

VOLUME 23: SEPTEMBER 2026



# BOLSTER COMMUNITY *Newsletter*

This Newsletter is funded by:



## Falling Into September



Welcome to our September 2026 newsletter! As we begin entering that cusp between summer and autumn, the leaves aren't the only thing changing! The last few months at Bolster Community have been full of action, growth and new people to support, but we aren't letting that momentum go.

Leading on from our incredible Golf Classic Fundraiser and the promotion of Allison Slater from Operations Manager to Interim CEO, our **Family Support Hub** is busier than ever in the anticipation of going back to school. Our **Starbites 57** cafe has been continuing weekly, most recently celebrating an incredibly important milestone birthday. A very happy 60<sup>th</sup> birthday to Martin Treanor from Team Bolster!!

In this issue, you'll find new job opportunities and a chance to join our growing team, exciting news about our expanding **Home2Hospital** services to support people living across the **Mourne, Slieve Gullion** and **Crotlieve** areas as well as information on getting involved in programmes like **Layered Lives (Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Campaign)** and **Autism Connect**.

With all that is going on, we want to pause and take a moment to be grateful. Grateful to our community, you, our readers, and of course, to our staff team.

Without the people behind Bolster Community we wouldn't be who and what we are, or support people in the ways that we do. So, from the bottom of our hearts, **thank you** for continuing to be a part of our journey and for choosing to be a part of something bigger.

Whether you have taken part in one of our programmes, clicked 'follow' on social media or purchased one of our hand-made ACORN candles online or from our shop, you have made a difference in your community. Please read on to find out more about other ways you can get involved and bolster our community. We'd love to have you!



Our Star Bites Kitchen celebrating Martin's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday!

### *Team Bolster xx*

#### **A note from our Interim CEO, Allison Slater:**



"It's hard to believe that I'm almost six months into my role as Interim CEO of Bolster Community. It has certainly been a busy six months - new projects, new services, new colleagues and lots of new opportunities - and I want to start by saying a genuine thank you to everyone who has supported me along the way. Change isn't always easy. It can challenge us and take us outside our comfort zones, but it can also bring fresh energy, new ideas and opportunity. I think that really reflects where Bolster is right now.

We're also seeing change around us. New approaches such as **Together for Families** and the **Neighbourhood Health** model are creating opportunities to think differently about how we support people and, importantly, how communities and the voluntary sector contribute to that.

One of my highlights was welcoming the **Board of the Northern Ireland Civil Service** to Bolster and having the opportunity to talk directly with senior policy makers about what we see happening on the ground every day.

There is lots still to do, but also lots to be excited about. Thank you to our staff, volunteers, Board, partners and everyone who continues to support Bolster. I'm looking forward to what comes next."

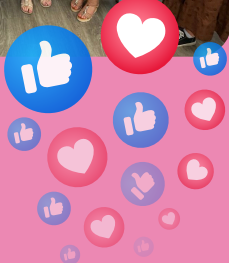
*Allison Slater*

## JOIN OUR TEAM



Our team has been busy! We've recently had LinkedIn training, spending time strengthening our team through team-building activities and we're more motivated than ever to connect with talented people looking for their next opportunity.

The best part? We have plenty of exciting new roles available right now! If you're looking for a rewarding career where you can make a real difference, we'd love to hear from you.



★ Join our growing community by visiting [community.ni](https://bolstercommunity.org/) and searching for Bolster Community, our website or follow us on our social media channels to stay up to date with our latest vacancies, news, and opportunities. Your next role could be just a click away. Come and join Bolster Community!

SCAN ME!



**BOLSTER**  
COMMUNITY



<https://bolstercommunity.org/>

ABILITY

FAMILY

SENIORS

**Empowering individuals and families through practical support at every stage of life**

## NEW FUNDING FOR LAYERED LIVES

**Layered Lives:** a FREE autism friendly programme exploring **relationships**, **consent**, **coercive control**, **boundaries** and **online safety**

**Last year, facilitators reported improved participant confidence in:**



Recognising warning signs



Discussing boundaries

Identifying safer responses in both online and offline situations.



**Contact Tracy on:**

☎ Call 028 308 35764 OR

✉ [tracy@bolstercommunity.org](mailto:tracy@bolstercommunity.org)

We also invite any groups that may be interested for their members





## A Summer to Remember



This summer has been filled with unforgettable moments and we'd like to say a huge thank you to every family who has joined us along the way.

**Our Family friendly Beach Day** was a fantastic success with plenty of laughter, music and memories made. A special thank you goes to Marcella from Community Tribal Drumming for bringing the energy and rhythm to the day, and of course to Mummy Shark, who proved to be a big hit with children and families alike!



We've also enjoyed wonderful days out together including visits to C&J's Animal Park and Armagh Observatory and Planetarium, where families explored the wonders of space and science together. Every event has provided opportunities for families to **connect and create lasting memories.**



As the summer draws to a close, we want to thank every family who has been part of our activities and helped make this such a memorable season. While the holidays may be ending, our support certainly isn't.

From September onwards, remember that our **Family Support** team will continue to be here for you, offering advice, guidance, activities and opportunities to help families stay connected throughout the year. Whether you need a listening ear, information or simply a chance to meet other families, we're here whenever you need us. Simply call Bolster on [028 3083 5764](tel:02830835764).



## Congratulations An Droichead!

Wishing the best of luck to everyone from our An Droichead programme on receiving their results. A huge congratulations for all of your hard work! To those that were working over the summer in their first part-time jobs, a true well done. We are all so very proud of you. Everyone at Bolster Community and St. Paul's High School wish you all the best as you move on to new, exciting training and education. The team has loved seeing you grow in confidence and develop your skills. We can't wait to see what the future holds for you all!



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## It is important to get help for anxiety if:

- it has lasted a long time;
- it is stopping you do things you would normally do;
- if you have tried things to help, but you aren't feeling better.





# Making the Journey to Treatment Easier for Seniors

For someone receiving hospital treatment, getting there can be just as stressful as the treatment itself. Imagine an elderly patient living in the Cullyhanna area needing to travel to hospital in Belfast. The journey could involve a taxi to Crossmaglen, a bus to Newry, another bus journey to Belfast city centre, and then a further taxi to the hospital. On paper, the journey might seem manageable. But once you factor in waiting times, delays, connections and the uncertainty of public transport, the reality can be very different. And that's before you consider the return journey after treatment, when someone may be tired, unwell or simply anxious to get home. This is where Home 2 Hospital can make a real difference.

Our volunteer driver service provides a door-to-hospital journey, helping to remove the stress and complexity of public transport. By travelling directly from home to hospital, we can potentially **halve the overall journey time**, while providing something that public transport simply can't: **a friendly face, reassurance and a supportive listening ear along the way.**

Following the success of our service, Home 2 Hospital is now expanding to support people living across the Mourne, Slieve Gullion and Crotlieve areas.

We know that getting to hospital shouldn't be another worry for someone already dealing with illness or treatment. Our volunteers are here to make the journey easier, more comfortable and more personal.

If you or someone you know could benefit from Home 2 Hospital, please contact our office on 028 3083 5764 and ask for Paula.



**WELCOME**

**WELCOME TO THE TEAM EMMA!!**

**NEW!**

## Get Involved at Autism Connect

Looking for a welcoming place where you can meet others, try new activities, and feel part of a supportive community?

At Autism Connect, our Social Hubs are all about creating opportunities to connect, build friendships and enjoy shared experiences in an understanding environment.

As one of our members put it: **"If you want somewhere to go where people just get you, Autism Connect is the place."**

Whether you're joining us for the first time or have been with us for a while, there's always a friendly face waiting to welcome you.

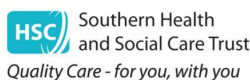
We have lots of exciting activities coming up including our relaxed Coffee Mornings, Silent Reading Night, the Creative Collective group, and plans for future trips and outings. **Whatever your interests, there's something for everyone!**

We'd love to see you get involved, so don't hesitate to reach out, come along to a session, and discover what Autism Connect has to offer. Simply e-mail [autismconnect@bolstercommunity.org](mailto:autismconnect@bolstercommunity.org)



**JOIN NOW**

Funded by:





## Meet Our Marketers!



Meet Michaela, our Marketing Manager, and Sarah, our Content Creator, the two faces behind your Bolster Community newsletter! There's a lot that goes on behind the scenes to bring each newsletter together, so we thought we'd introduce you to the people choosing the stories, events, updates and all the things we think you'll want to know about.

### How do you choose what makes it into the newsletter?

There's always lots happening at Bolster Community! We prioritise upcoming programmes, events and ways you can get involved, while also sharing what's been happening. Most importantly, we want to show the people and real-life stories behind what we do.

## Linktree\*

SCAN ME!



### How long does it take to do the newsletter?

Around 5-6 hours! From choosing content and images to branding and pulling everything together – there's a lot more to it than you might think!



### What would you like to see in future issues?

More personal stories and the real impact early intervention support can have on individuals and families.

### And finally... just for fun ladies, what's your spirit animal and why?

Michaela: Hummingbird. I'll admit I needed to do a quiz for this as I couldn't decide. They say this bird is capable of amazing feats despite its small size (me at 5ft 4), such as traveling great distances (I do love a chance to travel!) or being able to fly backwards (unfortunately the metaphor ends here).



Sarah: A wolf. I love their sense of community while retaining the ability to be independent. I adopt a wolf once a year with Wolf Watch UK. Also, my favourite book is 'Women Who Run With The Wolves' by Clarissa Pinkola Estes.



## A Busy Summer for Our Bolster Buddies!

We have welcomed some new buddies to the group these last few weeks, which has been a fantastic addition to our candle-making team! Some buddies have also completed their **Caring for Our World Project** and will be graduating from **Queen's University Belfast** in September, a brilliant achievement! We are so incredibly proud of you all.

They enjoyed their August residential with East Coast Adventures and have enjoyed visits from All Ability Cricket and Table Tennis Ireland, where they learned new skills.

They also enjoyed a shopping trip to Belfast using public transport, helping to build their confidence, independence and navigation skills. It has been a busy and exciting time for everyone! And there's lots more to come as we head into our peak candle-making times throughout Autumn and Winter. Watch this space ladies and gentlemen! 😊





# ACORN

SCENTS OF ACHIEVEMENT

## Back to School: A calm start to a new season

As the summer holidays come to an end, homes begin to find their rhythm again. School bags are packed, routines return and the busy pace of Autumn begins. It's the perfect time for a seasonal reset, not just for children heading back to school but for the whole family.

As mornings become earlier and evenings draw in, creating moments of calm at home becomes more important than ever. Lighting a favourite candle while enjoying a quiet cup of tea, helping with homework, reading a book or simply taking a few minutes to yourself can transform everyday moments into comforting rituals.

At Acorn, we believe fragrance has the power to make a house feel like home. Warm, inviting scents help create a welcoming atmosphere after a busy school day, bringing comfort to kitchens, living rooms and cosy evenings indoors.



## Create Your Autumn Routine

Whether it's the comforting glow of candlelight after the school run or filling your home with rich seasonal fragrances, our handcrafted candles are designed to help you embrace the change of season. Think crisp mornings, cosy evenings, soft blankets and your favourite autumn scent burning in the background. It's never too early to get ready for cosy season!

## BIG NEWS: You can now find our candles at National Trust sites!!



Our Strangford and Mourne products will soon be available in the rather illustrious National Trust sites of Castleward and Mount Stewart so keep your eyes peeled and if you feel inclined, snap a selfie for instagram and tag @acorncandles! You might even get a feature on our profile 😊



## ORDER ONLINE OR INSTORE

Order online at: [www.acornshop.co.uk](http://www.acornshop.co.uk)

Contact us at: [acorn@bolstercommunity.org](mailto:acorn@bolstercommunity.org)

Follow us on instagram @acorncandle and keep an eye out for our future Christmasmarts, corporate gifting also possible for all budgets.



A Social Enterprise from

**BOLSTER**  
COMMUNITY