

# BOLSTER COMMUNITY



## Newsletter

### STAR BITES-57 TAKES OFF AT BOLSTER COMMUNITY

Earlier this year, in May to be exact, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, local Community Representatives and Bolster Community staff welcomed representatives from the Council, Community Advice, and statutory agencies to the launch of our Star Bites-57 café and sustainable kitchen. Since it's launch, Star Bites-57 has grown into a life-line for all who attend, many of whom make up the fabric of Newry.

Located in 5-7 Marcus Street, twice weekly, Joanne and the team transform our creative space to a café where everyone can visit for a chat, a cup of tea or coffee and a nutritious, hot meal. Our doors are open to anyone on the Housing Executive waiting list or living in Housing Executive accommodation. We welcome a variety of people to our safe space where people can relax in a friendly atmosphere. We're delighted to see connections being made between everyone who walks through the door of STAR-BITES 57.

This project is funded by the Housing Executive to offer support that will help local people in Newry to sustain their tenancy. As well as providing a safe place for these individuals and families, we work with partner organisations to provide additional support. We also provide one-to-one support for those who need a little extra help.

Originally from Spain and living in Newry, café regular Cova expressed a love of cooking. She loves how it brings people together and wanted to help prepare food for everyone at the café. Supported by Joanne and the Marcus Street Team, Cova achieved her Food Hygiene Certification and is all set to get into the kitchen. We're delighted to have the facilities- a fully functioning kitchen, a laptop, internet access, to equip our service users with life skills. Cova has a massive boost in confidence. Well done Cova!

If you would like to know more about the Star-Bites 57 Sustainable Kitchen, please contact Joanne on 02830835764 or [joannec@bolstercommunity.org](mailto:joannec@bolstercommunity.org)

**Housing  
Executive**



The Women's Group at Star Bites-57 having a chat & getting creative



Cova Reaches For The Stars!



**Fun, Friends & Freedom- that's what Summer's all about!**

This year, we tried something a little bit different by inviting facilitators to come along and introduce new skills to the children. Getting active was high up on the agenda this year. We had football coaching, basketball tournaments, hopscotch, Jurassic Ark, obstacle courses, archery and much more! Our aim was a #SummerOfPlay for all children, making sure that this included children who are disadvantaged, new to the area or who may otherwise be excluded from summer activities. We were delighted to make some extra room this year for resettled families from Ukraine. With typical Irish weather (four seasons in one day!) the children, as well as the team at Bolster and all our wonderful volunteers, took on the rain like they took on the den building. With great enthusiasm! Immense fun was had by all, with 78% of parents reporting an improvement in their child's confidence. We couldn't be more proud of this feedback.

Applying the principles of GIMME 5 we focused on making connections, activity, Take Notice of our surroundings, learning and the importance of giving. We would like to thank Clanmill Housing and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust for making it possible for many of the children to attend.

If you would like to read more on #summerofplay go to: <https://www.summerofplay.co.uk/>



Southern Health  
and Social Care Trust



## A Great Meeting With Sinn Féin Representatives

Bolster Community's Jacinta Linden and Allison Slater met with Finance Minister Conor Murphy MLA, Liz Kimmins MLA and Mickey Brady MP. A plan was discussed on how to work together to bolster communities and families facing the threat of growing poverty, especially with winter around the corner. The elected representatives listened to our own staff, Joanne and Caroline from the Family Support Hub, share heart-breaking testimony of their recent work in homelessness prevention, disability services and family support. Our guests shared their understanding of the issues raised and paid tribute to the sterling work of the Third Sector supporting those most vulnerable in our society.

## BOLSTER FAMILIES HAVE THEIR SAY

On Monday 4th July Bolster Community facilitated a meeting between Professor Ray Jones, Chair of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Services and local families who had sought help via the Newry and Mourne Family Support Hub. The parents bravely shared their stories with Professor Jones and each other. They talked about the challenges they had faced accessing support and some of the barriers they had to overcome before reaching out to the Family Support Hub. One parent told of how low she felt that "no-one seemed to be listening, I felt like I was going mad". All parents talked about the need for accessible, timely, flexible and practical services. One parent said, "sometimes just having someone to reassure you that you are doing a good job can make all the difference". The Independent Review of Children's Social Services has been commissioned by the Department of Health and is a fundamental examination of Children's Services, with a focus on quality, equity, resilience and sustainability. It is expected that Professor Jones and his team's report will be completed early in 2023. If you would like to know more the independent review into Children's Social Care Services go to: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/independent-review-childrens-social-care-services>

## CARERS REQUIRED!



**SHORT BREAKS PROVIDE REGULAR BREAKS FOR A CHILD / YOUNG PERSON WITH A DISABILITY**

**CAN YOU PROVIDE OVERNIGHT SHORT BREAK CARE FOR A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY?**

**WE OFFER:**

**- ALLOWANCES - TRAINING - SUPPORT**

**GET IN TOUCH FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**T: 02837 564350**

**E: [SHORTBREAKS.TEAM@SOUTHERNTRUST.HSCNI.NET](mailto:SHORTBREAKS.TEAM@SOUTHERNTRUST.HSCNI.NET)**



## INCREDIBLE YEARS

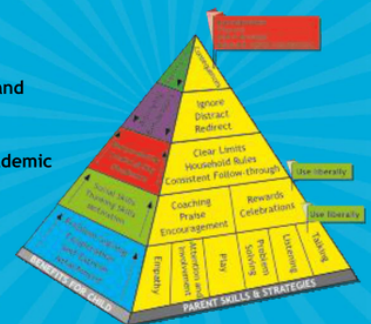


### School Age Programme

The Incredible Years School Age group work programme is primarily aimed at parents/carers of children aged 5-12. It works to strengthen parent-child interaction and attachment.

Parents will be supported to:

- Promote positive behaviours in their school age children
- Reduce challenging behaviour and promote problem solving skills
- Promote their child's social, academic and emotional development
- Set rules regarding computer, TV etc use
- In the parenting groups trained Incredible Years facilitators use video clips of real life situations to support training and stimulate parenting group discussion.



**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022, 10am -12 noon**  
**12 week programme via zoom**

For parents in Southern Trust area only. Priority for parents in Newry/Mourne Area  
For referral form or further information please contact Lorraine O'Neill:  
Email: [parenting.partnership@southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:parenting.partnership@southerntrust.hscni.net) Mob: 07880 474 747  
Delivery Partners: Parenting Partnership & Bolster Community



# Autism Connect

Autism Connect is an informal social hub designed around the likes and interests of people with autism. The aim of Autism Connect is to create and encourage a much-needed social outlet where autistic adults can meet in a comfortable, informal environment while also receiving any sign posting or support services if needed. Here at Bolster, our vision is to provide an atmosphere of fun, friendship, laughter and a safe space for these adults to express themselves and connect with others.

Autism Connect offers excursions, day trips, guest speakers and various inclusive activities that enable us to support opportunities for connection, employment, interviews and orientation support. All of which have benefited the group and seen them develop. Over the Summer activities have included game nights, CV writing, mock interviews, mindfulness, quizzes, art, music, bowling, singing and much more! From funkopops to karaoke nights, there hasn't been a dull day.



Thus far, those who have attended have commented on the need for such a service, especially for adults with autism, who often feel overlooked by services after the age of 18.

Music is very important to all our group members and is a passion which they all share. To help develop this shared interest we have commissioned an external provider who will lead on a five-week inclusive music project which will explore music technology, song writing using music software and creating field recordings. At the end of the project, the group will have a piece of music which they have jointly created and recorded.

One of our service users has commented that she is "so happy that Bolster Community is here." She added, "I love coming to meet people I feel comfortable with. I can feel myself gaining confidence."

And it is this statement that best summarises what Autism Connect and Bolster Community is all about. Small changes that lead to big differences!! We can't wait to show you what lies ahead for Autism Connect.

 Southern Health and Social Care Trust

For more information, contact Orla on  
028 3083 5764 or email [orla@bolstercommunity.org](mailto:orla@bolstercommunity.org).

## Bolster Community in Partnership With Leonard Cheshire

Grad Employ NI was created by Leonard Cheshire, who are a UK wide and international charity who support those with disability. It was created through a partnership with Ulster University and was lucky to secure funding from UK government fund Renewing Communities.

One of the programme organisers of Grad Employ NI, Roisin McDermott, stated: "We knew that young people with disabilities, including hidden disabilities and neurodivergent people, can find it more difficult to find employment. We had run a successful graduate programme in England and wanted to pilot it in Northern Ireland. This was our first year."

"The idea of the programme was to reach out to graduates, learn about their skills and their disabilities and find them a 3-4-month placement." In Northern Ireland, we have just 38 per cent employment rate for those with disability who are age 16-64, compared to the national employment rate of 80 per cent for individuals who do not have disabilities!

Many graduates who have applied for Grad Employ NI have hidden disabilities like epilepsy, ME, arthritis, anxiety, diabetes and Crohn's. Others are considered neurodivergent which includes autism, ADHD, dyspraxia, dyslexia, tourettes and more. And of course, there are physical disabilities such as MS and muscular dystrophy, which can impact on confidence and mental wellbeing.

"The not-for-profit sector and small business community have been particularly supportive of the programme," Roisin added. We here at Bolster Community are proud to say that we have been one of many host companies in Northern Ireland to be involved in this pioneering project through 23-year-old graduate Sarah Fox. Sarah, who has Crohn's disease, has been working at Bolster Community for 4 months and will continue to be apart of our team as Project Support Worker. When asked how Sarah felt about working at Bolster, she said, "It's just such a positive, pro-active environment. I'm a little bowled over by the work ethic and how hands-on the team are. Being in this environment is really making me think more about what I want in a career. It might sound cheesy but I feel that Bolster Community is a home away from home."



A few of the girls from Bolster Community Celebrate Partnership with International Charity Leonard Cheshire and Ulster University.



"Bolster Community is a home away from home," says Sarah.

Write or update your Will for free  
with Leonard Cheshire's

## BEST Club Out and About

Following on from our #summerofplay Summer Scheme we have our BEST Club all inclusive Summer Day Trips. Best Club is a programme for school age children with a disability and their siblings funded by the Community Fun NI. Supported by Bolster Community Staff children and parents enjoyed trips to Mount Panther Farmpark, Seaforde Tropical Butterfly House, Armagh Planetarium, Fort Evergreen Open Farm and Cranfield Alpacas.

We are looking forward to starting our next adventure with the BEST Club after school activity sessions coming back by popular demand in September.



## Newry's Women To The Wise

On Thursday 30th June, Bolster Community welcomed over 70 women to Bellini's Newry for a 'Ladies Night with a difference'. The night was dominated by conversation and the lived experience and wisdom of Menopause. It was Bolster Community's privilege to lead the way for change and invite discussion around the, too often, taboo subject.

Acting as host for the evening, Tracy McCartney, Training Development Officer @Bolster Community expressed her gratitude for women gathering together to learn more about Menopause and remarked that the night would be a chance to break some of the stigma surrounding Menopause.

Next up, the first Guest Speaker Briana McAteer of Briana McAteer Coaching took to the podium. Briana reflected on her experience as a TED-X Speaker in Enniskillen and reflected on the toxic negativity of the 'good vibes only' Social Media Movement and the harm feeding into this can do, especially to women who are struggling through Menopause.

During the interval, there was a chance for networking for local Women's Groups as well as refreshments and live music from local musician Decky Harbinson. Candlemakers Lisa, Donna and Olivia from Bolster Community's Social Enterprise offered cheese platters alongside prosecco. They took this opportunity to present their Acorn products from the recently rebranded luxury home scents range.

Bolster Community CEO Jacinta Linden reflected on the evening, "It's been a difficult few months for everyone, this "Women to the Wise," event was a school's-out for grown-ups event. It was a chance to escape the house, catch your breath and enjoy the company of a room full of wise women!"



"It's been a difficult few months for everyone. Women to the Wise is a school's out for grown ups event- a chance to escape the house, catch your breath and enjoy the company of a room full of wise women!"

-Jacinta Linden,  
Bolster Community CEO



# What's New for September?

## BOLSTER COMMUNITY

### FUN FRIENDS

4-7 years old

Fun FRIENDS guides the social and emotional development of children using fun, play-based group activities. It nurtures the child's development by teaching how to engage resilience skills early on.

**Start date: 19/09/2022**

**Time: 3.30pm**

**Location: Newry**

**Duration 10 weeks**

### FRIENDS FOR LIFE

8-11 years old

Friends for Life builds resilience, social and emotional skills in children. It is proven to reduce anxiety, as well as equip participants with the tools to rise to life's challenges.

**Start date: 21/09/2022**

**Time: 3.30pm**

**Location: Newry**

**Duration 10 weeks**

### PARENTS PLUS SPECIAL NEEDS

For parents of children of mixed ability  
Parents of children of mixed ability can face significant challenges, especially during the adolescent years. With our Special Needs Programme parents can get support to manage these challenges, improve their family's well-being and strengthen their links with other parents.

**Start date: Sept 2022**

**Time: 10.30am**

**Location: Newry**

**Duration 8 weeks**

### INCREDIBLE YEARS

School Age Programme

This programme is primarily aimed at parents/carers of children aged 5-12. It works to strengthen parent-child interaction and attachment.

**Start date: 21/09/2022**

**Time: 10am to 12 noon**

**Location: Zoom**

**Duration 12 weeks**

To register contact Lorraine O'Neill  
parentingpartnership@southerntrust.hscni.net

### Adult Resilience

15+

The Adult Resilience programme is ideal for anyone who may be dealing with a dramatic increase in life's pressures, choosing a career, social lives and maintaining a work-home life balance. The programme strengthens foundations for mental health skills and builds a resilience for life.

**Date: 13/10/2022**

**Time: 7pm - 9pm**

**Location: Marcus St, Newry**

**Duration: 6 weeks**

### PARENTING SUPPORT GROUP

For parents of children 11-16

Being the parent of a newly diagnosed child with a physical or learning disability can be overwhelming. If you are the parent of a pre-school age child with a disability then you and your child would be very welcome.

**Next date: 07/09/2022**

**Time: 10.30am**

**Location: Courtrooms,  
Markethill**

**Every 2 weeks**

### STAR BITES 57

For tenants of the NIHE

Join us for a bite, cuppa and a chat. Catch up on the craic, browse the paper. Our team will be there to help with any form-filling, appointment booking or signposting to local services that you may need.

**Next date: 05/09/2022**

**Time: 10am - 1pm**

**Location: Marcus St, Newry  
Every Monday and Thursday**

Find our more:  
[bolstercommunity.org](http://bolstercommunity.org)

### INTERESTED IN REGISTERING FOR AN UPCOMING PROGRAMME?

Contact: Justina MacDonald on  
028 3083 5764 or  
[trainingsupport@bolstercommunity.org](mailto:trainingsupport@bolstercommunity.org)



# ACORN

## SCENTS OF ACHIEVEMENT

While most people have been enjoying the fantastic August heatwave, here at Bolster HQ we have been getting hot under the collar for other reasons!!

Yes, it's that time of year when all our attention turns to Christmas. Our festive production has already begun in earnest.

We have started stockpiling all the top selling scents with a few new additions to the Acorn family. These are sure to go down a treat.

If you are that super organised gift buyer, please consider Bolster Community's beautiful Acorn Scent range this Christmas.

Meanwhile, let us introduce Olivia, one of our amazing team of talented candlemakers....



"Hi, I'm Olivia! I'm one of the Candlemakers



"3 words that describe how I feel when I come to Bolster Community to make Acorn products: great, happy and positive!

I always have a laugh with Kathy and Noreen. They always put me in a good mood, and know how to make me smile even when I'm having a bad day. I've made some good friends since coming to the workshop and I get on well with the other Candlemakers. We're like one big family!

When I'm at home, I love to watch movies, especially comedies like Mr Bean's Holiday. Shrek is another favourite of mine. And Tangled.

One thing most people don't know about me...is that I love to sing! My favourite songs are 'Ain't No Mountain High Enough' by the legendary Marvin Gaye and 'You Win Again' by the Bee Gees. I can hit all the high notes, no problem! I love coming into the Workshop to have a catch up with my friends while I work. My favourite thing to do while I'm working is...you guessed it: sing! Two Christmases ago, Gary and I did a duet of 'Fairytale of New York' while we were making the Christmas candles. A great way to get in the festive mood!

I was sad last year during Covid when we couldn't come into the workshop for so many months. I had plenty of time to spend at home with my family and pets, but it's great to be back again making up orders for the guests at Killeavey Castle. I know the guests will enjoy all our products. We make them with a lot of love.

My all-time favourite scent is Lavender Spa! I love making a few Lavender Spa candles and how the scent fills the workshop...it's so relaxing. I hope people try out this scent, then they can agree with me that Lavender Spa is the best one we have."

Lavender Spa: <https://bolstercommunity.org/product/scented-candle-lavender-spa-ac028/>

### Vegan, Cruelty-free, Eco-friendly

Every Acorn product is vegan-friendly, cruelty-free. Our Candlemakers are animal lovers, especially Olivia, who is passionate about animal welfare! So it was important for Acorn to have the cruelty-free certification as part of our rebrand.

Bolster Community and Acorn are delighted to be joined in partnership with Killeavy Castle and thank them for their continued support of our Social Enterprise. Together, we will continue to bring purpose and a #scentsofachievement to local young people of mixed ability. With Acorn's recently rebranded packaging material made from 90% recyclable materials, we are joined with Killeavy Castle in the protection of the natural environment. "The team at Killeavy Castle Estate are proud to be surrounded by such a magical landscape and a wonderful community. We work tirelessly with The Woodland Trust, the Forestry Service and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to increase the level of broadleaf trees planted in Slieve Gullion as it is very important for us that this area is restored to its former glory. For us, this partnership with Bolster Community opens up a new opportunity for us to give back and become an even greater part of the local community."

#scentsofachievement #shopandsupport

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