operational element of the Contract with the Executive Office.

Ashton Community Trust has partnered with YEHA and Lighthouse to deliver the programme within the New Lodge and Ardoyne areas.

The programme will include the active participation of Volunteers from within the North Belfast CIT Areas. The volunteers will be referred to as Community Champions and Befrienders. It is envisaged that the programme will recruit a minimum of 30 Community Champions and 30 Befrienders from across the New Lodge and Ardoyne CIT areas to actively participate in the Health and Wellbeing programme.

Befrienders and Champions will not be limited to Health and Wellbeing Programmes or Projects, they will be drawn from a range of organisations such as: youth clubs; church groups; sports clubs; local schools; parent groups; care providing organisations; and other community organisations, however any target Organisations / Groups / Individuals recruited to the programme must meet the following criteria:

* Be located in or have a substantial impact in the area;
* Be constituted or be in the process of becoming constituted;
* Exist for community benefit with their core work relating to health or wellbeing matters; and
* Be committed to non-violence and exclusively peaceful and democratic means and to support the rule of law unequivocally in word and deed and support all efforts to uphold it.

The role of the Community Champions and Befrienders will be to play an active role in supporting existing services to address the Health and Wellbeing needs of the wider CIT North Belfast community. In addition, the Champions and Befrienders will assist the community partners with community engagement and health and wellbeing initiatives.

Following a training needs analysis both Befrienders and Community Champions will receive bespoke training prior to carrying out any programme activities. The training will empower both Befrienders and Community Champions to play an active role in response to Health and Wellbeing issues and to gain the ability to signpost people to relevant support and statutory services where appropriate *(Training includes Mental Health First Aid, Adult & Child Safeguarding & Drugs and alcohol).*

Accredited training to a maximum of £500, can be accessed if the Contract Lead can demonstrate that the training will assist the Champions & Befrienders support the needs of those in the community.