

## “Let’s Explore Behaviour”

We are delighted that the new Northern Ireland wide Resource “Let’s Explore Behaviour” was launched last week at the Northern Area Stronger Together event – see links below:

News Article click [here](#).

Direct Link click: <https://cypsp.hscni.net/download/443/lets-explore-behaviour/47769/naog-lets-explore-behaviour.pdf>

Please share widely with colleagues, families, social media and in newsletters to ensure as many families as possible get access to the new Resource.



If you have any information you would like to share across our Locality Planning Group members in Belfast please email:  
[LocalityPlanning@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:LocalityPlanning@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

We wanted to bring to your attention an Open Letter issued by the NSPCC, calling for children in Northern Ireland to be given equal protection under the law.

Currently, the legal defence of 'reasonable chastisement' means that physical punishment of children can still be justified, leaving children with less protection from harm than adults. As highlighted in the NSPCC's open letter attached, there is clear evidence that physical punishment can negatively impact children's wellbeing, relationships, and long-term outcomes, and increase the risk of further harm.

Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland have already introduced legislation to ensure equal protection for children, and this campaign is urging Northern Ireland to follow suit by supporting the equal protection amendment to the Justice Bill.

We would strongly encourage your organisation to:

- **Sign the open letter** in support of this campaign: <https://forms.office.com/e/PK2KSBsGHV>
- **Share the letter** across your networks to help amplify the message and encourage more signatories.

By supporting this campaign, we can collectively advocate for a safer and more protective environment for all children.

Dear Party Leader,

Children in Northern Ireland deserve to grow up in a world where they are loved and protected from harm.

Yet our law still allows a defence of "reasonable punishment", meaning a parent or guardian physically harming a child can be justified.

This creates a troubling reality: **children have less protection from harm in law than adults.**

Decades of research show that physical punishment can harm children's wellbeing, damage relationships of trust and increase the risk of behavioural and emotional difficulties later in life. A 2024 report published by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) showed that children who experience physical punishment are up to 2.6 times more likely to experience mental health problems and up to 2.3 times likely to go on to experience significant harm through more serious forms of physical abuse.

It can also send a concerning message to children that violence 'corrects' behaviour.

Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland have already changed the law so that children have the same protection from assault as adults.

Across the world the direction of travel is clear. 70 countries have now passed laws giving children equal protection from physical punishment.

Northern Ireland now has the opportunity to do the same.

Removing the defence of "reasonable punishment" would bring clarity to the law and support the continued shift towards positive parenting. It would support parents to raise their children with empathy, and it would give professionals the clarity they tell us they want. Most importantly, it would ensure children here are afforded the same legal protection from assault as everyone else – as called for by a long-standing coalition of organisations and stakeholders.

We urge all political parties to support the tabled equal protection amendment to the Justice Bill. Stormont must act to ensure every child is protected from harm.

Children deserve nothing less.

## Take part in an interactive workshop to help shape a new automated telephone message for Belfast Trust's GP Out of Hours service.

The GP Out of Hours service is introducing a new automated telephone message to help callers access the right care at the right time in the right place. At this workshop, we will:

- Share background on why the new message is needed
- Discuss key information to include in the message
- Review draft wording and gather your feedback
- Explore ideas to help improve public understanding of the GP Out of Hours service

Your perspective will help ensure the message is clear, accessible, and meaningful for the communities we serve.

### Workshop Details

Date: Wednesday 22nd April 2026

Time: 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Venue: Mitre Training Room, Physiotherapy Department, Mitre Rehabilitation Unit, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast, BT9 7JB.

### Who Should Attend?

Anyone with an interest in improving Out of Hours services, including:

- Service users
- Carers
- Community representatives

### How to Join

Please register to confirm your attendance [here](#).

Warm regards,  
BHSCIT Involvement Team

Personal and Public  
Involvement (PPI)



Involving you,  
improving care

If you would like to receive the BHSCIT Involvement newsletter and register for our database [click here](#)





Researchers from Ulster University invite participants to take part in this anonymous online survey to investigate food insecurity and its associations with the public's health, as well as the public's view on food insecurity in their residential area.

*“Due to the rising crisis of food insecurity in Northern Ireland, this work is vital for assessing and addressing the issues which lead to the inequalities associated with food insecurity.”*



We are therefore asking you to kindly help us circulate and promote this survey among your networks”.

For more information and to complete the survey click [here](#).

The survey should take no more than ten minutes to complete, the data are anonymised and respondents may choose to enter a raffle to be in with a chance to win one of two £100 high street vouchers.



**Belfast**  
City Council



We started the process of developing the new Good Relations Strategy in April 2025, undertaking extensive consultation and engagement with a range of stakeholders across many sectors. We carried out 400 engagements in total, involving the general public, community organisations, statutory and governmental representatives, funded groups and Elected Members. The consultation methods involved:

- An online survey
- Focus groups
- One-to-one meetings on request
- Completing the circle event to discuss findings with consultees
- Consideration of the draft by the Shared City Partnership and by the Council

In February 2026, Council agreed to run an 8-week public consultation exercise. The consultation runs from 3 March to 5 May. Following this, a revised strategy will be presented to Council for adoption. In consideration of the draft strategy, we are keen to hear your views.

<https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/gr-strategy2026>



## JOIN OUR PARENT REFERENCE GROUP FOR GENERATION NEW ERA STUDY

- Are you a single parent?
- Do you have a child younger than 3 years old?

If YES we would love to hear from you

### Join us:

Parentline is hosting two meetings to allow a group of single mums and a group of single dads advise a new study about how best to include parents in future research about children.

The meetings will take place online and will last around 1.5 hours

### Where can i get more information?

For more information or to register to take part call ParentLine on 0808 8020 400.

### THANK YOU

We know that parents are very busy, and as a thank you for taking part, you will receive a £50 shopping voucher.



We would like to invite parents to advise a new study called Generation New Era about how best to include parents like them in future research about children.

For this advisory group, we particularly want to speak to mums and dads across Northern Ireland with a young child under 3 years old. We would especially like to speak to mums and dads who no longer live with, or are no longer in a relationship with, their child's other parent.

This research project is being carried out by Children in Northern Ireland and Parentline. They are conducting this research for a project team led by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) at University College London (UCL), in partnership with the Ulster University.

CLS carries out research studies exploring the experiences and development of children as they grow up in the UK. This advisory group will help CLS understand how to support parents in Northern Ireland to engage in the Generation New Era Study.

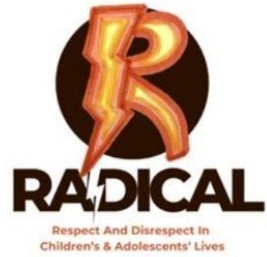
Generation New Era is a new study that will be starting later this year. We are not asking you to take part in the Generation New Era study but would like your views on what the study team could do to help parents take part in this new study.

We will be convening two groups of parents for a discussion: one group of mums and one group of dads. The group discussion will take place on Zoom. We may send you a short description of the study beforehand so you can understand more of the context before the discussion.

The discussion will last around 1.5 hours, and we can schedule the interview to take place at a time that is convenient for you. As a thank you for your time, you will receive £50 for taking part in this research.

Notes will

If you would like to speak to someone about taking part in a focus group, you can contact the Parentline team by telephone on **0808 8020 400** or by email at [parentline@ci-ni.org.uk](mailto:parentline@ci-ni.org.uk).



# WHAT DOES RESPECT REALLY MEAN TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

## INSIGHTS FOR YOUTH WORK PRACTICE

A practical workshop based on new research exploring children and young people's lived experiences of respect.

### ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

This session shares key findings from the recently launched RADICAL research project examining how children and young people experience respect in their everyday lives. It focuses on what this means for youth work, practitioners and organisations working directly with young people.

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- Youth workers
- Community and voluntary sector staff
- Teachers and educators
- Anyone working with children and young people

### DELIVERED BY

Dr Gail Neill (Centre for Youth Research and Dialogue, UU) and Dr Siobhan McAlister (Centre for Children's Rights, QUB)

SCAN HERE TO REGISTER



**Critical Voice NI**  
YOUTH WORK DIALOGUE



**QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST**

**CENTRE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**



**15 APRIL 2026**



**10:00AM – 1:00PM**

**CLIFTON HOUSE, BELFAST**

Lunch provided

Psychological services



The Neurodiversity Café offers a warm and welcoming space for parents/carers of children on the autism assessment waiting list and those that have used our service before, to pause, breathe, and focus on their own wellbeing.


It is a safe, supportive environment to talk, connect with others, and access information about local services and signposting.


### This Month's Focus: Holistic Wellbeing

The EHWBT will be joined by aromatherapist Dr. Kate Laverty, who will guide a gentle aromatherapy experience.

Participants will have the opportunity to explore essential oils chosen to support relaxation, emotional regulation, and overall wellbeing.

The session will take place in a calm, inclusive, and sensory-considerate environment, with refreshments provided.

 **Date: Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

 **Time: 10:00am – 11:30am**


 **Venue:**

**Black Mountain Shared Space,  
280 Ballygomartin Rd, Belfast BT13 3NG**

### Registration

Places are limited. To book your place, please email:  
[EHWBT@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:EHWBT@belfasttrust.hscni.net)



 **Belfast Health and Social Care Trust**



## Support Group Schedule April 2026

To find out when your next Support Group meeting is scheduled please click [here](#) for support group schedule.

Sign up is available via the link above and is necessary to receive all the details to join your meeting.

Please note all groups are subject to change and facilitation so registration is recommended.

Together with our volunteers we continue to provide our Support Group meetings in person and online.

If you have any queries regarding our Support Group Network, upcoming meetings or would like to learn more about the work we do, please contact us via:  
email: [supportgroup@autismni.org](mailto:supportgroup@autismni.org)  
phone: 028 90 401729 (Opt 1).

Best wishes,  
Autism NI.

**Parent/Carer Support Courses**  
AutismNI  
Northern Ireland's Autism Charity

Live and On-Demand options available



**Book Here**

Online Courses include:  
**Autism and Sensory Processing**  
15th April 2026, 10-12pm

**Summer Structure: Helping your child with routines and transitions**  
11th June 2026, 6-8pm

*Note: Courses delivered live on Zoom and include Q+A.*

In-person Courses in East Belfast include:

**Understanding Autism**  
21st April 2026, 5.45-7.45pm

**Using Visual Approaches**  
5th May 2026, 5.45-7.45pm

**Understanding Play and Engagement**  
19th May 2026, 5.45-7.45pm

# News April Training



**Free Training Courses for those working in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors**

Register and create your Training Member account on our website if you do not already have an account to book your place:

[Register Here](#)

## **Substance Use Awareness**

2nd April 10am - 1pm

## **Understanding Synthetic Cannabinoids (SPICE)**

9th April 10am - 1pm

## **Complexities of Cannabis**

16th April 10am - 1pm

## **Working with Substance Use in a Homeless Setting**

20th & 27th April 10am - 1pm

## **Foundation Module Young People, Children & Families**

21st & 29th April 10am - 4pm

## **Neurodiversity and Substance Use**

22nd & 29th April 9.30am - 12.30pm

## **Understanding the use of Performance and Image Enhancing Drugs**

22nd & 23rd April 10am - 1pm

## **Understanding Cocaine**

29th April 10am - 1pm



BELFAST CITY OF SANCTUARY

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

Join us at the Belfast City of Sanctuary AGM 2026  
to reflect, connect, and shape a more welcoming Belfast!



The Great Hall,  
Queen's University Belfast



Wednesday, 03 June 2026  
10:00am - 01:00pm

SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO REGISTER



[BelfastCityofSanctuary.com](http://BelfastCityofSanctuary.com)



[belfastcityofsanctuary@gmail.com](mailto:belfastcityofsanctuary@gmail.com)

FREE

## OCN COURSE



EIGHT WEEK  
LEVEL TWO IN  
HORTICULTURE

- PLANT PROPAGATION
- GROWING VEGETABLES
- GARDEN MAINTENANCE

10 AM to 12PM  
Starting April 29th

**SIGN UP NOW!**

Send us a message or  
call 028 90391028 to sign up





# Sighted guide training

I'm reaching out from Guide Dogs to offer our *free Sighted Guide Training* to Active Belfast, as well as any partner organisations, community groups, or volunteers you work with across your programmes.

As your mission focuses on helping people in Belfast become more active and healthier through partnership working, this training may support those efforts by building confidence in including people with sight loss in physical activity, wellbeing initiatives, and community events.

The training covers key topics such as:

- Sighted guiding techniques
- Common eye conditions
- Communication barriers
- Emotional consequences of sight loss
- Access rights
- Practical guiding skills (in face-to-face sessions)

**Matt Campbell**  
**Sighted Guide Training Officer (Northern Ireland)**

Call Guide Dogs: 0800 781 1444

Direct Mobile: 07901 103565

We offer both online and in-person delivery.

[Guide Dogs Sighted Guide Training](#)



THE  
**CHANGING LIVES  
INITIATIVE**  
FLOURISH & THRIVE

# Thinking outside the box

**How Different Brains Learn  
& Grow**



**Free Workshop For  
Parents and Caregivers**

Raising a child who learns differently brings both joys and challenges. This workshop helps parents understand how children's brains grow and adapt, with simple strategies to support learning at home.

Whether your child has a diagnosis, is waiting, or you're just beginning to wonder, this session offers knowledge, confidence, and practical strategies you can use straight away.

### In this workshop you can expect:

- ✓ Parent-friendly information on how children's brains learn
- ✓ Everyday strategies to support your child
- ✓ A focus on strengths as well as challenges

### Event Details:

 17th APRIL 2026

 10:30AM - 11:30AM

 GREENWAY WOMENS  
CENTRE  
19 GREENWAY  
BT6 0DT



SCAN HERE

**17<sup>th</sup>  
April**

**10:30AM -11.30AM**  
Thinking Outside  
the Box:  
How Different  
Brains Grow & Learn

SCAN ME



**24<sup>th</sup>  
April**

**10:30AM -11.30AM**  
Sensory SOS:  
Practical Strategies  
for Kids Who Feel  
Everything

SCAN ME



**1<sup>st</sup>  
May**

**10:30AM -11.30AM**  
Social Smarts  
Helping Your Child  
Build Meaningful  
Connections

SCAN ME



**8<sup>th</sup>  
May**

**10:30AM -11.30AM**  
Calm & Connected:  
Helping Kids  
Understand and  
Manage Emotions

SCAN ME



**15<sup>th</sup>  
May**

**10:30AM -11.30AM**  
Stop! Think! Act!  
Helping Kids with  
Self-Control

SCAN ME



**22<sup>nd</sup>  
May**

**10:30AM -11.30AM**  
Attention HQ:  
Helping Kids Tune  
In and Stay on  
Track

SCAN ME



A project supported by the PEACEPLUS Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).  
Delivered by Colin Neighbourhood Partnership as part of The Changing Lives Initiative: Flourish & Thrive

# New Pilot Programme to Invest in Grassroots Football in NI

£9 million fund aims to enhance access and participation across Northern Ireland



**Grants are now available to support investment in grassroots football facilities in Northern Ireland through the new Pilot Programme of the Northern Ireland Football Fund. The pilot, announced by Communities Minister Gordon Lyons, aims to increase the availability of facilities to support current and future participation, especially for women and girls**

- Improve the accessibility of facilities for disabled users.
- Upgrade and enhance the facility to develop a safe, inclusive and attractive venue.
- Provide an insight into the diversity of need across the grassroots sector, gaining an understanding of demand and assessing the capacity of applicants to deliver projects effectively
- Test key aspects of the Programme design to inform the development of the main Programme

A total of six projects will be funded, with grants ranging from £500,000 to £1.5 million in two funding streams.

Stream One is open to grassroots clubs that own or plan to own their facility, while Stream Two is open to councils, either applying alone or with a partner club. Councils will be contacted with further information.

Under Stream One, eligible items include full-sized grass and artificial grass pitches, LED floodlighting, club rooms, changing facilities and facilities for disabled players and spectators.

**The deadlines for applications are 15 April 2026 (Stream One) and 29 April 2026 (Stream Two).**  
[The Northern Ireland Football Fund Stream 1 - Grassroots Facilities Programme \(Pilot\) | Department for Communities](#)

ACTIVE  
COMMUNITIE  
NETWORK

# WOMEN LEADING IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

Programme designed to support women to develop confidence, employability skills, and social enterprise experience.

## WHAT WILL YOU GAIN?

Practical training in:

- Communications & Customer Service
- Social Media & Digital Marketing
- Digital Design
- Social Enterprise Leadership
- Mentoring from experienced professionals
- Peer support and networking
- Hands-on experience developing a real community business

If interested please contact us via social media or email:  
[meganf@activecommunities.org.uk](mailto:meganf@activecommunities.org.uk)

📍 155 Northumberland Street BT132JF



Belfast Health and  
Social Care Trust

caring supporting improving together



## HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

Susan supports people seeking international protection across Belfast. Help is available to overcome barriers accessing health services, understand the health care system in Northern Ireland and build individual and community capacity.

### Support offered:

- ✓ **Personalised Support**  
Help individuals and families access Health and Social Care
- ✓ **Signposting**  
Guidance to health, wellbeing, and community services
- ✓ **Promoting Inclusion**  
Encourage integration and a sense of belonging

📞 07795 953090

✉ [susan.gilchrist@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:susan.gilchrist@belfasttrust.hscni.net)



## Fostering comes to Belfast

**We are in your area now -  
Let's talk fostering!**

There are local children and young people in your community in need of safe and loving foster homes.

Chat to us about fostering opportunities that can work with your life. Discover how you can make a difference and give a child a brighter future.

HSC NI foster carers receive:

- training and development
- 24/7 support
- financial allowances



**0800 0720 137**



[adoptionandfostercare.hscni.net](http://adoptionandfostercare.hscni.net)

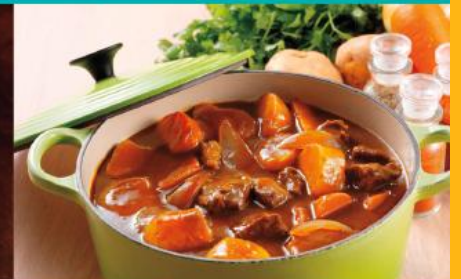
# Belfast City Centre Lunch Club

*A friendly space for over  
55s to enjoy a hot meal  
and good company*

**MAIN, DESSERT, TEA/COFFEE  
SERVED AT 12.30PM  
WEDNESDAYS  
JUST £5/WEEK!**



★ Book in for a taster session | T: 07743 962662



**Belfast Central Mission, 5 Glengall St Belfast**

# [Job and Training Opportunities](#)

## Family Support Worker



### BLACKIE RIVER COMMUNITY GROUPS

Employer Location: Published

## Job description

The role of the Family Support Worker FSW is to offer personal and practical support to families children aged 0 to 3 years and their significant carers. To do this, the FSW will conduct home visits as well as facilitating relevant activities in line with the Sure Start programme. The aim is to support local families, promoting the holistic development of children aged and supporting their parents in their parenting role by enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem, and linking them into a wider social and community network.

## Responsibilities

- To carry out a number of home visits from a caseload.
- Establish good relationships with families referred to the scheme.
- To promote the benefits of play for children's learning and development through creative approaches.
- Also be responsible to helping to plan and deliver parenting programmes in group setting within the Beechmount Sure Start area.

## Skills and Qualifications

### Essential Skills

- Minimum Level 3 in Child Care Learning and Development or Health and Social Care or equivalent.
- Effective communication skills.

## Further Information

Location: Beechmount Sure Start.

## [Job and Training Opportunities](#)

A recruitment poster for Ark Housing. The background is a photograph of a brick residential building with a playground in the foreground. A large yellow banner at the top left reads "WE ARE HIRING!". Below it, a blue banner contains the text: "Ark Housing's Homeless Services Team is hiring a Floating Support Officer (F/T). For more information on this job and to apply, please visit our website: [www.arkhousing.co.uk/vacancies](http://www.arkhousing.co.uk/vacancies)". In the bottom right corner of the poster is the Ark Housing logo, which is a circular emblem with "Ark HOUSING" in the center and "QUALITY HOMES" at the top and "STRONG COMMUNITIES" at the bottom.

**WE ARE HIRING!**

Ark Housing's Homeless Services Team is hiring a Floating Support Officer (F/T).

For more information on this job and to apply, please visit our website:  
[www.arkhousing.co.uk/vacancies](http://www.arkhousing.co.uk/vacancies).

Ark HOUSING  
QUALITY HOMES  
STRONG COMMUNITIES

Join the Ark Housing Team.

Floating Support Officer

Full Time: Permanent

Closing Date: 17 Apr 2026

Ark Housing Association is seeking to recruit an experienced and dedicated individual to join the organisation as Floating Support Officer. This position is on a permanent full-time employment basis.

For more information and to apply click [here](#).