

Greater New Lodge Community Magazine

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Ashton YouTube Channel

New Lodge Youth Centres 12 Days of Christmas



New Lodge Youth Centre's 12 Days of Christmas initiative was a youth-led programme delivered by young people involved in a range of group work projects across the Centre. Over the twelve days, young people planned and delivered a series of meaningful actions that reflected the spirit of generosity, inclusion and community responsibility.

Activities included hosting a Christmas party for young people from the local community, alongside a dedicated celebration for participants of the 174 Disability Project. Young people also raised funds for the People's Kitchen, organised a shoebox appeal for individuals sleeping rough over the Christmas period, and prepared Christmas gift bags for elderly residents of Clifton House. In addition, festive boxes were delivered to children and parents spending Christmas in hospital.

The initiative concluded with a large-scale toy appeal, generously supported by local organisations and individuals, ensuring many families were able to experience a special Christmas. Follow us on [Facebook](#).

Community Magazine Supported by Belfast City Council and Ashton Community Trust



Belfast
City Council

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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/>



Day Opportunities
for young adults
with learning
disabilities and/or
autism.



JOIN US!

HAPPY DAYS PROJECT

Engage in activities like games, dance, drama, arts and crafts, music, gardening, and trips.
*For ages 19-35.

For more information, contact Susie Vint

028 9074 2255 / 07946417238

happydays@ashtoncentre.com

Happy Days Project

McSweeney Centre,
Henry Place, Belfast BT15 2AY

www.ashtoncentre.com

ashton

Community Contact Details

174 Trust	9074 7114
Ashton Centre	9074 2255
Bridge of Hope	9074 2255
Bridges Sewing Group	9074 2255
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain.....	9032 2409
Camberwell Fold.....	9096 0552
Cancer Lifeline.....	9035 1999
Carlisle Day Centre	9023 1227
Carrick Hill Community Centre	9023 1602
Clanmill Housing Association	9087 6000
Community Restorative Justice.....	9621 0900
Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain.....	90749 688
Friends of St Joseph's Church Sailortown	terryblfst@gmail.com
Glenravel Local History Project	9074 2255
Holy Family Primary School.....	9035 1023
Holy Family Youth Centre.....	9087 5150
Indian Community Centre	9024 9746
KinderKids Day Care - Ashton	9074 2255
KinderKids Day Care - Cliftonville	90749146
KinderKids Day Care - Cliftonville.....	9521 9830
McSweeney Centre.....	9032 2289
Newington Credit Union.....	9035 1773
Newington Housing Association.....	9074 4055
New Lodge Arts	9074 2255
New Lodge Housing Forum.....	9074 2399
New Lodge Safer Streets	07564 938276
New Lodge Youth Centre	9075 1358
North Belfast Family Centre	9024 7580
North Queen St. Community Centre	9032 3945
Smile SureStart	9504 2771
St. Patrick's Primary School.....	9035 1206
Star Neighbourhood Centre.....	9074 0693
TAMHI	9074 7437
Tar Isteach.....	9074 6665/9074 6664



Ashton Centre Tel: (028) 9074 2255

**Open:
Mon to Thur
1pm - 3pm**



**ALTERATIONS, CURTAIN MAKING AND
ALL YOUR SEWING NEEDS**

**BRIDGES SEWING GROUP
ASHTON CENTRE
TEL: (028) 9074 2255**

The Greatest Night of the Year



It has been rumoured that the Happy Days Formal is not only the most anticipated night of the year but one that everyone should attend as it brings so much joy, fills you with pride and is very uplifting.

We held our second anniversary formal to mark all the achievements and progress throughout the year of our crew. It is hard to believe that it has already been two years since we opened our doors, I guess it really is true what they say when you are having fun!

The special night was held in Lansdowne Hotel, a drinks reception to welcome all the guests and of course the most emotional and inspiring performance of *This is Me* and *A Million Dreams* from the *Greatest Showman* by our crew. They had worked tirelessly for months leading up to the event to ensure it was a seamless and powerful performance. Move over *Britain's Got Talent*...we deserve that golden buzzer!

Everyone looked simply stunning, the preparation that went into everyone's outfits and style was fashion week worthy. It was wonderful having all the families together to simply celebrate and showcase what Happy Days is all about. The real sense of a family unit was felt by all as we laughed, cried and made magical memories. The party resembled a huge family wedding reception without the family feuds and that one "crazy uncle" that everyone tries to avoid on the dance floor! Haha!

We at Happy Days are so proud of all our participants but especially our Jamiee – Leigh, who got up onto the stage for the first time speaking in front of an audience and thanked all the parents and caregivers for all their support, love, care and fight that they have shown over the years. A role that can be exhausting, emotionally draining and often challenging. We felt that our parents and carers deserve to be seen and to be shown appreciated – Thank you!

This night has to be experienced to understand how special it is, it is an honour to be part of it each year and we look forward to creating another spectacular evening in November 2026. Follow us on [Facebook](#).



Strengthening Skills and Building Futures: Training & Employment Team

The past three months have been an extremely positive and productive time for our Training & Employment (T&E) and Belfast Works Connect (BWC) teams, with a strong focus on delivering high-quality training, supporting people towards work, and strengthening the skills of both participants and staff.

During this period, we were delighted to receive a grant from the Lidl Green Fund, which has provided valuable support for our work within the community. This funding has helped strengthen our capacity to deliver training and employment-related activity while also supporting environmentally

focused improvements and sustainable practices. The Lidl Green Fund grant has played an important role in enhancing our resources and ensuring we can continue to create positive, long-term outcomes for participants in a way that is mindful of both people and the environment.



While preparations continue for the upcoming launch of our new Skills for Life & Work programme, Launchpad, the majority of recent activity has been delivered through the dedicated work of the T&E and BWC teams. Their commitment has ensured that participants continue to access meaningful training and development opportunities that support progression into employment.

A key highlight during this period has been the delivery of beauty training, facilitated by our brilliant tutor Gail. Participants took part in hands-on sessions covering areas such as eyebrows, nails and essential beauty skills, gaining practical experience alongside increased confidence and employability. This training has provided participants with a valuable introduction to the beauty sector, while also helping them develop professionalism, communication skills and self-belief.

In addition to vocational training, participants also benefited from a series of addiction and resilience workshops, delivered by Tony. These sessions focused on strengthening coping skills and building resilience both of which are vital for sustaining employment and managing everyday challenges. The workshops were designed to be practical, supportive and accessible, helping participants to build confidence in their abilities and recognise their own strengths.

Alongside participant-focused delivery, the last three months have also seen significant investment in staff development within the Belfast Works Connect team. A series of staff development



events were delivered with the aim of upskilling staff, sharing learning, and supporting professional growth. These sessions have helped strengthen team cohesion, improve practice, and ensure staff feel confident and well equipped to continue supporting participants effectively.

As we move forward, the work completed by the T&E and BWC teams over the past three months has laid strong foundations for the future. With Launchpad set to begin soon, this period of delivery, learning and development has ensured that both staff and participants are well prepared for the next stage continuing our shared goal of supporting people to gain skills, qualifications and sustainable employment. Follow us on [Facebook](#).



Your creative future starts here!



Launchpad

Where ideas take flight

Are you ready to take off into the world of digital and creative industries?
Launchpad is your starting point

This Skills for Life and Work programme will help you build the skills, confidence and experience to thrive in whatever world of work you choose



What you'll get:

- Hands on workshops in Digital Media, Design and Creative Technology
- Essential Skills, Numeracy, Literacy & ICT
- Up to £40 weekly incentive

Open to people aged 16 & 17 and up to age 22 (conditions apply)

For further information, please contact the Launchpad team on 02890 742255 or email: Launchpad@ashtoncentre.com



www.belfastworkconnect.com



Belfast Works⁺ CONNECT

SUPPORT | TRAINING | EMPLOYMENT

How We Help

- Person-Centred 1-2-1 Support
- Better Off Calculations, Specialist Benefits & Welfare Advice
- Training, Skills & Qualifications
- Volunteering, Job Tasters & Employment
- Financial Support (Clothes, Childcare, Travel)



For further information contact:

☎ 028 9074 2255

✉ belfastworks@ashtoncentre.com

📱 @BelfastWorksConnectAshtonCommunityTrust

Connecting People, Changing Lives



Funded By UK Government

Connected Communities Programme

Women from New Lodge, Shankill, Sedan, Nigeria, and Jordan have been coming together to share stories of home—celebrations, dance, music, food, and also the difficult experiences that shaped them. The women have spoken about how much they’ve learned from one another and how they plan to bring this learning back into their own communities. This project has been supported by Belfast City Council and TEO.



International Men's Day

The Ashton Centre partnered with Girdwood Community Hub and Belfast City Council to host a celebration for International Men's Day on 17 November 2025. Men from across North Belfast enjoyed a range of activities including barbering, massage, facials, reflexology, and plenty of food. Community partners were also on hand to offer advice and support. We are grateful to Belfast City Council for funding this event.



Benefits Advice Appointments

Ashton in partnership with North Belfast Advice Partnership hold weekly benefits checks at Ashton Centre. To make an appointment please contact Ashton Centre to speak to Fionnuala Black on 028 9074 2255.



Happy New Year from all at CRJ.

The end of 2025 and the start of 2026 has been busy, with our focus remaining on providing restorative solutions and supporting community safety. We have been supporting vulnerable residents with safety concerns and working with youth workers and social services to reduce anti-social behaviours in the New Lodge and greater North Belfast area.

We were invited to the city hall to a celebration of restorative justice, with our colleagues in Alternatives NI. This was a great opportunity to share experiences and note the contribution restorative practices bring to our communities across the city. We also attended a meeting of the North Belfast Partnership, for the community sector across North Belfast, the partnership is going from strength to strength and we look forward to see what it brings to the city.

As well as this, we have been working with people in our communities signposting substance abuse support and other services. We continue to work with the PSNI on the issue of hate crime and anti-social behaviours in interface areas and are partnering with organisations across the city to try and see some progress in this area.

In addition to this we have been supporting our neighbours in the New Lodge Road with new recycling initiatives and working on the security situation in the flats which house our offices. We spent an interesting night with the Fire Service when the gates malfunctioned, and everyone was locked in! Since then, we have seen the gates modernised, and a new system introduced.

December is a busy month for the whole community sector, and it was no different in our offices, we went full steam ahead seeking resolution and extra support where it was needed with the hope to make some Christmases a little bit merrier. Our colleague Gerry O'Reilly in New Lodge Housing leads on this, and we were delighted to help and support these initiatives.

Finally, CRJ are part of the new Community Navigator initiative as part of the North Belfast Network Support Project. CRJ will be staffing a part-time navigator role to support new and existing community safety forums and networks, with the aim of forging new connections and processes. This new project, which has had success in other parts of the city, will look at the most prevalent community safety issues in North Belfast, namely, ASB, Interface Violence, Domestic Violence and Abuse, Substance Issues, Hate Crime and Road Safety. We look forward to working with all the partner groups and sharing expertise on these important issues and will be linking in with the North Belfast Partnership on this.

That's all for now, as always you'll find us at 14 New Lodge Road, our door is always open.



The Agency of Change – New Lodge Arts

In December 2025 17 of our agents pitched their social action/community project ideas to a panel of experts. The agents did a fantastic job at presenting their pitches and made it a difficult choice for our panel. Our panel this year consisted of a range of people with different backgrounds and skills to help the judging as fair as possible. This year we had Pete Snodden (Cool fm), Taylor McGrann (Sinn Fein), Vicky Blades (Women in Business NI/Actor) and our wonderful Alumni Agent Sophie Rossbotham. They were set with the challenging task of choosing only three projects to receive £2000 to make their idea a reality. A massive thank you to them all for giving up a Saturday to be part of it this. Our three projects that got chose for the funding are called 'From Mask to Mic', 'Cúpla Focal' and 'Newlight Network'. Watch this space for more info on our inspirational agents and their exciting new community projects! Follow us on [Facebook](#).



NLA STUDIO



PODCASTING



VOICEOVER




RECORDING
MUSIC PRODUCTION



**NEW LODGE
ARTS**

 @nla.studiobelfast
 07736389968
 nlabelfast@gmail.com
5 CHURCHILL STREET, BT15 2BP



NLA STUDIO

BASED IN NORTH BELFAST. 10 MINS WALK FROM THE CITY CENTRE.
WE OFFER HIGH-QUALITY FACILITIES FOR CREATORS OF ALL LEVELS –
AT AFFORDABLE RATES.

PODCASTING

RECORD IN A PROFESSIONALLY TREATED ROOM DESIGNED FOR CLARITY AND COMFORT IDEAL FOR SOLO OR GROUP PODCASTS
LOOKING FOR A POLISHED SOUND.

VOICEOVER

PERFECT FOR FILM, TV, RADIO, AND DIGITAL MEDIA. RECORD IN OUR VOCAL BOOTH WITH VIDEO SCREEN FOR PRECISE SYNC AND CLEAN DELIVERY EVERY TIME.

MUSIC PRODUCTION

WORK WITH OUR IN-HOUSE PRODUCER WITH OVER 30 YEARS' EXPERIENCE. WE SUPPORT EVERYTHING FROM SINGER-SONGWRITERS TO FULL BANDS – WHETHER YOU'RE RECORDING, MIXING, OR PRODUCING BEATS.

OPEN TO ALL . PRO-LEVEL SETUP
LOW HOURLY RATES FOR COMMUNITY ARTISTS

Christmas Party Day

Participants from the Community Inclusion Projects joined with the North Belfast Men’s Shed for a festive day filled with games, bingo, a quiz, and a raffle. The Christmas spirit was definitely alive. Congratulations to all prize winners—especially Liz Donnelly, who won the top prize of a 40-inch TV and immediately donated it to be raffled again to raise funds for TAMHI. A brilliant day enjoyed by all.





The Pantry at Ashton Centre



The Pantry Programme at Ashton Centre has been operational for four years. The Pantry functions as a social supermarket, providing food, household items, and personal care products to families weekly. This shopping opportunity is complemented by wrap-around services designed to support family life and build the capacity of parents and caregivers.

These services include enrolling in and attending training programs, as well as participating in workshops on various topics such as money management and parenting skills. Individuals also have access to health and well-being support, which includes complementary therapies and counselling.

The wrap-around services are tailored to meet the specific needs of each family. Additionally, families can be referred to the Family Support Hub network, gaining access to over 70 services committed to assisting families.

The Pantry Programme is available to families in North Belfast who are facing financial hardship and have children under 18 living in the household. Access to the pantry is granted solely through referrals from community partners or schools.

Once a family is accepted into the programme, they receive support for 12 weeks, with a weekly shopping allowance ranging from £40 to £50.

Ashton Community Trust is collaborating with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Belfast City Council to ensure the ongoing delivery of the Pantry Programme.

For more information on how to refer to the Pantry Programme, contact Ashton Centre on 02890 742255 or email fionnuala.black@ashtoncentre.com

Community Fridge at Ashton Centre

The Community Fridge at Ashton is for anyone in financial hardship and in need of food support. A self-referral is all that is needed to register. You can do this by completing a registration form at the Ashton Centre Reception. Once you receive a slot to attend, you can do so for 6 consecutive weeks.



COMMUNITY FRIDGE

Register at Ashton Centre

For 6 weeks of Community Fridge support

Call: (028) 9074 2255
or email fionnuala.black@ashtoncentre.com

ashton
Supporting North Belfast

ashton

Kinderkids Daycare



Ashton Kinderkids Daycare based in the heart of North Belfast operating over 2 sites, Cliftonville Road & Henry Place (off Clifton Street)

Kinderkids is a long standing community childcare provider with over 20 years experience serving the North Belfast community and its children.

Providing Early Years & Afterschool options from individual sessions to full week care.

Kinderkids Daycare had developed a child centre philosophy which is central to the care and learning we provide to each child and their family.



To register for a place or for more information please contact;
Charlene Foster – charlene.foster@ashtoncentre.com
Telephone: 028 9521 9830
Fionnuala Black - fionnuala.black@ashtoncentre.com
Telephone: 028 9074 2255

Alcoholics Anonymous Antrim Road Group, Belfast

Address: Ashton Centre, 5 Churchill Street,
Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2BP



Meetings and times:

Sunday: 12:30	Closed Meetings
Sunday Night: 8:30	Closed Meetings
Monday: 8:30	Closed Meetings
Tuesday: 8.30	Open Meetings
Wednesday: 8.30	Closed Meetings
Thursday: 8.30	Closed Meetings
Friday: 8.30	Step Meetings
Saturday: 8.30	Discussion Meetings

Zoom Meetings: Tuesday and Saturday 8:30pm



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>

ashton Supporting North Belfast
Belfast City Council

Sewing Workshop

Join our fun and beginner-friendly sewing class and unlock your creativity!

8 Week Program
Every Wednesday
10am - 12pm

NOW OPEN FOR REGISTRATION !!

£2 per week

@ New Lodge Arts, Fab Lab
5 Churchill Street, BT15 2PT

Whether you've never touched a needle or just need a refresher, this course will guide you through the basics of sewing, machine operation and simple projects. By the end, you'll have the confidence and skills to tackle your own handmade creations. All materials provided and no experience necessary.

For more information please contact S aerl aith on:
028 9074 2255
saerlath.kerr@ashtoncentre.com

Health and Wellbeing Residentials

Ashton has been delivering Health and Wellbeing Good Relations residentials through Belfast City Council’s Peace Plus Programme. Since January, 150 women from across the Belfast City Council area—particularly North Belfast and the Shankill—have taken part. Delivered in partnership with the Shankill Women’s Centre, these residentials have been a major success, helping to build new relationships and deepen understanding of good relations and the evolving diversity of our communities.





Ashton Bridge of Hope Upcoming Training Courses

Ashton's Bridge of Hope programme is pleased to introduce a series of new personal development opportunities scheduled over the coming months. All services are funded by the Victims and Survivors Service and are open to anyone affected by the conflict.

To register interest or request further information, please contact our Training Coordinator at mary@ashtoncentre.com

BODY-MIND-EMOTIONS CONNECTIONS

A programme supporting balance and wellbeing

Wednesdays from 25 February 2026

10 am–12 pm | The Ashton Centre

This six-week programme explores the connection between the body, emotions, and wellbeing. Drawing on ideas from Traditional Chinese Medicine, it looks at how experiences such as stress, worry, sadness, fear, anger, and anxiety can be held in the body.

Sessions are gently paced and include discussion, guided reflection, and grounding practices. There is no pressure to speak or share; participants are encouraged to take part in whatever way feels comfortable for them.

Each session ends with a short relaxation or guided meditation, helping you leave feeling calmer, steadier, and more supported. Open to anyone impacted by the conflict.

No experience needed.

QI FLOW – GENTLE MOVEMENT & ENERGY STRETCHING

A calm, body-led movement practice

Wednesdays from 25 February 2026

1 pm–2 pm | The Ashton Centre

Qi Flow is a slow, gentle movement practice inspired by Traditional Chinese Medicine. Using soft stretches, mindful breathing, and flowing movements, sessions support the body's natural energy pathways and help ease tension built up through stress or difficult experiences.

Movements are adaptable and done at your own pace, with an emphasis on listening to your body rather than pushing or performing.

Often described as a moving meditation, Qi Flow supports relaxation, grounding, and a sense of ease, helping you feel more settled and connected by the end of the session.

Open to anyone impacted by the conflict.

No fitness level or experience required.

BODY • MIND • SPIRIT ALIGNMENT

A six-week wellbeing programme

Thursdays from 26 February 2026

10 am–12 pm | The Ashton Centre

This six-week programme offers time and space to reconnect with body, mind, and spirit. It is suitable for anyone who feels overwhelmed, disconnected, or in need of a pause from everyday pressures.

Sessions include simple discussion, grounding practices, reflection, and a short meditation. Sharing is always optional.

The course explores the body as a source of awareness, the mind and its patterns, and personal meaning and inner resources, supporting balance, clarity, and wellbeing.

Open to anyone impacted by the conflict.

No experience needed.

CYCLE OF MEDITATION & HEALING SOUNDS

A four-week programme for calm and balance

Thursdays from 26 February 2026

1 pm–2 pm | The Ashton Centre

This four-week cycle offers a calm, welcoming space to slow down and reset. Sessions combine gentle breathwork, light QiGong-style movement, guided meditation, and healing sounds to support relaxation and wellbeing.

Sessions are suitable for beginners and those with experience alike. Everything is optional and adaptable, with a focus on comfort and moving at your own pace.

The aim is to ease tension, quiet the mind, and help you leave feeling more grounded and settled.

Open to anyone impacted by the conflict.

No experience needed.

HAND REFLEXOLOGY WORKSHOP

A practical, calming wellbeing session

4-hour class | Date to be confirmed

The Ashton Centre

This hands-on workshop introduces the basics of hand reflexology, a simple, gentle technique that supports relaxation and wellbeing.

Participants will learn easy reflexology points and techniques that can be used on themselves or others, making it a practical tool for everyday stress and self-care.

The session is taught at a steady, supportive pace and is suitable for complete beginners.

Open to anyone impacted by the conflict.

All materials provided.

CANDLE MAKING & AFFIRMATIONS WORKSHOP

A creative, calming wellbeing session

Wednesday 11 February 2026 | 10 am–12 pm

McSweeney Clinic

Additional dates and times available

This relaxed workshop combines candle making with simple affirmations focused on calm, self-care, and inner strength. Participants will create their own candle while enjoying time to slow down and reflect.

No experience is needed, and there is no pressure to share. You'll leave with a handmade candle.

Open to anyone impacted by the conflict.

All materials provided.

TAKE 5 STEPS TO POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

A practical wellbeing workshop

Saturday 7 February 2026

McSweeney Centre

This one-day workshop introduces the Take 5 Steps approach to supporting positive mental health and wellbeing. Through discussion, reflection, and practical activities, participants explore simple steps that can support mood, manage stress, and improve emotional balance.

The session is relaxed and accessible, with no pressure.

Open to anyone impacted by the conflict.

No experience needed.

Ashton Bridge of Hope

TROUBLES PAYMENT SCHEME

ashton
Bridge of Hope

Were you physically and/or psychologically injured by an incident during the Troubles/Conflict?

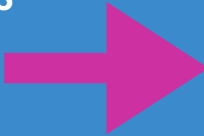


Please contact us for further information

If so, you may be eligible to apply to the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme

Call us on:
028 90 742255

QR code us on



Email us on:
bohension@ashtoncentre.com



Ashton Centre
5 Churchill Street
Belfast



HEALTH & WELLBEING

ashton
Bridge of Hope

What is a Health & Wellbeing Caseworker and how can they help?

A Health & Wellbeing Caseworker can assist you to access services, information and support to improve your health and wellbeing.



Our Health & Wellbeing Caseworkers are here to discuss your needs with you and find services to meet those needs.



This support could include counselling, reflexology, massage therapy, child therapy or it may involve physical activity, disability aids, social groups or training/education. This also includes The Troubles Permanent Disability Payment Scheme

Call us on:
028 90 742255

QR Code us on:



You are eligible if you have been impacted by the conflict/troubles.



Ashton Centre
5 Churchill Street
Belfast



www.ashtoncentre.com

ashton
Bridge of Hope

- ✓ Counselling
- ✓ Complementary Therapies
- ✓ Personal Development
- ✓ Health & Wellbeing Casework Support
- ✓ Life Coaching
- ✓ Pension Welfare Support for Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment

Building a healthy resilient you

Get in touch: (028) 90 221 022

irene.sherry@ashtoncentre.com mary.stanton@ashtoncentre.com

<https://bridgeofhope.support/>

Follow Ashton On Facebook

Are you aware Ashton is on Facebook? You can follow us to find out what's happening. Additionally, we have established a Facebook Group where we regularly share information about our services. We invite you to follow us or join our Facebook Group to stay informed. Thank you.

facebook.com/ashtoncommunitytrust
facebook.com/groups/Ashton



Open letter to Steve Reed MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government; and Hilary Benn MP, Secretary of State

Shortsighted Cuts Will Devastate People, Prosperity and Ambition

The UK Government's decision to impose a 64% cut to funding for programmes tackling economic inactivity is devastating. It will dismantle vital community-based services, put hundreds of jobs at risk, and leave thousands of vulnerable people this year without the support they rely on.

Economic inactivity remains one of the most persistent challenges facing communities across the UK, driven by disability, ill health, caring responsibilities, and high numbers of young people not in education, employment or training. Community-led programmes, most recently funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, have consistently helped people gain skills, move into work, and reduce pressure on health and other public services. These programmes work. They change lives.

From April 2026, funding will fall from £25 million per year to just £9.2 million under the new Local Growth Fund, driven by a rigid 70/30 capital-to-revenue split. This approach is fundamentally unsuited to tackling economic inactivity, where investment in people and frontline services delivers the greatest impact.

When the Local Growth Fund was announced, the UK Government committed to a bespoke, flexible programme reflecting local priorities. From the outset, the community and voluntary sector made clear that a capital-heavy model would

undermine effective service delivery. That warning has been ignored.

This decision is not what was promised, nor what our communities should accept. Whether it is a young person seeking their first opportunity, someone returning to work after illness, or a person with learning difficulties, access to tailored support is essential for both social inclusion and economic growth.

Cuts of this scale will destabilise services, force staff losses, and leave those furthest from the labour market with no alternatives. We therefore call on you to immediately reverse the allocation model, protect services through 2026/27, and commit to genuinely co-designed, sustainable funding that reflects real community need.

Political courage is needed now to prevent irreversible harm and secure a stronger, fairer society.

Belfast Works Connect is backing the call for urgent changes to the Local Growth Fund, to ensure frontline community services are properly protected.

While funding is being prioritised for capital projects, the vital day-to-day support that people and families rely on is facing severe cuts. This decision puts Belfast Works Connect — and many organisations across the community and voluntary sector — at serious risk.

The proposed 64% funding cut by the UK Government threatens essential services and the communities that depend on them most. Funding must reflect the real and growing needs of people across our communities.

Women's Health and Wellbeing Programme

The Ashton women's group continues to meet every Thursday morning, offering a supportive space for women to connect and take part in activities such as art therapy, mindfulness, crocheting, knitting, meditation, and more. The programme is shaped by the women themselves and funded by Belfast City Council.

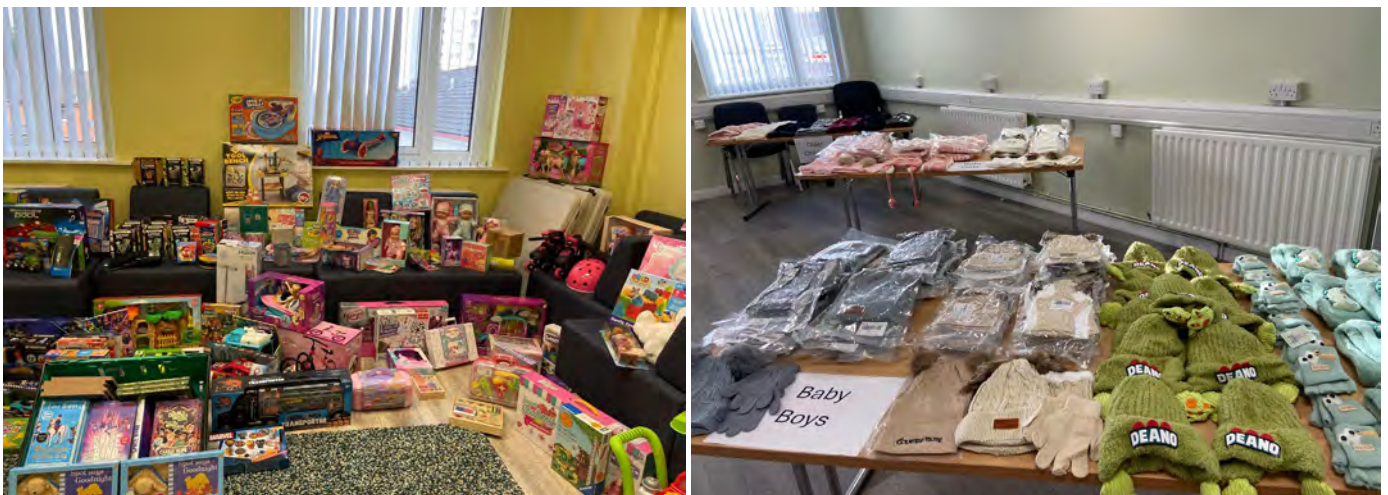


Anti-Poverty Interventions

The Childcare & Family Support Department at Ashton has continued to deliver anti-poverty programs. In addition to the ongoing Community Fridge and Pantry Program, a Christmas Toy Event provided toys to 80 children, while a Winter Warmers Event supplied warm hats, gloves, and scarves to 60 children.

To register for the Community Fridge, please complete a registration form at the Ashton Centre Reception.

To access the Pantry Program, you must be referred by another organisation with which you are currently engaged, such as your child's school, Sure Start or Housing Provider. For more information, please contact the Ashton Centre at (028) 9074 2255.



Ashton's Older Persons Group

The group has had a busy couple of months. In partnership with Greenshoots Production Company, we visited the Grand Opera House to see "Under the Lights," which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

We conducted a series of workshops based on the Take 5 Principles, funded by Belfast City Council's "Your Voice, Your Choice" program. The group participated in well-being and aromatherapy sessions, including hand massages, as well as

workshops on candle making and creating table centrepieces.

In partnership with Supporting Communities, we hosted digital workshops for the Older Persons' group. These focused on getting WhatsApp set up on phones and how to send and receive emails and messages. Additionally, there was a session on cybersecurity and scamming, along with information on online banking.



Look North Festival

The festival takes place over the weekend from Friday 27 to Sunday 1 March 2026, with some spill over events in the week leading up to that weekend.

Our aim is to celebrate North Belfast's rich heritage, and its cultural, creative and literary talents. As a result, our programme features a wide range of activities and interests, including talks, walking tours, literary discussions, debates, poetry, music, workshops, and exhibitions, drawing on local talent, but also including outside performers.

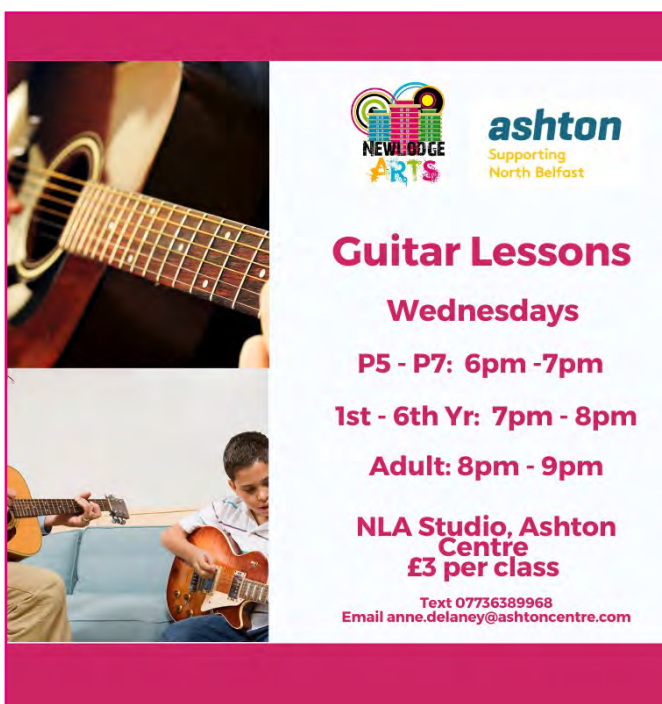
Please check individual event listings on our website www.northbelfastfestival.com for the most up-to-date information.

The Look North Festival organisers include The John Hewitt Society, the North Belfast Heritage Cluster, Ulster University, Beat Carnival, Cavehill Business Association, Paul Carlin, The Linen Hall Library and New Lodge Arts.

We are grateful to all our supporters and venue providers, particularly our principal festival sponsors, the National Lottery Community Fund, Belfast City Council Community Festivals Fund, Ulster University, and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

We do hope you enjoy our Festival, and we are pleased to present the creativity and quality of work from local artists, performers and young people, and the opportunity to remember and to celebrate all that is special about North Belfast.

Tony Kennedy, Chair – Look North Committee



NEW LODGE ARTS **ashton**
Supporting North Belfast

Guitar Lessons

Wednesdays
P5 - P7: 6pm - 7pm
1st - 6th Yr: 7pm - 8pm
Adult: 8pm - 9pm

NLA Studio, Ashton Centre
£3 per class

Text 07736389968
Email anne.delaney@ashtoncentre.com

The advertisement features two photographs: the top one shows a close-up of a guitar's neck and strings, and the bottom one shows a young boy playing a guitar on a couch.



NEW LODGE ARTS **ashton**
Supporting North Belfast

Arts Academy

Mondays
Tinys Drama
Junior Drama
Hip Hop
Senior Drama

Tuesdays
Crochet Class (adults)
Drawing Class (adults)

Wednesdays
Tiny's Arty Kids
Junior Arty Kids
Junior Musical Theatre
Senior Musical Theatre

Wednesdays
Junior Guitar Class
Senior Guitar Class
Adult Guitar Class

Thursdays
Tiny's Drama
Junior Drama

Starting back 12th January!

£3 per class

Contact New Lodge Arts
07736389968

The advertisement includes a row of four small photographs at the bottom showing various arts activities: a boy playing guitar, a child painting, a girl playing a drum, and a group of children performing.

New Lodge Arts' Christmas Production

Huge congratulations are due to the talented young people of New Lodge Arts on their Christmas production of MTI's *Beauty and the Beast*, staged at the Boys Model School in December. The production was a wonderful showcase of creativity, commitment and confidence, and a true celebration of youth theatre at its best.

The cast delivered an amazing performance that brought the much-loved story to life with energy and humour. Each performer embraced their role with enthusiasm, demonstrating not only strong acting and vocal ability, but also a clear sense of teamwork and professionalism. Amy Brannigan stepped into the role of Belle, a character she had dreamed of playing since childhood, and she truly shone on stage. It was clearly the perfect role for her, and we could not have been prouder of her performance.

Special recognition must also go to the creative and support teams at New Lodge Arts, whose guidance and encouragement helped the young cast reach such a high standard – to Aaron, Rochelle & Alex who showed dedication, provided support and inspired the young people could develop their skills, build confidence and express themselves creatively.

Everyone involved should be immensely proud of what was achieved. This production was a shining example of what young people can accomplish when given the chance to learn, collaborate and perform.

Well done to all the cast and crew of ***New Lodge Arts' Beauty and the Beast***—a truly magical achievement and a performance to be remembered. Follow us on [Facebook](#).



Happy Days Christmas Lunch

If you are a follower, you would be fully aware that Happy Days loves any excuse to get out and party. Christmas season is the time of year to sparkle up and be merry therefore we just have to join in.

We headed out to The Chester Bar, which was extremely accommodating and made sure that our crew had the best day out. On this outing it was fantastic to see how our crew have come along and made friendships while attending Happy Days. Looking around it was obvious that our work on communication skills and socialising is definitely paying off. The giggles from the surrounding tables, the banter being thrown about to one another and even our participants having the confidence to order their drinks on their own at the bar was wonderful to see. Staff were not drinking and we did get jealous of a few of the pornstar martini's being ordered.

The food was lovely and the open fire was just making us all want to stay there all night - we easily could have! Perhaps next year the lunch can be extended to the evening hours.

Getting out and about with our friends is very important, some of our crew have struggled over the years with anxiety, confidence and also not being with their peers. At Happy Days we develop those skills and provide opportunities to demonstrate and to showcase their learning. Another example of how we are proud of their achievements no matter how a small they may seem.

Next up, we are heading off in February to the Slieve Donard for a fancy night away, keep an eye out to hear all about it. We are looking forward to the thermal spa and swimming pool as well as the craic! Apologies in advance to anyone in Newcastle wanting to relax when we are there! Follow us on [Facebook](#).



DRUG AND ALCOHOL SUPPORT SERVICES

BELFAST HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST AREA

Date of publication: 2022

Disclaimer: Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this directory at time of print, we do not accept any responsibility or liability for any errors. It is recommended that you always check directly with providers that their service or organisation meets your requirements. Where any specific organisation or service is mentioned by name or otherwise this does not necessarily constitute or imply any endorsement or recommendation by NIDACTs or PHA of that organisation or service.

This publication can also be downloaded from www.drugsandalcoholni.info

Services for Adults

Community Drugs Programme

One to one and family support, auricular acupuncture, mentoring and onward referral service.

[Open Access](#)

Falls Community Council

☎ Tel: 028 9020 2030

Reach Out

One to one support for alcohol and/or drug misuse (and other associated issues).

[Open Access/Self Referrals Accepted](#)

Extern

☎ Tel: 074 4253 3165

Low Threshold Services

Aimed at those who misuse alcohol and/or drugs at harmful levels and/or in harmful ways but who are unable to commit to formal treatment (including chronic drinkers & injecting drug users).

[Open Access/Self Referrals Accepted](#)

BHSCT Drug Outreach Team

☎ Tel: 028 9504 1433

Extern Alcohol Housing Support Service

☎ Tel: 028 9033 0433

Community Based Adult Services

One to one therapeutic treatment and support service for those aged 18+ misusing alcohol and/or drugs. Family members can also get advice and support - regardless of whether their significant other is seeking help.

[Open Access/Self Referrals Accepted](#)

Inspire Wellbeing Addiction Services

☎ Tel: 028 9066 4434

Dunlewey Addiction Services

☎ Tel: 028 9039 2547

Statutory Addiction Service

Provided by a range of specialist teams within community and hospital settings.

[GP/Health Professional Referrals](#)

BHSCT

☎ Tel: 028 9504 2900

Residential treatment is accessible through the statutory addiction service.

Residential Addiction Treatment Centre

6 week residential programme.

[Addiction Service Referrals](#)

Carlisle House

☎ Tel: 028 9032 8308

For more detailed information on services available in your HSCT area visit:

www.drugsandalcoholni.info



"Addressing drugs and alcohol together"

Young People/Family

Belfast Youth Engagement Service (YES)

A youth friendly, holistic health and wellbeing service where young people, aged 11-25, have opportunities to socialise and to get advice and support on a range of issues.

[Open Access](#)

Extern

☎ Tel: 028 9032 5786

Community Drugs Programme

Drug and alcohol education and awareness programmes, accredited and non-accredited, targeted at young people and/or parents.

[Open Access](#)

Falls Community Council

☎ Tel: 028 9020 2030

Reach Out

One to one support for alcohol and/or drug misuse (and other associated issues).

[Open Access/Self Referrals Accepted](#)

Extern

☎ Tel: 074 4253 3165

Targeted Lifeskills Service

Groupwork programmes for young people, aged 11-25, focussed on lifeskills and harm reduction.

[Targeted at At-Risk/Vulnerable Groups](#)

LYMCA

☎ Tel: 028 9267 0918

Steps to Cope/ Hidden Harm

For young people aged 11-25 who have been impacted by parental substance use and mental health problems.

[Open Access/Self Referrals Accepted](#)

ASCERT

☎ Tel: 0800 2545123

☎ www.stepstocope.co.uk

✉ stc@ascert.biz

DAISY

One to one and group therapeutic treatment and support service for children and young people aged 11-25. Family members can also get advice and support - regardless of whether their significant other is seeking help.

[Open Access/Self Referrals Accepted](#)

Start 360 & ASCERT

☎ Tel: 028 9043 5815

☎ www.start360.org

Pharos

Therapeutic treatment and support for families and children affected by parental alcohol and/or drug misuse.

[Social Services/Addiction Services Referrals](#)

Barnardos

☎ Tel: 028 9066 3470

DAMHS (Drug and Alcohol Mental Health Service)

A range of therapeutic support services for young people aged under 18 with significant mental health and substance misuse difficulties.

[GP/CAMHS Referrals](#)

BHSCT

☎ Tel: 028 9504 0365

Specific Groups

Needle and Syringe Exchange Sites

Maguire Pharmacy

📍 3 Beechmount Avenue

☎ Tel: 028 9032 0590

Chemist Connect

📍 59 High Street

☎ Tel: 028 9023 1002

Street Injecting Support Service (SISS) (inc. needle exchange)

📍 Extern

☎ Tel: 080 0085 8426

Removal of Drug Related Litter (Needle Finds)

📍 Belfast City Council

☎ Tel: 028 9027 0469

BHSCT Drug Outreach Team (inc. needle exchange)

☎ Tel: 028 9504 1433

Group Support

Call or go online to find a meeting near you:

Alcoholics Anonymous

12 Step Programme/Group Meetings

☎ Tel: 028 9035 1222

☎ www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

AlAnon

Group Support for Family Members

☎ Tel: 028 9068 2368

☎ www.al-anonuk.org.uk

Alateen

Group Support for Teenagers

☎ Tel: 028 9068 2368

☎ www.al-anonuk.org.uk/alateen

Narcotics Anonymous

12 Step Programme/Group Meetings

☎ Tel: 0300 365 1010

☎ www.na-northernireland.org

Community/Stakeholder Support

Belfast Drug & Alcohol Coordination Team/ Connections Service (BDACT Connections)

The DACT Connections Service provides information, advice, signposting and awareness raising initiatives to a range of community and stakeholder partners.

☎ Tel: 028 9084 0555 (Extern)

☎ www.drugsandalcoholni.info

✉ connections@bdact.info

Workforce Development Training Programmes

A range of drug and alcohol training courses for those working with adults, children and young people.

ASCERT

☎ Tel: 0800 254 5123

In Crisis? Call **Lifeline**

FREE 24/7 HELPLINE
0808 808 8000