

This is our health.

Programme Summary

Northern Ireland needs a new conversation about health. One that strengthens people's sense of contribution, builds confidence in what they can do for themselves and each other and helps protect the capacity of the health and care system for the moments when it is most needed. Currently, demand for health and care is rising faster than the system can sustainably meet. On its current trajectory, the gap between rising need and available capacity will continue to widen.

Consider a spectrum of health and care. At one end are the areas where only a professional system can act, such as emergency care, surgery, acute medical intervention, diagnostics, therapies and hospital admission. At the other end are the everyday things that keep people well, such as relationships, movement, food, purpose and community connection. These everyday things are critical to health and wellness, but they don't require and shouldn't rely on the formal system.

If more people feel able and supported to do the small daily things that help them stay well, the system can focus on the areas where professional expertise is essential. This creates greater capacity, resilience and stability over time.

The aim of "*This is our health*" is to understand what a shared promise, or "deal", between the public and the health and care system might look like. A capacity-building promise where:

- The health and care system protects and invests in the things the public need most, and
- People contribute in the ways they are able to, for themselves, their families and their communities

so that everyone stays as well as possible and between us all we can deliver more.

To shape this responsibly, we need to hear people describe:

- What helps them stay well
- The part of the system they most need us to protect
- What they feel able to contribute by supporting themselves and those around them

The conversations themselves are part of the intervention. When people talk openly and without barriers about what keeps them well, and when they hear themselves say out loud what they can do, their sense of identity and agency shifts. These small shifts, at scale, add up. And when people go on to share these messages through conversations with others, the impact spreads naturally.

Our engagement model is designed around this. We will start early in 2026 with visible, accessible, in-person conversations in public spaces, then extend naturally into peer-to-peer sharing and wider participation through partnerships and digital and media channels.

We will collect thousands of insights to analyse and reflect back to people across Northern Ireland, and we will use these to frame a new "deal" to share in the Autumn. We also hope to hear hundreds of powerful stories that will make this feel very human, real and important as the work evolves.