

Greater New Lodge Community Magazine

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UPPER LONG STREETS REDEVELOPMENT AT LAST



Community Activists and Elected Representatives Welcome Redevelopment

After many years of lobbying and campaigning by residents, community activists and political representatives, the final phase of the regeneration of the Upper Long Streets has at long last been announced.

Minister for Communities

The Minister for Communities Deirdre Hargey said: "I am delighted to announce this £37m regeneration project for Upper New Lodge Belfast. This scheme will deliver high quality, affordable and sustainable homes. This £37m investment in North Belfast is evidence that the transformation work will deliver for people, workers and their families".

123 New Homes

Local Sinn Féin MLA Carál Ní Chuilín added: "I'm delighted

that Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey has announced £37 million to build 123 new homes in the Upper New Lodge. This will deliver high quality, social and affordable homes for families in North Belfast. It will also see the regeneration of the area and run-down buildings being replaced by new, first-class homes. Delivering more homes and transforming housing is a commitment for Sinn Féin and I am pleased that Minister Hargey continues to deliver on her promise to build homes where they are needed most. I look forward to seeing work beginning on these homes and the first families getting their keys upon completion".

[Upper Long Streets Decision -New Lodge Housing Forum Give Warm Welcome - Page 2 & 3, Statement from MLA Page 5](#)

Community magazine Supported by Belfast City Council, Newington Housing Association and Ashton Community Trust



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City Council

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New Lodge Housing Forum-Update

I had intended to begin this piece by saying we were expecting an announcement any day from the Minister for Communities regarding the redevelopment of the Long Streets. As it was Minister Hargey beat me to it. As I'm sure you will already be aware the Minister has secured 37million for the completion of the regeneration of this part of the New Lodge.

Special Thanks

I don't need to go into it as it will already have been covered as front page news elsewhere in the magazine but I would just like to congratulate the committee for their perseverance and also the residents for their patience and for sticking with us when some said it would never happen. A special thanks to our M.L.A. Caral for her commitment down the years and also in later times for the support and assistance of Councillor J.J. Magee.

Hard Work Only Beginning

We always like to think we learn from our mistakes, in the past committees would have got to this point and felt our work here is done and left it to the developer only to find the outcome not completely as they would have hoped. It would be our belief that the hard work is only beginning and we will be pushing for a group to be set up consisting of the Housing Executive, Housing Association, their development team and ourselves so that residents will have a voice at every stage of development.

Seven Towers Committee

The Housing Executive's tower block strategy which had been shelved due to Covid is to resume and following intense discussions the Board have admitted that, given the high demand in this part of North Belfast, and the lack of space for new build, the possibility of demolition of any of our blocks is a non-starter in the foreseeable future. The Seven Towers Committee can now concentrate on much needed refurbishment. We must accept that Oisín House will be used as a temporary decantment site for the long streets and so have tried to identify what is needed to improve quality of life in the other six blocks. The areas we have highlighted are as follows:

- Brickwork and Roofs
- Kitchens and Bathrooms
- Windows
- Heating and Dampness

We believe the Housing Executive need to set their strategy aside in this case and concentrate in putting these blocks right.

Good News

Some good news to report regarding the flats at Victoria Parade (beside the Recy), this block has been empty for some time for a variety of reasons including contractual problems and of course the pandemic. Residents have been living in temporary accommodation awaiting refurbishment and sadly in the delay two have passed away. However, we now have acquired a new contractor and work is already underway. The Housing Forum are holding fortnightly meetings with said contractor and completion is expected mid-March.



New Lodge Housing Forum-Update

Duncairn Parade

Duncairn Parade has been on the agenda for some time, major works are required and the discussion is around the number of homeowners there are. The Housing Executive intend carrying out an Economic Appraisal to assess the cost and possible funding streams or grants. This is of course merely speculation at this point and residents will be kept informed.

Bruslee/Pinkerton

Major works are nearing completion in the Bruslee/Pinkerton area with just the new gates and security cameras to be installed. Most residents believe the work is making a difference and when the landscaping is finished it will vastly improve the image of this section of the road. The project to revamp the surrounding area is ongoing with a delay in supplies holding it up. We hope to resume with the installation of the lighting A.S.A.P.



Community Restorative Justice Ireland

As most people will be aware the Housing Forum is the lead partner in the Greater New Lodge Safer Streets Initiative along with many statutory groups. We are now joined by Community Restorative Justice Ireland (C.R.J.I.). This is a long standing organisation with an excellent track record particularly in local mediation and a welcome addition to the team. They are at present working from our office at 23 New Lodge Road but will shortly be moving to their own premises at New Lodge/Pinkerton.

Anyone wishing to contact C.R.J.I. or indeed discuss any of the issues in the above article can contact our office at 23 New Lodge Road, Belfast BT15 2BU. PH. 02890742399 and speak to our housing worker Gerry O'Reilly. Gerry can also signpost residents to other advice bodies such as City Council and financial advice groups, everyone is welcome.

Liam Wiggins, Chairperson, New Lodge Housing Forum.



New Lodge Housing Forum

Who we are:

A committee of volunteers and one community housing worker based in the New Lodge to support the improvement of the quality lives of the tenants living in the Greater New Lodge.

Assist Tenants On Issues Relating To:

- Repairs
- ECM Schemes
- Environmental Issues
- Sign Posting
- Service Suppliers
- Housing Campaigns/ Redevelopment
- Computers for Residents Use

How you can get in touch: Drop in to our housing office between the hours of:
9am - 2pm Mon to Thurs
9am - 1pm Friday

New Lodge Housing Forum

23 New Lodge Road, BT15 2BU

Phone: (028) 90 742 399

Email: thenewlodgehousingforum@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/newlodgehousingforum/>

Essential Skills Classes Restart at the Ashton

Finally, Essential Skills classes have restarted at the Ashton Centre. We are pleased to be able to resume in-house delivery of our English, Maths and ICT courses. People who had been on our waiting list throughout the Covid period have been offered places on the current courses, and some have already made a start. We plan to offer the next courses in the New Year, so if you are interested in finding out more about these courses and/or enrolling, contact us via one of the options below.

At the Heart of the Community

Improving your English and Maths skills and gaining a qualification may be just the thing to help you recover from the Covid lockdowns and move forward with your plans for life and work. We are based at the heart of the community in New Lodge, and are here to support you in gaining essential skills and qualifications.

Email: essentialskills@ashtoncentre.com

Facebook: [facebook.com/ashtonesentialskills](https://www.facebook.com/ashtonesentialskills)

Telephone: 028 9074 2255

Enquire in person at Ashton Centre reception.



Ashton Essential Skills Tutors Hilary and Mairead

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Essential Skills

Calling all Residents!

Do you have the Essential Skills for everyday life and work?

English + Maths + ICT = Essential Skills




**Make 2021
the year to
start your
Essential Skills
journey!**

New short English, Maths and (ICT) computer courses are starting in July for anyone living in BT14 and BT15.

Courses cover:

- ✓ Improving everyday Maths
- ✓ Communication skills for Life + Work
- ✓ Using computers for English and Maths



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Courses are **LOCAL + FREE** + lead to a recognised **QUALIFICATION**

If you would like to find out more phone 02890742255, email Hilary and Mairead at: essentialskills@ashtoncentre.com or message us on: <https://www.facebook.com/ashtonesentialskills/>

www.ashtoncentre.com











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Google: <https://g.page/ashton-centre>



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WhatsApp Group

Just text your name to:

078 034 058 99

Redevelopment of the Upper Long Streets

Statement from Carál Ni Chuilin MLA (October 28th 2021)

Hi all

I wanted to provide an update on the redevelopment of the Upper Long Streets announcement by Deirdre Hargey last week.

As announced, Deirdre will invest £37m into the redevelopment of the Upper Long Streets. This will mean 123 new homes for the area.

In conjunction with the Upper Long Streets Residents Committee, Sinn Féin reps met with Deirdre, her officials and the Senior Management Team led by the Chief Executive of the Housing Executive yesterday.



The purpose of that meeting was to thank Deirdre for investing in our community and for the recognition of the plight of the residents living in homes that are unfit and beyond repair. This community has fought for decades for homes, regeneration and investment.

However, there have been a lot of requests from residents regarding the next steps and understandably so. At the meeting yesterday, we asked the Housing Executive to do the following:

- Put a leaflet through every door giving each resident as much information as possible regardless if you own your own home, rent your own home from the Housing Executive or through a Private Landlord.
- As best possible, for the Housing Executive to outline what will happen next for the residents who want to sell their homes.
- Where people will live during the construction of the new houses.

We know this is welcomed news but we also understand that there are loads of questions that we need the Housing Executive to answer and they have committed to do this as they want as much clarity for residents as possible in the coming months.

Previously at the request of the Upper Long Streets Residents Committee, the Housing Executive set up a One-Stop-Shop information desks in the New Lodge Youth Club and ran this service over a period of a few days to allow for residents to get the information they need to make choices about their own individual circumstances.



The Housing Executive have agreed to do this again as they did for the previous phases of redevelopment and also suggested looking at additional ways of making contact with each resident and maintaining that contact with you all.

We welcomed their approach and look forward to working with them to ensure this happens. Again, I want to take the opportunity to thank in particular, Kate Clarke, Liam Wiggins and Gerry O Reilly who have diligently and persistently advocated on behalf of local families for decades.

Sinn Féin have held public meetings, delivered letters and spoken with many of you over the years to ensure the campaign to have the redevelopment of all of the Long Streets was achieved. We are not done yet and there is still a lot of work to do.

As soon as we get any information about detail and plans, we will deliver the update to you all by letter.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh

Carál October 28th 2021

Belfast Works Employability Programme

Belfast Works
TRAINING | EMPLOYMENT | SUPPORT

What is the Programme?

The Belfast Works Employability Programme offers a tailored service which meets your needs whatever your situation. If you are unemployed or working less than 16 hours per week we can give you the help and support you need to get back into sustainable employment. Once you are signed up to the programme you will be assigned a dedicated mentor who will help you to take the next steps in developing your career or getting a job. We can help to fine tune your CV and give you the skills required to fill in application forms and prepare you for interviews. We work with many employers in your local area who are looking for people just like you. Because we have strong relationships with these employers we have exclusive access to jobs that you won't see advertised anywhere else which gives you a better chance of being successful at interview as we know exactly the skills they are looking for.

Free Accredited Training

As a result of Covid-19 our top priority is ensuring that our clients are kept as safe, you can phone 02890322289 to book a 1-2-1 session with an employment mentor in any person at any of our Belfast offices, or via Zoom or telephone. We are even running free accredited training courses in person and over the internet to ensure that you are fully prepared once you get that new job.

Parallel Support

The Belfast Works Parallel Support Service is a bespoke programme for anyone who wants to get back to work but perhaps doesn't feel quite ready at the moment for one reason or another. We have a dedicated team who will work with you to try to break down any barriers you feel are preventing you from entering the world of work. Some of these barriers could be anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or anything which is making it more difficult for you to realise your potential. Whatever it is we have a programme that is just right for you based on your preferences. Our programme is client centred, meaning

"My parallel Support mentor Lauren identified my needs and was supportive. She was also encouraging and gave me useful feedback. I'm now in the best place ever in all my life."

we will involve you in the whole process and will go at a pace that is right for you. Our aim is to ensure you get the best from this experience.

Our Parallel Support Mentors have a wealth of experience in helping people realise their dreams. There has never been a better time to make a positive change. You can sign up we can even arrange fully accredited training courses that you can complete from the comfort of your own home to enable you to reach your maximum potential and change your life for the better. Contact us today to sign up; we can offer support building CV's, help improve your interview technique, arrange fully accredited training courses and much more. Our aim is to help you reach your full potential and change your life for the better. All our offices are fully operational, mentors are available to give you advice and sign you up today. The Belfast Works team is available if you would like to drop into McSweeney Centre or Ashton. Alternatively, you can give us a call or register on the Belfast Works website or Facebook page and we will be in touch to let you know what the next steps are. **What have you got to lose?**

Please call **02890322289** or visit our page at: www.ashtoncentre.com/contactbelfastworks/ to sign up with Belfast Works or contact belfastworks@ashtoncentre.com for our support.

Other criteria applies for people on Universal Credit – contact us to see if you are eligible.

 www.facebook.com/Belfastworks/

 twitter.com/belfastworks

 www.instagram.com/belfastworksjobs/

 www.ashtoncentre.com/contactbelfastworks/

TRAINING | EMPLOYMENT | SUPPORT

Supporting
North Belfast

New training courses on offer

Interested in Belfast Works training courses to help you gain employment?
Contact us to register or for more information.

Health & Safety

First Aid

SIA Security

Forklift Licence

CSR Card

Food Safety

You must:

- Be unemployed or working under 16 hours per week*
- Be seeking employment*

To register contact:

belfastworks@ashtoncentre.com
02890 322289

www.ashtoncentre.com/contactbelfastworks

All training will be completed by March 2022

The LEMIS+ Project is part funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014 – 2020 and the Department for the Economy. Led by Ashton Community Trust in partnership with East Belfast Mission, GEMS NI, Job Assist Centre Greater Shankill and Job Assist Centre West Belfast.

TRAINING | EMPLOYMENT | SUPPORT

Boost your employability with free training

Course	Dates	Available venues
Basic ICT	8th Nov - 17th Dec 2021 (Mondays, Tuesdays or Wednesdays)	Job Assist Greater Shankill, West Belfast Upper Springfield Development Trust, West Belfast Skainos Centre, East Belfast
Personal Development	8th Nov - 14th Dec 2021 (Mondays or Tuesdays)	Online Ashton Centre, North Belfast
Word Basics	9th & 11th Nov 2021 (Tuesday & Thursday)	Online
Employability	10th Nov - 16th Dec 2021 (Wednesdays or Thursdays)	Online Ashton Centre, North Belfast
Spreadsheet Basics	23rd & 25th Nov 2021 (Tuesday & Thursday)	Online
Powerpoint Basics	7th & 9th Dec 2021 (Tuesday & Thursday)	Online

Call: 02890322289

E-mail: belfastworks@ashtoncentre.com

Website: <https://www.ashtoncentre.com/contactbelfastworks/>

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Training & Employment

Would you like help or support to find a job?

Get in touch: (028)90742255

training@ashtoncentre.com

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Core Project - Supporting 16-24 year olds

Mentoring | Job Searching | Training | CV Building | Wellbeing

The CORE team assists people aged 16 to 24 years old, who are living in the Greater Belfast and Newtownabbey areas by offering a range of training and employment opportunities needed to achieve their career goals.

Frequently Asked Questions 🤔

Can you help me find work?

Yes, we can and have successfully supported 82 young people into work since April of this year.

What Training Do You Offer?

We offer a range of FREE training such as CSR Card, Forklift, Warehousing, Driving Lessons, Fitness, Beauty and much more. We can also arrange and pay for training on your behalf should you have an offer of employment. (Criteria applies)

Beauty Masterclass

Following the success of our latest [Beauty Masterclass](#), offered with E&L Beauty, our clients have completed their training in Makeup and Gel polish application.

With the help of our mentoring team, they have had their CV's updated and are currently exploring opportunities available to them such as employment, self-employment or further education.

Driver Theory

We are currently recruiting for our Driver Theory course which is back by popular demand.

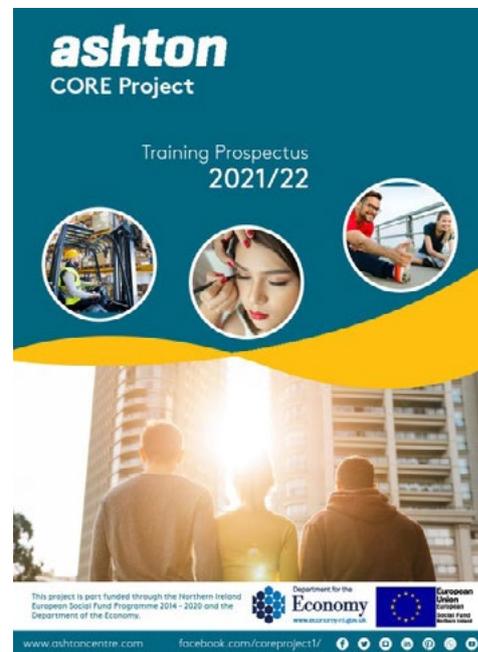
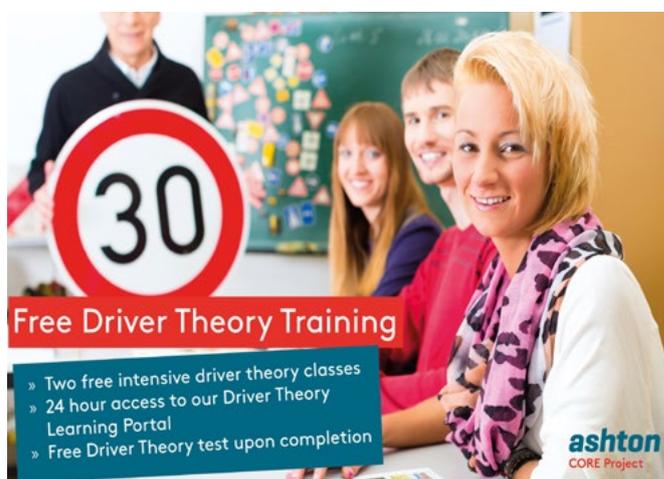
Can I get help to create a CV?

Yes, Aislinn our employability tutor offers CV building skills to help you create a great CV. We understand that employers ask for a CV when recruiting and it's important to have one readily available.

We also offer support on completing application forms that highlight your key skills to an employer and if you are contacted for an interview we will help you to prepare. Aislinn is currently supporting 25 of our young people through her Employability Programme.

I am not very confident, especially in groups, Can I get help to improve my confidence?

Yes, of course, Cailin our Wellbeing Coach has been working with young people on a one-to-one basis to help them overcome personal barriers they are facing.





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CORE Project

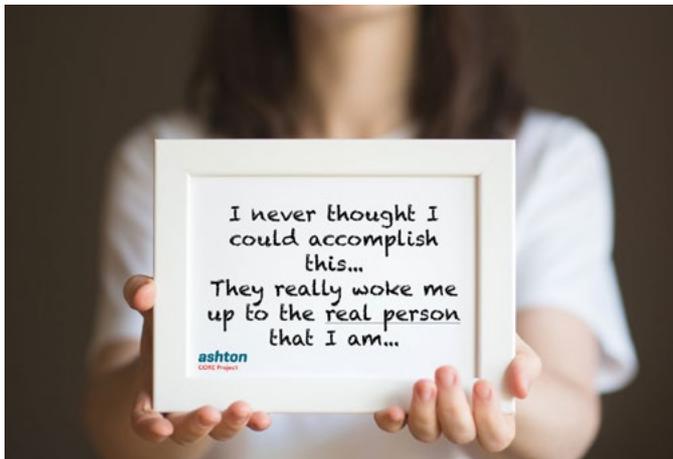
EMPLOYABILITY WORKSHOPS

Employability Workshops with Core

- » Do you need help with your CV?
- » Applying for work and want expert advice?
- » Want to improve your employment prospects?
- » Contact Core today to start with our dedicated Employability Tutor

The service is designed to help build your self-esteem, set life goals and offer techniques to eliminate negative thinking. Cailin has worked with 22 young people to date, with 6 moving into work who otherwise, were not confident in their own ability. Others have successfully started an apprenticeship scheme or progressed to further education.

Cailin's main purpose on CORE is to focus on helping you overcome low self-esteem, anxiety or simply to help you realise your own potential. This might take 2 weeks or 2 months but always at a pace that is right for you.



How can I get registered?

Give us a call on, 02895-609522 or 07801208217. We currently have 6 employment mentors ready to speak

with you and offer support. We will take you through a simple registration process and offer advice and guidance to help you reach your goal.

Do you have any links with local employers and education providers?

Yes, we do, Christine, our Employment and Education Officer, will help you to source information on the latest apprenticeship schemes that offer employment and training opportunities. We also have access to a range of local employment academies offered through Belfast City Council.

What's on offer?

Trainee Spa Therapists, Stena Line

We are recruiting for trainee Spa Therapists to work on Stena Line and you will be fully trained in, Manicure, Pedicure, Gel polish application, E-file, Facials, Massage and World Host. Upon completion you will be given the opportunity to work on a self-employed basis with a high earning potential.

Royal Mail Delivery Drivers

We are currently working with Royal Mail directly to support their recruitment for mail delivery drivers. Contracts are part-time for 12 months and could potentially lead to a permanent job. These roles will be situated in the Belfast area. Additional hours are available if required. If you have a clean driving licence, aged 18 + and live in greater Belfast then get in touch for more info.

Job Start Programme

Recently the Department for Communities announced the new Job Start programme. Job Start offers employers the opportunity to employ 16- to 24-year-olds on a part-time weekly contract for a period of 6 to 9 months. The salary is fully funded by DfC. Additionally, you will be offered full training to gain a vocational qualification while you work. Our Employment Support Officer will gather information needed to apply for these roles and support you in your application. The Job Start programme is available to a range of Northern Ireland Employers, therefore if you are an employer interested in recruiting through Job Start give us a call for more info.

Please contact Mary on 02895-609522 or email mary.loughran@ashtoncentre.com for more information

A copy of CORE's Training Prospectus can be downloaded by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.ashtoncentre.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CORE-Project-Training-Prospectus-2021-22-Web-Email.pdf>

 <https://www.facebook.com/coreproject1/>

 <https://www.instagram.com/coreproject1/>

Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI)

Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI) provides a range of services aimed at resolving and reducing conflict whilst supporting and advocating on behalf of residents and vulnerable or at-risk individuals. In recent times CRJI has established a new office in the New Lodge at Pinkerton. CRJI staff are working closely with local community groups including the Safer Streets Project to help address issues of community safety. CRJI is also a member of the Greater New Lodge Community Empowerment Partnership network (CEP).

One member of CRJI staff now based in the New Lodge is Sean Osborne who agreed to provide a brief personal introduction through our community magazine.

Sean Osborne- CRJI Community Safety Worker

My name is Sean Osborne and I have taken on the role as CRJI Community Safety Worker in the New Lodge area. Whilst this post is currently on a part time basis, I am aware Community Safety is vital 24/7. Everyone has a right to live in an environment free from fear of threat, intimidation, or attack, and allowed to carry on their lives in a community that looks out for the most vulnerable amongst us. In the short time in post, we have assisted local residents with issues causing them distress and anxiety, resolving issues that only required facilitating face to face dialogue to voice their fears and concerns as to how certain behaviour was making them feel threatened within their own homes. Once residents had the safe space and time to voice their concerns, free from fear or retribution, the issues were very quickly addressed and resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Having faced the threat of death on numerous occasions, and my home firebombed in the past, I fully understand the need

to support and seek answers as to why issues such as these occurred in the first instance, and what the statutory agencies could, should, and would do to prevent these issues occurring in the future. Our communities have come a long way in terms of development, and community safety must be at the heart of all we do in the time ahead. If we don't feel safe within our own homes, within our own community, then something isn't working, that needs to be identified, and addressed with service providers and it is here we can assist residents.

My role is not to replicate the excellent work currently being undertaken by local community service providers and workers, but to assist and compliment their successes in whichever way possible to achieve a standard of life we would all aspire to. For my part I can only do my best, that's all I have. Thank you for taking the time to read this, you have afforded me your time to do so, and that means a lot to me.

Sean Osborne



CRJI Staff - Michael O'Hara, Cristiona Mac Siacais, Sean Osborne



If you are the victim or the witness of crime, drug dealing or anti social behaviour you can contact the number below. If no one is there to answer always leave a message on the voice mail.

Remember If You Don't Report Then We Can't help You. Do Not Suffer In Silence

Greater New Lodge Safer Streets Committee - 0756 493 8276

Another community number you can ring is, Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI) - 028 90 753043

If possible provide the following details;

- Your name and contact number (If you feel comfortable doing so)
- The nature and location of the offence
- The date and time of the offence
- The name/details of the offender (If known)

<https://www.facebook.com/newlodgesaferstreets>

Bridge of Hope - New Troubles Pensions Welfare Officer

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Bridge of Hope

Bridge of Hope is happy to introduce Niall Ó'Murchú our new Troubles Pensions Welfare Officer. Niall supports people through The Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (TPDPS) application process. Niall has been a local lawyer working on legacy and benefits cases for over ten years. He has been involved in community projects in Belfast all his adult life. Niall has been a member of the Victims' & Survivors Forum since 2016. He is Chairperson of the PEACE IV funded Charity Paper Trail, which provides advocacy and support for victims and survivors of the conflict. An Ardoyne native, Niall is well known in the New Lodge since attending Edmund Rice Primary School Pim Street as a child. More recently, through his friends and his legal work in the New Lodge, Niall has been involved with the McGurk's Bar Commemoration Committee for more than ten years.

The Troubles Pension scheme began at the start of September 2021 and is open for five years. People who apply during the first three years will have their award backdated to the beginning of the scheme.

To Qualify For The Troubles Pension:

To qualify for the Troubles Pension, a person must have suffered a severe and permanent physical or psychological injury during the Troubles. Successful recipients will receive annual payments of between £2,000 and £10,000 for the rest of their life.



Niall Ó'Murchú

If you or someone you know needs any help, advice or assistance with this process, please get in touch with Niall on 07825393875 or email niall.omurchu@ashtoncentre.com

TOOLKIT For Community Development In North Belfast

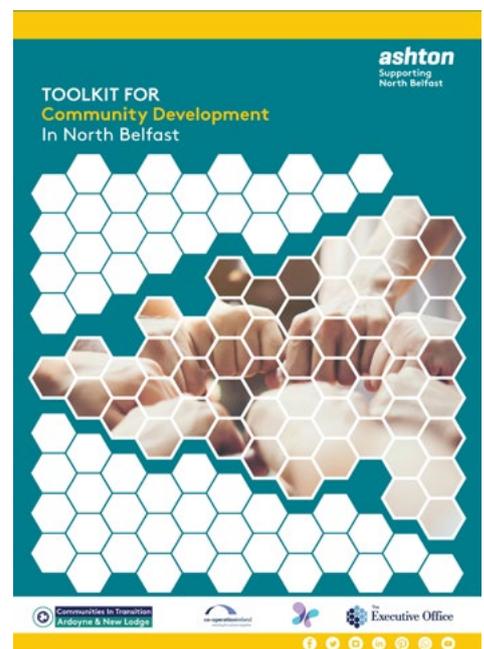
Ashton would like to share with you a resource for Community Development, we hope you find it useful and can share it with any groups you think would find it useful.

Through the Communities in Transition (CIT) funding our programme staff and participants worked closely with Community Places to co-produce the development of a Community Capacity Building Toolkit. The toolkit content reflects on the programme learning with specific references on how to build local capacity and what is required to promote the development of shared, resilient and lawful communities.

The toolkit also sourced best practice and from other institutional contexts to demonstrate how concepts such as lawfulness could be promoted and instilled across CIT areas.

The Toolkit can be downloaded here: <https://www.ashtoncentre.com/toolkit-for-community-development-in-north-belfast/>

We also have a small number of hard copies available in the McSweeney Centre and Ashton Centre, if you would like a copy please contact: leo.morgan@ashtoncentre.com



Ashton Family Support Programmes

Community Family Support Programme

Healthy Eating

The Community Family Support Programme has just completed the Healthy Eating Food Programme. This gave families the opportunity to cook together and try new recipes. Ingredients and recipes were delivered to the door for families to create nutritious meals together. We received a lot of great pictures of the creations and everyone had a go, this was very successful and feedback from the families involved was very positive. Employability Sessions

Alongside this we have been supporting people to move closer to employment by hosting employability sessions, CV builder days and individual support with completion of application forms. We support and guide families to identify goals and guide them on right path to achieving them. The team support people on an individual basis and plans for moving forward are based on these needs. We are also hosting a free make - up class over the coming months.

Contact

To be eligible for the programme you must live in North Belfast, not in education, training or employment, or working less than 16 hours and wanting to increase this. If you are interested please contact kris.morrison@ashtoncentre.com, eileen.oprey@ashtoncentre.com or caroline.mcilwee@ashtoncentre.com alana.mckeown@ashtoncentre.com

Ashton Early Intervention Family Support Project



In September 2019 Ashton was fortunate to receive funding from Belfast Charitable Society to provide a 1-1 Family support service that would take referrals directly from both Family Support Hubs in North Belfast. This service was the most demanded service through Hub referrals and it is a fabulous asset to the suite of services we can offer to families. The funding also allows the team to provide supermarket vouchers to families who accepted services through the Hub but also were experiencing financial difficulties.

The two team members are continuing to providing support to families at this time and adapting their service to take into account social distancing regulations.

The team are able to support your family to deal with challenging behaviour of children and young people, emotional health and well-being of your family or any issue within the family setting that is causing you concern.

Should you wish to avail of this service please contact Caroline or Alana by email at caroline.mcilwee@ashtoncentre.com or alana.mckeown@ashtoncentre.com

Lower North Belfast Family Support Hub

Connecting Families

It has now over six years since Ashton Community Trust was awarded the lead for the Lower North Belfast Family Support Hub. Since August 24th 2015, Ashton Community Trust has been co-ordinating and receiving referrals and working to connect families to the services they need at a time when they need them throughout North Belfast.

Early Intervention

The Family Support Hub provides early intervention services to families and young people requiring support. The Hub brings together organisations that deliver services to children/young people (0-18 years) and their parents/carers and this includes community, statutory and voluntary family support services.

Diversity of Services Available

The Family Support Hub can work with your family to deal with challenging behaviour of your child or young person by providing one-one family support in the home setting and can also work with your son or daughter to help manage their emotions and provide strategies to deal with low level anxiety. There are also services available to provide young people with mentoring support especially if they are socially isolated or dealing with bullying or anxiety which has been heightened during the pandemic. The Family Support Hub can also support families who are suffering from stress/depression by providing counselling or emotional support through talking therapies. There are also services available through the Hub to support families in financial stress, including debt management and budgeting.

Self- Referral

Any adult family member can refer themselves and their family to the Hub simply by completion of a referral form. The Co-ordinator of the Hub will then contact you in order to help match appropriate services to your family's needs. And your information will only be shared with the organisations who you feel will be of help to your family.

We Are Here To Help You

There is now no need for families to struggle through life's difficulties because the Lower North Belfast Family Support Hub is here to help through these times and work in partnership with families to improve outcomes for all the people who live in Lower North Belfast.



Contact

Should you have any queries about the Hub or should you wish to refer your family to the Hub please contact Edith McManus, the Lower North Belfast Family Support Hub Co-ordinator at the Ashton Centre 02890 749986.

North Belfast Lantern Festival Great Success



Lantern Festival Returns

After a break in 2021, we were delighted to return with the North Belfast Lantern Festival based around the theme of Alice in Wonderland. Over 30 groups took part in the outreach programme making fabulous lanterns and amazing installations. Over 5000 people from across the community attended the 2-day extravaganza which included family fun days and the main parade and event. Participants came in costumes and with colourful lanterns in the longest-running Halloween Community Event in Belfast.

Great Showcase

The family friendly festival, led by Ashton Community Trust and delivered by New Lodge Arts, culminated in a special family event in Alexandra Park including live music, dance, theatre, walkabout acts, a fireworks display, plus a very special headline performance by Simply Ariana. The whole event was an excellent example of communities working together to promote good relations and maximise the use of shared space whilst being a great showcase for the positive contribution children and young people make to our communities.

Torrential Rain Fails To Dampen Spirits

Anne Delaney, Arts Programme & Operations Manager for New Lodge Arts said. "The rain didn't dampen our spirits (well maybe just a little), but we were delighted with the success of the event this year. The artists produced amazing artwork with the schools/groups who participated in the outreach programme. The main event was fabulous and had something for everyone. There was a fantastic sense of community and we were delighted to be back running events again!"



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Arts



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Get in touch:
(028)90742255

anne.delaney@ashtoncentre.com

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For more information, get in touch with Anne Delaney on 07736389968 anne.delaney@ashtoncentre.com or via:

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Ashton - Engagement with Ulster University

According to the Ulster University's own strategic objectives it wants to build good relationships with neighbouring communities. It also says that it wants to help tackle some of the wider systemic economic and social issues affecting local neighbourhoods by working in partnership with local community organisations.

Working Relationships

It is within this context and in good faith that the Ashton Community Trust has striven to develop mutual understandings and productive working relationships with the UU leadership and staff. In recent times Ashton has engaged in a number of meetings with different University departments including, the UU's Vice Chancellor, the Director of Community Engagement,

Marketing and Communications Department, Social Justice Hub, UU Law Clinic, Architectural Department as well as with the Students Union.

Wide Range of Topics

During these discussions a wide range of topics have been covered including anti-poverty initiatives, family support, employment, educational achievement, community communications, community access to university space, support for community youth and arts projects, social research, student volunteers, public realm and environmental improvement, travel and connectivity, health and well-being, sports, community festivals, neighbourhood/student safety and more.

Challenges and Opportunities

The decision to relocate Ulster University to Inner North Belfast has undoubtedly created many problems for residents that live nearby, particularly in terms of the radical changes it has created to their physical space and living environment. Community activists have worked hard to try to mitigate some of these difficulties but this will present an ongoing challenge requiring continuous attention for years to come. However as we move forward we must remain positive. Yes there are serious difficulties, but if approached in a sensitive, sensible and properly resourced manner this massive investment on our doorstep could and indeed should enrich the lived experience of everyone involved, including local residents, students, university staff and the general public. It is to this end that Ashton alongside its community partners will stay committed and focussed.



New Road Markings to Address Parking Issues

The issue of obstructive vehicle parking has for a long time been a cause of frustration for local residents living in the Lancaster Street, Thomas Street area. It is a cause of concern that parking problems could become even worse with the opening of the new Ulster University Campus nearby, which will bring massive numbers of students, staff and associated visitors into the general area. Following repeated representations to the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) about this issue, a proposed walkabout of the area was eventually agreed to by the department earlier this year.



Attending the walkabout were local residents, community workers from Ashton, Safer Streets, New Lodge Housing Forum, MLA Caral Ni Chuilin as well as representatives from Ulster University, Belfast City Council and DFI. The walkabout allowed a DFI official to see the problems first hand and hear directly from residents about their issues and concerns.

As a result DFI has now placed new road markings in Lancaster Street, McGurks Way and Thomas Street. Caral Ni Chuilin MLA said, "I am pleased that the DFI has listened to the concerns raised by Sinn Fein, residents and community activists. I am content that these proposals are an attempt to resolve most of the issues raised".

One local resident said, "We will continue to monitor this new road marking system to judge whether or not it has a positive impact, only time will tell". Any resident that needs to discuss this matter in greater detail should contact Stephen McMeekin, on 028 90 526245 or email stephen.mcmeekin@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

New UU Campus Becomes Operational



Ashton Community Trust in partnership with the Greater New Lodge CEP continues to provide assistance to local residents as they cope with the physical and social challenges arising from the development of the nearby Ulster University, its carpark and associated student accommodation tower blocks. Since these constructions first began, nearby residents have endured many adverse effects including excessive noise, dirt, dust, air pollution, structural damage to property, rodent infestation, parking, traffic and access problems. The multi-storey constructions have also resulted in loss of daylight for some residents and a general sense of being closed in and cut off.

Construction Phase Coming to an End

With the construction of the main UU buildings almost complete the new campus will soon be fully operational. This means that thousands of new students, staff and associated visitors will increasingly populate the immediate area. This will bring with it a new set of challenges. There are already around two thousand students living in the new student accommodation towers in and around York Street.

Misbehaviour

Regrettably, a number of anti-social behaviour issues have arisen recently that residents believe relate to students. This involves the misuse of a local BCC owned carpark where cars have congregated at night playing loud music and making loud engine noise. There has also been on street drinking and general misconduct close to student accommodation blocks, all of which is causing concern and upset for local residents.

Community/UU Liaison Forum

One of the methods that Ashton has employed to assist residents in recent years has been through the establishment of a Community /UU Liaison Forum which meets on a regular basis and acts as a reference point for engagement between residents, the UU, student accommodation providers, Belfast City Council and other relevant agencies. Through the Liaison Forum issues are

identified and actions agreed to tackle problems when they arise.

Little Forethought on Environmental and Social Impacts

Mark Hackett of Ashton Community Trust explains, "Thousands of new students now live in the area and this does have positives, more street activity can make areas feel safer. However like with any large and new population there are wider complex social connections, networks and potential problems - it is inevitable. A new complex urban environment has been created with little forethought given to the practical environmental and social impacts this would have on residents and students alike.

Improvements to pedestrian crossings, provision of proper street lighting and CCTV considerations to keep everyone safe have been inadequate. With such a large change proactivity by all city partners is needed. Residents have had fears and concerns, but what is notable is how they also raise concerns on behalf of student welfare.

Greater Civic Leadership Required

Mark continued, "As we move forward much greater civic leadership is required. We would like to see the area better cleansed and areas of neglect adjacent to the older communities dealt with in a speedy manner. Inner city residents know and have endured the problems and neglect, they know where to take extra care - we fear students will be at increased risk within this urban neglect, especially as each year brings new people, often new to the city entirely.

Within all civic departments there is longstanding policy about connecting the city and making a 'living city'- nowhere else is this huge change happening at such pace. This area should be seen as an opportunity for the city partners to showcase innovation and their various strengths. Residents and community sector remain open to make this change a positive and managed one".

St Joseph's Church Sailortown Update

St. Joseph's Church is now open as a Community Hub with our heating and toilets in place

We've had a steady programme of youth activities and events: Drama, Circus School and Arts and Crafts to name a few.

Father Des Wilson

We also had a lovely event for the return of Fr Des Wilson's vestments. Fr Des had a very strong attachment to the people of the area, saying weekly mass for them as part of their campaign and attending the May Procession every year until his health deteriorated. He left his vestments in his will to the St Joseph's Community who fought so hard to keep their Church. Once we've a few remaining leaks fixed we'll create a space for them where people can sit and remember those who have passed away.

Covered Outdoor Seated Area

We now have a covered outdoor seated area facing the church as well. It has a stage for impromptu performances with planters and lighting to be installed next week. The local kids love it and enjoy doing their Tik Tok dances in it. This is part of our wider plan to recreate Sailortown as a 'go to' destination in its own right. We hope to get a Belfast Bike dock and a street mural to add to it in the next few months.

Loads of Visitors

There have been loads of visitors dropping in, particularly ex residents who are most welcome to come and see our progress. Lots of random people too who have never been inside. We do organised tours on request and had a great turnout for these at the Maritime weekender in September. There was also yoga, meditation, young people's sailing races on the Lagan and taster rowing



sessions. We even had a curragh built in St Joseph's which has been named Joe. I can be seen on the Lagan and runs regular trips for volunteer rowers.

150th Anniversary

Next year will be the 150th anniversary of St Joseph's Parish and we hope to organise a Sailortown Festival in June to mark the rich legacy of the community. There will be talks, films, walking tours and music events taking over the whole area. If anyone has ideas or would like to volunteer time, memories or just call in you can contact us on: SailortownOffice@gmail.com or through our social media which can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofstjosephssailortown/>
<https://twitter.com/StJoesBelfast>
<https://www.sailortownregeneration.com/>



Programmes at the Recy



Something For All Ages

North Queen Street CC (The Recy) has a range of Programmes to keep everyone busy over the Autumn and Winter period. Working with local volunteers and organisations we have something for all ages ranging from the ever-popular Ballet to Boxing with the world-famous Holy Family Boxing Club. Unfortunately, certain Covid restrictions still apply however we hope that we can help you forget about the dark nights and the cold by becoming part of the regular Recy Family.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
*Beann Madigan WI 10-12noon	*SMILE Sure Start 10-12noon	Mother and Toddlers 10-12 noon	Bunscoil Beann Mhad-again 9.30-12 noon	*Belfast Trust 11-2pm
Afterschool's Sports 3-4.30	Art Club 3-4.30pm	*Springboard 1-4.30pm	Ballet 3-5pm	
*Boxing 6-9.30pm	*Boxing 6-9.30pm	*Boxing 6-9.30pm	*Boxing 6-9.30pm	*Boxing 6-9.30pm
*St Patricks Girl Guides 6-9pm	*Petri Doherty School of Irish Dance 6-8.30pm	Girls Keep Fit 6-8.30pm	*O'Neill Allsopp Flute Band 6-9pm	

*Denotes groups who act independently of the centre but are always looking for new members

Contact

As well as those listed above we also host Resident Meetings, Interagency Meetings, Safer Streets Meetings, various Training Courses, One 2 One Counselling Services and Public Consultations from the Statutory Agencies. Call us on 90323945 for information on any of the programmes listed above, we can put you in touch with the relevant persons, or come at the allocated time to speak to the leaders in charge of all the activities.

The Breakthrough Programme

Led by Ashton Community Trust, the Breakthrough Programme is delivered in partnership with a range of community partners in North Belfast. Young people taking part in the Breakthrough Programme have the opportunity to get involved in team building days, residentials, volunteering, one-to-one mentoring support and group work activities to include personal development, citizenship and good relations. In addition, young people also choose from a menu of training in the areas of Arts, Sports, Digital Imaging/Film Making, Music and Digital Fabrication.

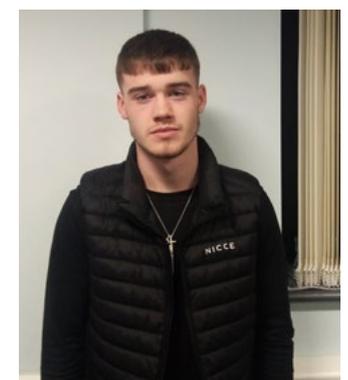
Oisin

I joined the breakthrough project as I knew there would've been great opportunities to better myself and gain new skills. I have got a lot from the Breakthrough Project such as meeting new people and gaining skills to help me throughout life. I also gained many qualifications such as IFA coaching badge. I would recommend this Breakthrough Project for anyone who has the opportunity I would encourage them to take it as it has many opportunities and qualifications that could be used throughout life.



Darragh Pettigrew

I joined the breakthrough project because I see it as an opportunity to improve my community and also to improve in myself within the personal development part of the course. I gained quite a lot from the course. I learned a lot when we done all the discussions I also seen many issues within my community that I never realised as you couldn't see with the blind eye but when you look into certain areas and the problems really do come to light. I couldn't really ask to change anything too much with the project because it was enjoyable and fun over the 26 weeks and I've improved mentally and socially. I was able to ask questions to things and get answers to questions that I never knew about. I would like to have more debates as they were best indoor session. Overall it was very enjoyable couldn't ask for much more.



NORTH BELFAST THEN AND NOW EXHIBITION

December Exhibition in the Recy

The first weekend in December will see the return of the Belfast History Project's impressive photographic exhibitions this time looking at a series of then and now photographs from around North Belfast. It will be staged in North Queen Street Community Centre (The Recy) and will be a massive collection of old photographs taken from the Victorian period onwards accompanied by modern photographs taken from the exact same spot.

Many will remember the first of these exhibitions from a few years ago when the subject was old and new photographs from around the New Lodge area and which attracted many people from all over the city.

In addition to the exhibition there will also be a book available which contains all the photographs on display and if you missed the first one there is also a limited print run of the first book from around the New Lodge.

The North Belfast Then and Now Photographic Exhibition will take place in North Queen Street Community Centre between Friday 3rd December and Sunday 5th December between 1pm – 8pm and, as always, admission is completely free.

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



Noah Donohoe Mural Dedication

Despite torrential rain local people gathered at a ceremony on Friday 6th August this year in the Pinkerton/Seven Hills section of the area to dedicate a recently created mural in memory of young Noah Donohoe. During the ceremony a number of speakers including local community workers and MLA Caral Ni Chuilin expressed sympathy and solidarity with Noah's grieving mum and family on their tragic loss. Local woman Bernadette McMullan read out a poem that she had written in memory of Noah.



Poem for Noah by Bernadette McMullan

Noah went missing on a warm summers day no one claims they had saw him why have you turned a blind eye, a grieving mother a precious life a boy with plans to go far in life. You were a flame that shone the brightest, like the warmest summers day. Darkness tried to dim your light, in the cruellest of ways.

A smile that lit a room like the clearest star filled sky. A future full of promise gone and all we ask is why? But we still feel your spirit, we know your soul lives on. Carrying your mum and an army thousands strong. No matter how we tire in this fight we will not fold, until truth comes to light about that dark day and it's told.

One day we'll understand it all, the reason for your mummy's pain. When the lies are all exposed and see you didn't pass in vain. The death of a beautiful child is just too heavy a load. No mother should ever have to walk this lonely and painful road. So rest easy young Noah. Wrap your arms around your mum. Watch over her forever, still her loving baby son.

York Street Interchange (YSI) - Place Making Review

In March the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) Minister Nichola Mallon accepted the six recommendations of the November 2020 review that was conducted into the Interchange. The first recommendation was that:

“the project brief should be reviewed and revised to ensure it aligns with the concept of “place making” and new best practice in terms of urban transport design”.

Engineers Meet Community Representatives

As a result engineers from AECOM who are conducting the Place Making Review on behalf of DFI have met on a number of occasions with community representatives from Ashton Community Trust and Sailortown Regeneration Group. During these discussions which included walkabouts of the local area, a range of key issues were highlighted. Community opposition to the current scheme and support for an alternative model as designed by Mark Hackett (Architect/Ashton Community Trust) was made very clear.

Interchange Plan Damaging To Community

Terry McKeown of Sailortown Regeneration said, “The walkabout provided a good opportunity for the engineers to see for themselves what the area is really like and why the current Interchange plan is so damaging. The meetings have provided the opportunity to outline in detail to AECOM the general thinking of the local community and explain to them the obvious benefits offered in the alternative design proposal”.

Alternative Solution

Paddy Benson, long-time community activist with Sailortown Regeneration said, “We believe the alternative design offers real solutions to the road issues. At the same time it will protect residents from the negative impacts and disruptions and save a lot of money for the public



Terry McKeown Sailortown with Mark Hackett Ashton Community Trust

purse. For many years we have been trying to achieve regeneration for Sailortown including new housing as well as other social development opportunities that will rebuild and reconnect the area. But the Interchange scheme if allowed to proceed in its current form will destroy any chance of that ever happening”.

Ashton Organise Independent Assessment

It is expected that the Place Making report should be completed by AECOM by December this year. Meanwhile, Ashton Community Trust has employed a London based road engineering company to conduct an independent assessment of the alternative model as designed by Mark Hackett. This report will add weight to the argument that DFI should look at alternatives that are better for connecting communities while solving the problems of the roads at less cost to the public.

To see YSI Public Review Recommendations go to <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/news/mallon-announces-outcome-review-york-street-interchange-scheme>

New Lodge Youth Centre Fundraising Initiative

New Lodge Youth Centre staff and young people recently organised a number of fundraising initiatives in aid of a young person who is currently undergoing chemotherapy. The young person is in need of a specialised bed and chair to support him resting and the team organised sponsored walks and a Coffee Morning. Overall as a team we raised £1200 which will help the young person and family significantly. This would not be possible without the generosity of all who sponsored, donated prizes and attended our events. For more information contact 02890751358 or visit us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/newlodgelyc/>





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christine.mckeown@ashtoncentre.com
fionnuala.black@ashtoncentre.com



Belfast City Council HSC Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

f t i p s y



WE ARE MOVING

In November 2021, Newington Housing will be returning to our newly constructed office accommodation at 300 Limestone Road, Belfast BT15 3AR.

Immediately prior to the move, the Association will be writing to all our tenants and stakeholders to confirm the exact timeframes regarding our return.

We can still be contacted by the usual methods, such as by telephone on 028 9074 4055 or by emailing admin@newingtonha.co.uk

At this time, we do not envisage that our move will have any significant impact on the services we provide.

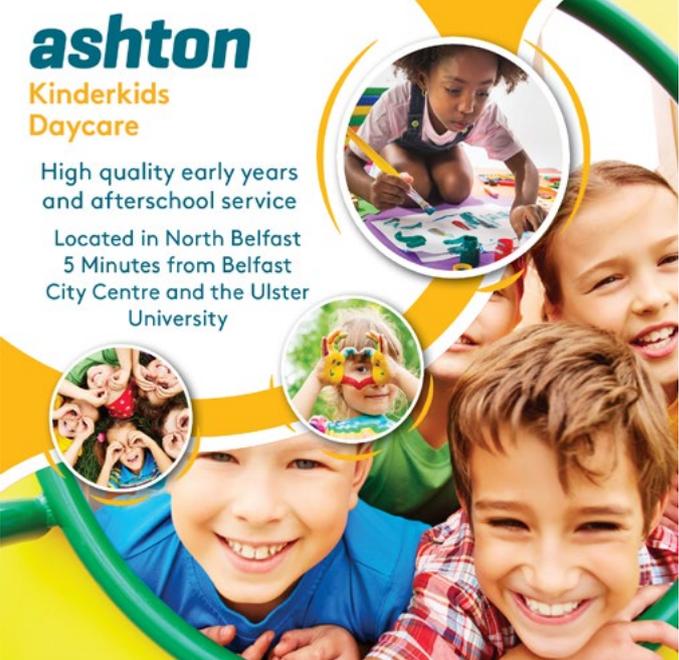



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Deafblind UK



Representatives from Deafblind UK recently met with the Ashton Community Trust to explain the type of services they provide. As a result of that conversation we agreed to include this article provided by Deafblind UK in our community magazine.

Understanding Deafblindness

A lady once came up to our stand at a low vision event. She had sight impairments and was wearing two hearing aids, indicating to that she was hard of hearing. She saw that we were representing Deafblind UK and said to me "wouldn't it be awful to be deafblind, those poor people!" What she didn't realise was that she herself was actually one of nearly 400,000 deafblind people in the UK.

Despite common misconceptions, deafblindness actually means a combined sight and hearing impairment to the point where someone's communication, mobility and ability to access information are impacted. Deafblindness comes on a huge spectrum ranging from someone struggling to see and hear the TV right through to them not being able to see or hear anything at all. However, many people with deafblindness are able to hear and/or see something.

Recognising the Signs

Many people don't identify themselves as being 'deafblind' but are aware that they "can't see and hear as well as they used to". It is important for us all to recognise the signs of sight and hearing impairments in ourselves and in our friends and family - and to understand that support is available if we need it.

Dual Sensory Loss

Dual sensory loss is a completely different condition to a sight loss plus a hearing loss. An easy way to think of this is to imagine hearing impairment as the colour blue and visual impairment as the colour yellow. When the two sensory impairments, or in this case the colours blue and yellow, come together they become something new - dual sensory impairment or in this analogy - green; a totally new colour with different properties.

Early Signs of Deafblindness Include:

- Difficulty reading books and newspapers or watching TV

- Difficulty recognising people, particularly in unexpected situations
- Being uncomfortable in bright and/or low lighting
- Finding it hard to read facial expressions
- Being unable to find something that you have lost without using your hands or asking for help
- Finding it difficult to move around in unfamiliar places or in familiar places that have changed
- Asking people to repeat themselves or to speak louder
- Difficulty hearing the TV or radio or music and/or having the volume turned up high
- Not hearing the doorbell or the telephone ringing
- Complaining that people are mumbling or speaking too quickly
- Finding it hard to understand unfamiliar people
- Avoiding using the phone

Questions and Concerns

Realising that you may have a dual sensory impairment can leave you with questions and concerns. At Deafblind UK, we support people with any level of combined sight and hearing loss to carry on as normal. Sometimes this means advising people about a new household tricks and tips to make their life easier (such as using daylight bulbs, bump-on stickers or other basic equipment) or it might mean we show you how to use accessibility features on an iPad so you can do your shopping online, for example.

Services

Many of our services are free of charge and include practical advice and information; emotional support for you and your family; help with digital technology; use of our accessible holiday caravans; social groups and companionship. If you have any questions about combined sight and hearing loss or to find out what we can do for you, contact our team of experts on the details below:

Call: 0800 132 320

Web: www.deafblind.org.uk

Email: info@deafblind.org.uk

Text: 07903572885

A purple banner with the Deafblind UK logo in the top right corner. On the left is a white telephone handset icon inside a white circle. To the right of the icon, the text reads: "We're here for you", "Tel: 0800 132320", "Text: 07903 572885", and "Text relay: 18001 then 0800 132320".

deafblinduk

We're here for you

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Text: 07903 572885
Text relay: 18001 then 0800 132320

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Community magazine Supported by Belfast City Council, Newington Housing Association and Ashton Community Trust



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