



BOLSTER COMMUNITY

Newsletter

CONFERENCE SUCCESS!



On Thursday 11th March, an international audience of over 750 people from all walks of life and across NI registered for the conference. Being Awesome Autism & Adulthood 2021 virtual conference to explore the various challenges and opportunities for adults with autism. Young adults with autism from across Newry and Mourne and the Southern Health & Social Care Trust came together to speak bravely about their experiences of living with autism. We welcomed a range of internationally acclaimed autistic speakers as well as professionals from within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust to speak at the conference and to

challenge some of the myths about autism. The conference provided amazing opportunities to explore ways in which society can improve the lives of adults with autism.

Shane Devlin, CEO of Southern Health and Social Care Trust opened the conference by welcoming the delegates to this event for change. Shane reminded us, "Co design and co-production are keys to being awesome. Stakeholders from health, education, housing, local government as well as families and people with autism must come together to design and deliver services in a society that are accessible, provide opportunities and support independence."

The stars of the event were Beth, David and Gary, 3 young autistic people and friends of Bolster Community who gave first-hand accounts of how they, as young autistic people, need society, education and healthcare services to do more to champion diversity and accommodate adults with autism.

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WE HAVE MOVED!

We've moved to our new office space in Whitegates Business Park in the Meadow, Newry. We're so excited to be here and wanted to thank our lovely new neighbours for welcoming us into the area. Since 2014, Bolster Community, previously known as Space NI, was based in Monaghan Street. You've probably driven past us at some point and wondered 'What's in there?!' and 'What do they do?'

Well, we're a practical family support charity with a social enterprise- Acorn candles which are made by young people of mixed abilities in our workshop and are sold through our online shop @ bolstercommunity.org (check out our stuff!)

Our team is made up of family support workers and programme facilitators and our mission is to help people get through and get ahead!

We have been helping to support local communities by providing workshops in schools and delivering the Home2Hospital Service in the Mournes and Slieve Gullion. We also coordinate the Newry and Mourne Family Support Hub through which we support everyone from babies to teens.

Although we've really only moved round the corner, we'll miss our Monaghan street neighbours who we've gotten to know and love over the years! Moving during a pandemic was a strange thing for all of us. We really look forward to getting to know our new neighbours, so if you're in the area, come down and say hello!



Bolster Community Staff outside our new premises at Whitegates Business Park, Newry

For now we'll have to settle for a socially distanced chat but we're looking forward to brighter days ahead when we can host an official opening with Bouncy Castles, balloons, and a welcome to all.

So, thanks again to all in the Meadow who have made us feel welcome so far!

Jacinta Linden

Jacinta Linden

CEO Bolster Community





CONFERENCE SUCCESS

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These amazing young adults were joined on the virtual stage by Adam Harris, founder and CEO of AslAm, Ireland's National Autism Charity which he founded based on his own experiences growing up in Ireland on the autism spectrum.

Jude Morrow took to the stage next. The self-professed anti-social social worker, author and motivational speaker said, "As someone who people spent their time trying to change, I see it as my turn now! Attitudes, perceptions and prejudices need to change - not us!"

Sarah Travers, former BBC news anchor, hosted our online event which was attended by an international audience of over 700 people.

Jacinta Linden, CEO of Bolster Community tells us "Many young adults with mixed ability attend Bolster Community's social enterprise, where they make amazing Acorn soy wax candles and vegan friendly soaps, available at bolstercommunity.org/shop"

On what has motivated Bolster to host this conference, Jacinta reflects, "We have been struck by the numbers who struggle to find support services. They tell us that they feel unfulfilled at home, at work and throughout wider society. Our audience heard from three young people who are determined not to be left behind and who absolutely aspire to "Be Awesome". As well as being an opportunity to hear first-hand how services can do more to support adults with autism, this event was a celebration of the shared good that comes from listening and responding those people who know the reality of living with autism.

Jacinta continues, "With support from leaders like Barney McNeany and Noreen McComiskey from Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Bolster Community has listened and learned from a wide-ranging consultative team to bring this conduit for change together! The conference highlighted what is possible when the appropriate supports and services are connected and that Being Awesome is within reach for all."

"I was at the conference this morning and I have to say it was brilliant. I had no idea how it would be but it ran so efficiently and was really enjoyable and informative." - feedback from an audience member

CO-PRODUCED BY

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Southern Health
and Social Care Trust

'The most important voices in the room'



A huge thank you to Beth, Gary and David for being champions and highlighting how we can provide better support for autistic adults. They really were the most important people in the room! We were delighted to have Gary perform an original song on the day.

GORGEOUS NEW SPRING SCENTS FROM ACORN CANDLES

Acorn products are handcrafted with love by young adults of mixed ability in our Whitegates workshop. In our factory we are delighted to offer a safe place for adults with autism to come and work to gain a sense of pride and fulfilment. We look forward to welcoming our Candlemakers back after Easter!

This Spring, we have rolled out 3 brand new scents

- Meadow Lily & Cotton Musk
- Black Plum & Rhubarb
- Fairy Dust



Follow us on Instagram
@BolsterCommunity

bolstercommunity.org



WALK MORE TO LEAD A HEALTHIER & HAPPIER LIFE!

Every movement counts!

COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

Everyone in Northern
Ireland should now be
using social distancing



Stay at least 2
metres away from
other people

Visit www.pha.site/coronavirus
for latest information
& advice on coronavirus

BENEFITS OF WALKING

MOOD
BOOSTING

STRESS
BUSTING

IMPROVE
CONCENTRATION

INCREASE
ENERGY
LEVELS

HEALTHY
HEART
& LUNGS

CONNECT
WITH
NATURE



MENTAL HEALTH & Stop Smoking

Bust the Myths...

KNOW THE FACTS

MYTH #1: Nicotine helps me deal with stress and anxiety

FACT: Nicotine increases physical stress, heart rate and blood pressure

MYTH #2: Stopping smoking is bad for my mental health
FACT: Stopping smoking improves physical and mental health

Watch here for more
information on Quitting
smoking:
<https://vimeo.com/504832409/903ca8e56c>



Myth #4: It's too late to stop smoking

FACT: It's never too late to stop. Smokers with mental health problems are more likely to die from tobacco related disease than their mental condition

Myth #3: People who suffer from mental illness can't quit smoking.

FACT: stopping smoking can be challenging, smokers with mental health conditions can successfully quit with specialised support and medication



**WE ALL
MUST DO IT
TO GET
THROUGH IT**



STAY SAFE



SAVE LIVES

Diamond Days Continues...

We are delighted to announce the continuation of our older peoples good relations programme in Newry, Mourne and Down. This programme has been rolled out across 6 districts in the Newry, Mourne and Down council area and will come to a close with our last district in Slieve Gullion. This cross community project is aimed at bringing people together in a relaxed safe atmosphere to learn from one another. Due to the current circumstances this group will look a little differently combining some on-line workshops and get together to reminisce about the past in fun and creative ways.

We look forward to welcoming some of our guest facilitators and speakers to the group and having plenty of fun and craic along the way. We hope to produce some fantastic food, artwork and a book containing stories of your Diamond Days!

We are also excited to introduce the inter-generational part of the project that will see a group of young people produce some complimenting artwork and designs in conjunction with the older people. If you know anyone aged between 12-14 living in the Newry/Slieve Gullion area please contact us on 028 3083 5764 to register. This will take place between April to June 2021.

Diamond Days

Stories

An older peoples good relations programme recalling memories of your Diamond Days

Newry, Mourne & Down

Funded by PEACE IV, Bolster Community welcomes you to participate in our Diamond Days for older people - a relaxed place to uncover stories, tell tales, and value memories, where cultural diversity is celebrated and people can live, learn and socialise together



Memories

Join Us For

- Workshops
- Day Trips
- Candle Making
- Celebration

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Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne
and Down
District Council

Peace
Northern Ireland - Ireland

This project has been funded by the EU's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)

SENIORS

HOME 2 HOSPITAL

- Are you, or a family member, over 60 and live in the Slieve Gullion area?
- Are there times when you struggle to get to your hospital appointments?

- If so, please contact Bolster Community, we are currently offering a Free Home2Hospital driver service in this area.
- All our drivers are Access NI checked and trained. They will be compliant with government regulations on PPE and only one passenger will travel in each vehicle (unless a carer is needed).
- Our driver will pick you up at home and accompany you to your appointment, ensuring you arrive safely and on time.

To register, contact Aine
028 3083 5764

bolstercommunity.org

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

In February, we started running Free English Language Classes over Zoom. Staying true to Bolster Community's mission to get through and get ahead, we set up these classes to help Newry's newest residents feel part of the community.

We've had a great response to our conversational classes, and have welcomed a number of keen learners from South Armagh to Kilkeel. Every Friday and Saturday night we meet to discuss a range of topics such as Jobs & Employment, Health Care and Education. Although the classes are currently through Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions, the students and their tutors plan to meet up in person soon! Lessons are free and funded by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

If you are interested in improving your English speaking skills, give us a call to register on 028 3083 5764.

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Newry, Mourne
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Since we last chatted so much has happened with Youth Upfront and our army of young leaders.

- 15 remote workshops complete, hosted by 3 fantastic guest facilitators!
- 120 Participants taking part across the whole of Newry, Mourne and Down!
- Stage 1 complete and ready to tackle community-wide initiatives. Stage 2 coming soon!

What a rollercoaster 5 weeks it's been with our brilliant guest facilitators and super keen audience. With some brilliant engagement, thought-provoking discussions, great prize draws lots of laughs along the way we can now draw a line under Stage 1 of Youth Upfront with some fond memories.

In Workshop 1, we had Mark McCormack from 'Create The Great In You' challenging everyone to ask questions of themselves, to realise true potential while identifying, understanding and overcoming obstacles that can get in the way.

Workshop 2 saw the dynamic duo of Grainne McCoy and Ryan Cinnamond, giving our participants plenty of food for thought about their ability to show resilience, overcome adversity and deal with whatever life throws at us. Oisín McConville reminded us all why it's so important to look after both our Physical and Mental Health and how both are critically linked in Workshop 3.

If Stage 2 is half as much fun as Stage 1 then we're in for a treat! With some brilliant ideas around Community Events we can't wait to see what our groups come up with next so watch this space!



WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING AT BOLSTER COMMUNITY IN APR-JUN 2021?

FRIENDS RESILIENCE	START DATE
• FUN FRIENDS - AGES 4-7	19/04/2021
• FRIENDS FOR LIFE - AGES 7-14	21/04/2021
• MY YOUTH FRIENDS - AGES 12-15	TBC
• ADULT RESILIENCE - AGED 16+	TBC
PARENTING PROGRAMMES	START DATE
• PARENTS PLUS ADOLESCENTS	TBC
• PARENTS PLUS SPECIAL NEEDS	27/04/2021
YOUNG PEOPLES PROGRAMMES	START DATE
• GO GIRL	20/04/2021
• YOUTH UP FRONT	ON-GOING

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER FOR ANY OF THE ABOVE PROGRAMMES PLEASE CONTACT US ON 028 3083 5764

All programme dates are subject to change due to current covid-19 restrictions

CONNECT

GO GIRL

Starting Soon

GO GIRL aims to give every girl an opportunity to become more self-aware and recognise their own strengths and ability, make better informed choices, learn the importance of effective communication and build resilience.

If you struggle at school with issues, such as bullying and involvement in unhealthy friendships/relationships, just to fit in. This results in the development of negative self-talk and poor body image.

Join us on GO GIRL to find out how you can overcome this!

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To register, contact Aine 028 3083 5764

bolstercommunity.org

FRIENDS for Life

Our FRIENDS Resilience team have been very busy in the last 12 months delivering 16 programmes throughout the pandemic in our Marcus Street premises and via Zoom. We were delighted when just before Christmas we had confirmation from the PHA Clear Project that they would fund the delivery of 7 FRIENDS for Life programmes to delivered to children in local primary schools"

FRIENDS for Life builds resilience, social skills and gives children coping skills for dealing with emotions and feelings. The programme has reduced anxiety for children throughout the Newry area, as well as equipping participants with the tools to rise to life's challenges. Through the programme, children aged 7-11 have been supported by promoting confidence, ability to focus, capacity to relax and regulate emotions.

Mr Mason, Headteacher of St Paul's Cabra, remarked that the programme has been a major benefit to pupils who have been struggling with worry and anxiety as a result of the impact of multiple lockdowns on childrens' mental health.

We were delighted to be able to provide FRIENDS for Life over Zoom to 7 primary school classes and to the neighbourhood renewal areas in Newry from Jan - Mar 2021. These programmes were funded by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency.

104 children took part from :

- St Mary's PS, Rathfriland
- St. Paul's Primary, Cabra
- St Ronan's PS, Mewry
- St Patrick's PS, Hilltown
- St Malachy's, Newry
- St Moninna's, Cloughoge, Newry
- St Joseph's, Newry
- Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, Newry

We visited the participants at their schools to present their certificates and an Easter Egg for every child who participated. So many of the children were grateful for the FRIENDS for Life programmes which provided a safe space to talk about feelings and anxieties which have emerged over lockdown.

We are delighted to be able to roll another 5 Friends for Life programmes to local Primary Schools between April to June 2021. Watch this space- FRIENDS for Life may be coming to a school near you!

"If your child is struggling and displaying symptoms of anxiety please contact us on 02830835764 for advice on upcoming FRIENDS programmes"

Tracy



028 3083 5764
info@bolstercommunity.org
bolstercommunity.org

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Southern Health
and Social Care Trust



Public Health
Agency

Project supported by the PHA

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