



**Bogside & Brandywell**  
Health Forum An Fóram Sláinte



**ANNUAL  
REPORT 2021**



## WELCOME

There have been many challenges this year for beneficiaries, volunteers and staff members alike. The COVID pandemic has unearthed major barriers to being able to support people, such as social distancing, restriction of movement, inaccessible health care. However, it has also ignited a community spirit unseen for many a year. BBHF would like to thank each and every member of their staff and community who volunteered, donated and simply participated in the activities available to them. It was the community spirit, generosity and selflessness of others that made delivering services possible throughout the 2020/2021 pandemic. Our ability to easily adapt to the new working environment, demonstrated our teams dedication to the organisation and the participants for which they provide services.

Through this time the BBHF General Manager gained the organisation a precocious award to recognise the

dedication of the staff, and volunteers ability to support our participants and encourage shared learning to benefit other communities and organisations.

The GSK IMPACT Award, organised and managed in partnership with The King's Fund to recognise and reward small to medium sized charities doing excellent work to improve people's health. Judge's comment:

*"Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum supports people across the community to improve their physical and mental health. We were particularly impressed by the way the charity had set up and rolled out the social prescribing service, working with 30 organisations to support people's health and wellbeing, and reducing pressure on the NHS. The charity has also engaged young volunteers to help spread positive health messages among their peers and bring the community together."*



Please click on the play button to see the Kings Fund award.  
<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/audio-video/2021-gsk-impact-awards-bogside-brandywell-health-forum>

## COVID RESPONSE

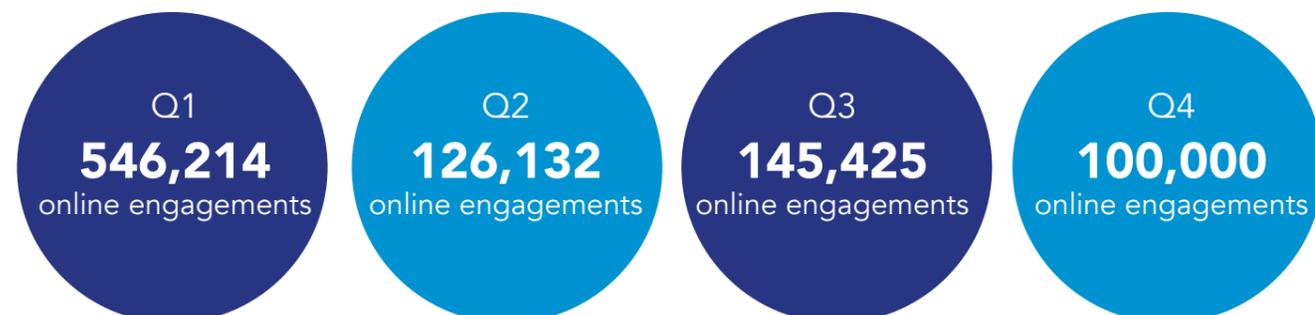
When faced with lockdown the management and staff kicked into action and made phone contact with our participants from the last year. An assessment of need was carried out and this seen ongoing weekly or bi-weekly telephone support being provided to approximately 800 people, with support for shopping, listening ear, older people, teenage, children and parent isolation packs, prescriptions, community response food and fuel support, counselling, referral to online programmes, tech support through access to devices and/or 4G and any additional support required by the individual provided a person centred approach to need.

BBHF provided a Listening Ear Service for 180 older people who received a weekly call providing much needed support for vulnerable older residents. This ground up approach ensured BBHF had the most up to date data and information on the status of older peoples well - being and gave a true reflection of what older people were experiencing during the pandemic. This service was the vehicle used to enabled volunteers to signpost to other agencies and organisations such as food banks and energy vouchers scheme during these most challenging of times.

Volunteers were given training throughout the pandemic in response to highlighted gaps, training included 'how to end a conversation without offending', as many of the older people were anxious and highlighted the phone call was the only person, they may have contact with on a daily basis which sometimes made it difficult for volunteers to end the call. Volunteers were the link supporting the connection between residents and community organisations during the pandemic.

During this time BBHF surveyed residents on what would benefit them during the lockdowns, they highlighted 'some practical things to do, such as jigsaws, reading, quiz books etc. In response BBHF developed and distributed 1940 isolation packs which included the most up to date COVID guidance and a range of activities and tools to help elevate boredom, isolation and keep their minds busy.

Over the course of the year BBHF have increased our social media presence and staff developed new skills to promote and deliver projects online. Our reach of service delivery increased tenfold, with participants taking up the challenge of physical activity classes all across NI.



## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS BUILDING

- Communities In Transition – OLT is the lead partner in this project, however we each had a target of supporting 25 people aged between 18 – 60 years old although have supported 28 people at various levels to get back into education, learn to read and write, improve their physical and mental health and re-engage back into their community.
- Families Achieving Change Together (FACT) - continued to develop throughout 2020/2021 with St Columbs College introducing our services into their school and this partnership has grown to sustaining family support in the school. We developed booklets for young people and parents to support through the pandemic
- Virtual Jog In The Bog – this year we had full sponsorship from O'Neills Sportswear for our t-shirts therefore all fundraising efforts could be solely used to support BBHF Mental Health Services 500 virtual participants
- Through the Urban Village Resilience programme and the COVID response in partnership with the primary schools we have managed to set up and build on our partnerships with the principals and teaching staff to develop educational and health and wellbeing quarterly booklets and provide support to an additional 3 schools and 220 families

Over the course of the year BBHF staff participated in over **275,000 virtual mins** online for meetings, classes and other fora.

- BBHF supported the production of COVID Nativity which was developed and filmed whilst adhering to all COVID 19 Guidance for the 5 local schools within the Urban Village Area. This was a fantastic programme working with the local schools. The impact of this programme was: The Nativity Featured on BBC Newslines, Feature viewed 61,000 times on Facebook, there was over 13,000 views on BBHF social media.

BBHF worked tirelessly this year and in previous to achieve excellence in delivering on the key priorities of the Public Health Agency which are to;

- Empower people in healthy living and to make healthy choices
- Equip people through life
- Giving every child the best start.



## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Throughout the year BBHF have been able to help 300 individuals access mental health and CBT counselling through the provision of primarily independent fundraising and small contributory grants. This vital service is a life line and life saving for some individuals.

ARC Fitness' founder Gary Rutherford was awarded AXA Community Hero of the year and was awarded 20,000 euro for a charity of his choice, which he donated to Bogside & Brandywell Health Forum. This donation will support the sustainability of much needed counselling and mental health services. It is the generosity of such heroes that make the work we do possible.

In order to continue supporting this work BBHF will lead on the path to create a Trauma Informed working group in our area with community and statutory organisations. Aileen McGuinness, General Manager has successfully secured position on the WHO Trauma Informed Practice Taskgroup. Leading in the implementation of a Citywide Trauma Informed practice model will be a direction of travel for future planning in BBHF.



## MEN'S SHED

Sadly, at the start of the COVID pandemic, the BBHF's Mens Shed space within the Gasyard Centre was deemed unfit for purposes due to social distancing restrictions and so it was repurposed into an new office for the Gasyard Centre management team. While this decision left the men and BBHF with a gap in much needed support and programme provision, it also opened our vision to new possibilities. The planning process to reinstate a new better than before Men's shed is ongoing and the BBHF endeavour to have new purposes built facilities ready by April 2022.

## SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

From March 2020, Spring adapted its delivery model to address the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, by launching the 'Connect Well' service. Working with HE tenants across the Derry and Strabane areas, the Connect Well service provided support online and remotely, including offering socially distanced visits and activities where appropriate, to ensure people felt connected and supported during these times.

SPRING is part of the Covid NI communications team, set up by Emergency Leadership Group (NICVA) and led by Inspire.

The SPRING management group have undertaken a review of the model and have developed a "Transition and Recovery plan" to support people during and out of lockdown. Various consultations with primary care, health

departments and delivery partners were carried out. The key priorities for delivering social prescriptions post Covid are; mental health, social inclusion and digital inclusion.



*"The Social Prescribing Project has been more than helpful. Support was there for me when I got out of hospital - during lockdown there was weekly telephone support, isolation packs, help with meals and assistance with food parcels through the local community response team. Oonagh encouraged me to go out when restrictions lifted and has provided me with a device to help me access courses online"*

### STATISTICS RE. NIHE SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PROJECT - MARCH 2020 TO JANUARY 2021



## LIST OF SERVICES DELIVERED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- SPRING social prescribing programme
- BBHF social prescribing project
- NIHE tenant social prescribing project
- #RETHINK Project Resilience Programme
- NHIP GP Referral
- NHIP Counselling
- NHIP Busy Bodies
- NHIP Co-ordinated
- NHIP Local Action Plan
- Awards for All – for older people
- Listening ear
- Befriending
- Older people counselling
- Health Forum physical activity classes
- Diabetes Together
- 5KM Dash
- Communities In Transition Volunteers
- Community Food Initiative Nutrition Programme
- Health in Our Schools
- Urban Villages Resilience Primary Schools and Youth Club Programme
- Chronic Pain Programme
- CoH-Sync Health and Wellbeing Programme
- Weight Management Programme
- DFC Programmes
- Stop Smoking Support
- Transform Your Trolley
- Health Promoting Families
- OCN Level 1 in Sports
- Resilience Packs delivered to local schools
- SAD Workshops
- Families Achieving Change Together (FACT)
- Pupil/ Support
- Family Support
- Well Connected
- Low intervention programmes
- High level intervention programmes
- Children in Need Moving On Up
- OCN Personal Success & Wellbeing (Entry Level) & Entry Level 3
- Health champions – 16 year old

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