



PREFACE

“There are more and more people living longer – and in the main healthier – lives.

This is really good news and we should celebrate the contribution older people make to our communities and wider society.

We must also remember that many older people find it hard to live on their incomes, hard to heat their homes, are worried about crime, and need to be certain that if they become frail or develop dementia, the support they need will be available to them.

This Directory is a real, practical help to older people to find information about services, support and community organisations across Belfast that can make a real difference to their quality of life.

The role of Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland was introduced by the Northern Ireland government to be a strong, independent voice for older people. I have been listening to the views, opinions, ideas and experience of older people as I develop priorities for my work to safeguard and promote the interests of older people. Older people have told me how important it is to them that they have:

Hope – to enjoy living longer in good health than earlier generations had the opportunity to do. Older people



enjoy having time to spend with family, friends, in work or volunteering, with lifelong learning or faith activities. Older people value their independence and want to contribute to society.

Confidence - that older people will have a secure and adequate level of income; that they will be safe in their homes and communities; that older peoples contribution to society will be recognised and supported; that equality, fair treatment, dignity and respect will be at the heart of services which older people need and use; and that their voices, opinions, and ideas will be valued, heard, understood and acted on by decision-makers.

Certainty – that if an older person becomes frail, develops dementia or is otherwise vulnerable, they must have certainty that they will get the practical support, health and social care, and respect they need to live dignified and fulfilled lives right through to the end of life.

I very much welcome the Seniors Info Directory and trust that it will help you find the information you need about the things that matter to older people in this great city of Belfast.

Claire Keatinge
Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland



FOREWORD

This directory provides information for older people on a wide range of topics including health and wellbeing; learning and leisure; housing; safety in the home; heating your home; income, benefits and money; rights and advocacy, preventing crime; transport; support organisations and emergency numbers. A more detailed seniors info online resource has also been developed and can be located on Belfast City Council's Website:
www.belfastcity.gov.uk/seniorsinfo

The Seniors Info Directory was developed in 2008 by Belfast Healthy Cities in partnership with representatives from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors as well as older people themselves. It has been very well received and used by older people and people working with them, resulting in this being a third reprint of the directory.

Since 2009 the directory has been maintained through Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership and I would like to thank all our contacts who have helped us to keep this information up to date. Special thanks go to Anne Ross and Elma Greer who have coordinated the current update of this resource.

I would encourage you to make good use of this resource, to pass it on to others or ask for more copies from us, so



that older people are as well informed as possible about the services and support available to them in the Greater Belfast area.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iain Deboys', located below the text.

Iain Deboys
Chair of Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership



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HEALTH AND WELLBEING

ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM (AAA) SCREENING

An AAA is a swelling in the abdominal aorta, which is the main artery that supplies blood to your body. As the AAA grows, the wall of the aorta stretches and becomes weaker, which can eventually lead to a significant risk of a ruptured AAA. This is often fatal. The aim of the AAA screening programme is to reduce AAA-related mortality by providing a systematic, population-based screening programme.

Men will automatically be invited for screening in their 65th year, while men aged over 65 can request a scan through the central screening office. For more information on the programme talk to your GP or call the AAA central screening office on **028 9063 1828**.

ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

If you are concerned about your own or someone else's drinking habits there are a number of people or organisations that you can go to for advice and support. These include:

- Your GP who may refer you to a specialist working within Community Addiction Teams in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. Addiction NI offers a specialist service for older people aged 55+ who are abusing alcohol and/or drugs. Telephone **028 9066 4434** for more information.
- Alcoholics Anonymous telephone: **028 9043 4848**



- Al Anon (for family and friends of alcoholics) telephone: **028 9068 2368**
- Dunlewy Substance Advice Centre telephone: **028 9061 1162**
- Falls Community Council telephone: 028 9020 2030
- FASA (Forum for Action on Substance Abuse) telephone: **028 9080 3040**
- Rosemount House telephone: **028 9077 9740**

ALZHEIMER'S/DEMENTIA

The Alzheimer's Society is one of the key organisations in Northern Ireland that support people who have Alzheimer's/dementia including their carers, family and friends. Services include:

- A telephone helpline where you can get advice on: diagnosis and assessment of Alzheimer's; your rights as a carer; social services support you can get; and benefits you may be entitled to
- An outreach service where advisors can visit you in your home
- Support groups/befriending scheme
- Information and education programmes/fact sheets.

For more information telephone **0845 300 0336** or visit their website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust provide a Community Mental Health Team for older people. They offer assessment, education, advice and support to individuals over the age of 65 who are experiencing a mental illness



and individuals of any age who are experiencing or have concerns about Early Stage Dementia. Referrals to the team can be made by yourself or through your GP or psychiatrist.

To request further information contact the Community Mental Health Team (older people) **028 9056 4961**

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis Care is a charitable organisation that acts on behalf of people who are affected by arthritis. Arthritis Care Northern Ireland offers the following services:

- Information on arthritis
- Campaigning
- Self management courses to help people cope with arthritis
- Family and youth work/events
- Local groups providing support to people with arthritis

They also support volunteers who help with sharing information, campaigning, fund raising, and events.

For more information on services available through Arthritis Care or to become a volunteer contact their free helpline number on **0808 800 4050** or their Belfast office: **028 9078 2940**

Website: www.arthritiscare.org.uk

Arthritis Research UK is a charitable organisation based in England that provides information free to the general public on arthritis. Arthritis Research UK is also involved in research into the cause and treatment of arthritis.



For more information contact Arthritis Research UK on **0300 790 0400** Website: www.arc.org.uk For more information contact Arthritis Research UK on **0300 790 0400**, Website: www.arthritisresearchuk.org

BEREAVEMENT

Bereavement is something that will affect us all at some point in our lives. You can prepare yourself for death in a number of ways. Make a will so that the people you leave behind know your wishes. If you are preparing for the death of a partner you may want to discuss funeral arrangements including their wishes with them and sort out finances.

Practical things that need to be done if there is a death include:

- If someone dies at home you must call a doctor. They can sign a death certificate if the death was expected. If the death was sudden/ unexpected then the doctor will have to talk to the police who will report it to the coroner. A post mortem examination may be carried out
- When someone dies in hospital the doctor will give you a medical certificate which you must take to the registry office and register the death within five days (**Telephone: 028 9027 0274**). The registrar will issue a death certificate and notification of disposal which should be given to the funeral director. Make a few copies of the death certificate. You may need these for pension and insurance purposes
- A funeral director can be chosen before or after you have registered the death (see yellow pages for a list). He or



she can make all the necessary arrangements for the funeral including putting a death notice in the local or national papers

- Contact your local social security office to arrange pension and other entitlements. You may be eligible for funeral payment or widow's payment. (There are guides to your entitlements available from your local social security office)
- Inform the tax office about your change in circumstances
- If there is a will the executors will make sure it is carried out. Contact the solicitor. If there is no will contact the Probate Registry for an application to administer the 'estate'. Your local Citizens' Advice Bureau can help you if you are not sure.

SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

CRUSE Bereavement Care enables anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss.

Telephone: **028 9023 2695** or visit their website at www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

CARING FOR SOMEONE WHO IS DYING

When a person is dying, care is provided through a range of professionals and organisations, who work closely together to co-ordinate services to ensure the needs of the person and carers are met. The majority of formal care is provided by district nurses who can provide: wound care; pain control; continence care; general advice and support and provision of equipment as needed. The district nurse will also



coordinate other services that are required and evaluate the needs of the patient on a regular basis. There are a number of other organisations that can provide support and assistance at this difficult time. These include Cancer Focus NI, Action Cancer, Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie Cancer Care, NI Hospice and Hospice at Home (see full details under Cancer services).

CANCER

Accessing Benefits

If you do develop cancer there are special rules for people with a terminal illness to help them get disability related benefits quickly. If a patient is told that their illness is terminal they need to ask their GP to complete a DS1500 form. On receipt of this form the benefit branch fast track the application to ensure the benefit is paid as quickly as possible. For more information contact your local benefits/social security office.

Skin cancer: Most skin cancers are linked to excessive exposure to sunlight. Beware that taking certain medicines can make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Seek the advice of your GP if you notice any unusual skin lesions or change in size (larger than 6mm growing or shrinking), shape (ragged or irregular outline) or changing colour of freckles/blemishes/moles on your skin. Most skin cancers are curable if treated early.



Breast cancer can develop any time but is more common in women over 50. Women aged 50-64 are invited for screening – if you are over 65 however you can still make an appointment through your local screening centre or GP. In the Belfast area the screening centre is located at 12-22 Linenhall St, Belfast (Telephone: **028 9033 3700**). Screening is free of charge and picks up one third of breast cancers in Northern Ireland every year. You should check your breasts every month and visit your GP immediately if you notice any changes in your breasts that isn't normal for you.

Cervical cancer: Between the ages of 20-65 it is recommended that you have a cervical smear test at least once every five years. However regardless of age if you have any bleeding after having sex or after the change of life, or if you have any abnormal vaginal discharge you should discuss this with your doctor.

Prostate cancer: 9 out of 10 cases of prostate cancer occur in men over the age of 60. You should visit your doctor if you are experiencing any of the following: difficulty or pain in passing urine; frequent visits to the toilet, especially at night; starting and stopping while urinating; dribbling urine; a feeling of not having emptied the bladder fully.

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer found in men aged 15-45. You should check yourself monthly to look for lumps. It is unusual to develop cancer in both testicles at the same time so you can often compare one testicle with the other to see if it is abnormal. If you detect a lump contact your GP immediately.



Bowel cancer, also known as colorectal cancer is cancer of the large bowel (colon) and the rectum (back passage). If you notice any change in your normal bowel habits that lasts for more than six weeks you should visit your doctor. Other symptoms to look out for include: persistent bleeding from the rectum (back passage); the feeling of still having to go to the toilet even after having emptied the bowels; pain or discomfort in the stomach area (colicky pain, cramps or tenderness); unexplained weight loss; extreme tiredness or a lump in the abdomen.

Bowel cancer screening

All men and women aged 60 to 71 years are currently invited for bowel cancer screening every two years. They will also receive the life-saving Faecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) kit which is sent to the address patients have registered with their GP. It is therefore important that your GP has your most up to date address and correct date of birth or you may miss the chance to be screened. Anyone who has received the test kit and has questions about how to use it please call the Freephone Helpline number **0800 015 2514**.

Cancer Focus NI has produced a number of leaflets that provide further information on the following cancers:

- Skin cancer; Breast cancer; Prostate cancer; Testicular cancer and Bowel (Colorectal) cancer

For more information telephone: **028 9066 3281**



Coping with Cancer: Services Available

Cancer Focus NI

Services provided include: cancer support groups; freephone cancer helpline; cancer information and support services; counselling services; patient befriending service; fitting service; patient advocacy group; art therapy; creative writing; reminiscence group; love your life course; family support services; community cancer education programmes; occupational cancer programmes; tobacco control activities and smoking cessation programmes.

To make use of any of these services contact Cancer Focus NI Freephone helpline on **0800 783 3339** or **028 9066 3281**

Cancer Focus NI Support Groups

Cancer Focus NI run a number of support groups throughout Northern Ireland for people suffering from the following cancers: breast, laryngeal, lymphoma, myeloma, and prostate.

For more information contact the Care Services Coordinator at the Cancer Focus NI on **028 9066 3281** or visit their website: www.ulstercancer.org

Action Cancer

Action Cancer is a Northern Ireland Cancer Charity offering early detection and support services to people who have or have been affected by cancer. Services offered include:



- Mobile Resource Centre (nicknamed the 'BIG BUS'). Services provided include: digital breast screening for women aged 40-49 and 65+; health promotion and health checks for men and women; as well as the Listening Ear Service, and complementary therapies. The bus is fully accessible for people with disabilities by means of a wheelchair lift
- Specific information for men
- Complementary therapy
- Health promotion factsheets
- Counselling - appointments can be made by phoning Action Cancer House on 028 9080 3344.
- Listening Ear Service (LES) – this service is designed to offer support and signposting to other local services to help with issues such as childcare, financial assistance and transport issues among many others.

For more information telephone: **028 9080 3344**

Macmillan Cancer Support have a number of support centres where people can talk through issues and concerns with their staff and trained volunteers. These centres have booklets, leaflets, videos and other sources of information about cancer. They can also give you advice on benefits and can help fill in forms. For people living in Belfast the main centre is based at Belfast City Hospital. This centre offers additional services such as self help and support groups, and complementary therapies.



To obtain the services of a Macmillan nurse, you must be referred by your GP, your hospital consultant, a district nurse or a hospital ward sister.

To speak to a specialist Macmillan cancer nurse or for information on cancer support groups in your local area call freephone **0808 808 0000** (9am to 8pm) or visit their website on www.macmillan.org.uk

Marie Curie Cancer Care provides specialist support to people with cancer and other illnesses at no cost to individuals or their families. The Marie Curie Nursing Service provides care during the day but more usually at night, spending eight or nine hours in the patient's home allowing carers to rest. If you feel you would like a Marie Curie Nurse you should contact your District Nurse, who will decide whether it is appropriate to request a Marie Curie Nurse.

For patient information and advice, you can phone one of Marie Curie's trained advisers on **0800 071 6146** (freephone) 7 days a week, 9am - 10.30pm.

For information online: www.mariecurie.org.uk/patientsandcarers

Marie Curie Hospices offer a range of services including day services, in-patient care and respite care. To access this service you need to go through your GP. In Belfast, the Marie Curie Hospice is located in Kensington Road (East Belfast).



For more information on the Marie Curie Hospice in Belfast call **028 9088 2000** and ask for a copy of the Belfast Hospice Brochure. Alternatively it can be downloaded from their website: **www.hospicebelfast.mariecurie.org.uk**

Northern Ireland Hospice Care is a local charity in Northern Ireland providing specialist palliative care for adults and children with life limiting and life threatening illnesses. Northern Ireland Hospice Care provides a full range of services both in the adult hospice and at home. These include: inpatient care; day hospice; care in the community (offering nursing services during the day or night depending on need); spiritual care; family support and bereavement care; advice and information and complementary therapies. There is no charge for Northern Ireland Hospice Care services.

Referrals are made via the patient's GP using a Northern Ireland Hospice Care referral form which is available on request by telephoning: 028 9078 1836

In Belfast there are two NI Hospice Community Teams covering North & West and South & East Belfast. To contact the N+W Belfast team telephone: **028 9078 1836**
To contact the S+E Belfast team telephone:
028 9079 6466

For information on care homes go to the Housing section (page 61)



CARERS

A carer is someone who provides help and support to a friend, neighbour or relative who could not manage otherwise, because of frailty, illness or disability.

Belfast Carers Centre is an independent organisation providing support to Carers. Services offered include: information and advice; help to access health and social care services; support groups and a range of social activities; someone to talk to; and advocacy work on behalf of carers.

They can also help with claiming benefits such as the **Carers Allowance** which is the main benefit for carers. It is intended to replace the income you might otherwise earn from a job if you were not caring. Entitlement to it does not depend on your record of paying National Insurance Contributions and you do not have to live with the person you care for.

For more information telephone Belfast Carers Centre on: **028 9073 0173**. Website: www.carerscentre.org

Carers Northern Ireland (NI) is part of Carers UK. It is a membership organisation run by carers, for carers across NI providing information on all matters relating to caring. They can help with: financial advice; help with caring; supporting you in your work and your rights; research, policy and practice and training.

For more information contact Carers NI on **028 9043 9843** or **0808 808 7777**. Website: www.carersni.org



The **Belfast Health and Social Care Trust** provides a range of supports for carers, including: information and advice; carers groups; training; complementary therapies; carer away days; and breaks from caring.

If you would like to receive more information on carer support or to be referred for a carer's needs assessment, please contact the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust carer's coordinator on Telephone **028 9056 4937** if you live in North and West Belfast and **028 9063 6819** if you live in South/East Belfast/Castlereagh.

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY (AIRWAYS) DISEASE (COPD)

If you have COPD or any other lung condition and would like more information on managing symptoms you should talk to your GP or practice nurse in your GP surgery.

Further information booklets are available from the British Lung Foundation which are available to order by telephoning British Lung Foundation's helpline on **0141 248 0050** Or you can download information free from their website: northern.ireland@blf.org.uk

Rehabilitation Programmes for COPD

Pulmonary Rehabilitation programmes are currently run by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in both hospital and community settings. If you are interested in this programme speak to your GP.



COPD Support Groups

Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke (NICHS) run a number of respiratory support groups in Belfast.

For more information on these support groups contact NICHS on **028 9032 0184**

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

Complementary therapies such as acupuncture, aromatherapy, homeopathy, osteopathy, chiropractic therapy etc, have become increasingly popular and more available in the last decade.

If you intend using a complementary therapist ensure they are properly trained. You may find that your GP has a complementary therapy qualification and/or offers some treatments through the surgery. If not, he or she may be able to give you a referral.

Herbal medicines are also becoming more widely known and used. Generally speaking many herbal remedies are reasonably safe to use, however **medical advice should always be sought before using herbal medicines** especially if you are also taking prescribed medicines due to the risk of interactions and side effects that can occur if both are taken together.



Useful Website addresses

Complementary Medical Association	www.the-cma.org.uk
Internet Health Library	www.internethealthlibrary.com
Institute for Complementary and Natural Medicine	www.icnm.org.uk
British Medical Acupuncture Society	www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk
HerbMed	www.herbmed.org/
Medicdirect (UK)	www.medicdirect.co.uk/
British Homeopathic Association Trust Homeopathy	www.trusthomeopathy.org/
General Osteopathic Council	www.osteopathy.org.uk/
British Complementary Medicine Association (BCMA)	www.bcma.co.uk/

CONTINENCE CARE

If you experience any problems with either your bladder or bowel you should discuss this with your GP who may refer you to the Continence Service who will offer advice, assessment and treatment for your problem. Alternately you can self refer to the Community Continence Service (part of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust) via either of the Call Management Centre numbers opposite:



South and East Belfast **028 9056 5565**

North and West Belfast **0845 606 6593**

The Continence Foundation (UK) is a charity which offers advice and support to those suffering from incontinence.

For more information telephone: **020 7700 7035.**

Website: www.continence-foundation.org.uk

The **Disabled Living Foundation** (UK) also has factsheets on “Clothing for continence and incontinence” and “toilet equipment and accessories” which can be downloaded free from their website:www.dlf.org.uk

DENTAL HEALTH

To prevent dental decay and gum disease you should take the following advice.

- Brush your teeth and gums twice a day with Fluoride toothpaste for at least two minutes
- Avoid consumption of sweetened snacks and drinks between meals and especially at bedtime
- When cleaning partial dentures pay particular attention to cleaning around the clips holding the dentures in place
- If you have full dentures remember to brush daily your gums, tongue and palate with a soft bristle brush. Use water, soap or a denture cleaner to clean dentures as toothpaste is abrasive and can damage them
- Your mouth is likely to need a rest from wearing dentures. Ideally they should be left out of your mouth (usually at night) for at least four to eight hours everyday



- To prevent warping always leave dentures immersed in cold water
- If your dentures feel loose or painful you should discuss this with your dentist.

You should see the dentist at least once a year for a check up, whether you have your own teeth or not. To keep on the dentist's register you need to attend the dentist every 15 months. If you are not registered with a dentist you will have difficulty getting emergency treatment.

Accessing a Dentist

If you are having difficulty finding a **National Health Service (NHS)** dentist in your area, the Eastern Health and Social Services Board (EHSSB) can provide you with this information. All dentists are required to produce, and make available, a Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) with details of services provided by their practice including the cost of services.

If you are on benefits you may be eligible to apply for help with the cost of dental treatment. You must complete an HC1 Form which can be obtained from your local Benefits Agency/Social Security offices or possibly from a dental surgery and return it to your local social security office.

For more information download the HC11: Help with Health Costs booklet from the Department of Health website: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk or you can obtain it from your local Benefits Agency/Social Security office who can also help with filling out HC forms.



Regardless of your circumstances, if you go to a **private dentist** you will have to pay for all treatment provided. Before any private treatment is started you should ensure that you fully understand what the cost is going to be. If you require a **dentist out of hours** the EHSSB provides a Relief of Dental Pain Service available to anyone who requires emergency dental care.

The Dental Pain Clinic operates at the Dental Out-patients Department on the Ground Floor of the Belfast City Hospital Tower Block (Monday – Friday 7-8.30pm and Saturday/Sunday 10-11.30am, 2.30-4pm and 7-8.30pm). For more information telephone Belfast City Hospital on **028 9026 3992**

Community Dental Services

Some people find it difficult accessing dental care from within the general dental services, for example people who are housebound or have special needs, or people in residential or nursing homes. For such people the Community Dental Service offers a specialised service targeted to address their specific needs. To avail of the Community Dental Service you can be referred through your GP, or other health care professional or you can self refer. Contact details for your local community dental clinic can be obtained from the Health and Social Care Board.

If you have difficulty accessing NHS dental services or need more information on the Community Dental Service contact the dental department within the Health and Social Care Board on on: **028 9055 3774**



DIABETES

Diabetes is a condition where blood glucose (sugar) levels are high. In type 1 diabetes the body does not produce any insulin. In type 2 diabetes the body does not produce enough insulin or the insulin does not work properly. Symptoms of diabetes include: extreme tiredness; blurred vision; frequently passing urine especially at night; excessive thirst; weight loss; genital itching; regular episodes of thrush; and slow healing of wounds. If you have any of the above symptoms discuss these with your doctor.

If you have diabetes it is important that you attend clinic appointments at your GP surgery or hospital to ensure your condition is managed and any complications detected early.

Diabetes UK is a charity which aims to support people living with the condition.

For more information contact Diabetes UK (Northern Ireland branch) on Telephone: **028 9066 6646**, or visit their website www.diabetes.org.uk

ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse occurs when an older man or woman is harmed, mistreated or neglected – usually by someone they should be able to trust. Abuse can happen in a person's own home, in the community or in institutions and can take many forms; physical, sexual, financial, psychological or neglect.



If you are worried that you or someone you know is being abused or for further information contact **Belfast Health and Social Care Trust** on **028 9096 0099** or contact **Age NI Advice & Advocacy Services**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm on Freephone **0808 808 7575**

EXERCISE

Regular exercise is vital for good health. Walking is one of the easiest ways to exercise. Aim to walk briskly for 30 minutes on most days – this will give you most benefit. Brisk walking will: give you more energy; make you feel good; help you sleep better; help you cope with stress; tone your muscles; burn up calories; lower blood pressure and reduce cholesterol levels; protect your bones from osteoporosis (bone thinning); and improve your mobility.

For more information on leisure facilities and activities and day centres go to the Learning and Leisure section (Page 42)

EYE CARE AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

As you grow older you may notice changes in your sight. If you currently wear glasses or you feel your sight is deteriorating, it is important to get your eyes tested regularly (at least every two years). Everyone over the age of 60 is entitled to a free eye test. Regular eye tests with your optometrist/ optician can catch any problems at an early stage.



RNIB (Royal National Institute of the Blind) in Northern Ireland provides people recently diagnosed with loss of sight with support to help them adapt to difficult circumstances, retain confidence and quickly regain their independence. They have a number of Eye Clinic Liaison Officers – one based at the Royal Group of Hospitals.

For more information contact their Helpline on **028 9032 9373** or visit their website: www.rnib.org.uk

The **Guide Dogs for the Blind Association** which is a UK charity, have a branch in Belfast. Services offered include: provision of guide dogs and appropriate training; information on sight loss and other services; rehabilitation services; and support from a rehabilitation officer at the Low Vision Clinic at the Royal Group of Hospitals.

For more information contact telephone: **028 9047 1453**

Belfast Central Library offers specific services to people who are blind or partially sighted. Services offered include: talking newspaper service; magazines in Braille; talking books; and full access to the music department.

For more information call Belfast Central Library on **028 9050 9150**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has teams of people working specifically to help people who are blind or have diminished vision. These teams are known as “Sensory



Support Teams”. They provide a range of services including: providing information about your sight loss; making the best use of the sight you have; help you manage safely in your own home and outdoors; arranging for appropriate aids and providing information about other services which can help. You can self referral or be referred to the sensory support team through your GP, hospital consultant, health visitor, social worker or voluntary agency.

To contact the sensory support team for more information
Telephone **028 9056 6000**

FOOT CARE

If you cannot manage to care for your feet you should visit a registered podiatrist or chiropodist, particularly people on steroids, people who heal slowly or have problems with ulcers, or people with diabetes. You can access the Podiatry/ Chiropody service run by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust by ringing one of the following clinics:

North Belfast

- Carisle Centre, telephone 0845 300 6650
- Grove Wellbeing Clinic, telephone 028 9063 6800

East Belfast

- Arches Centre, telephone 028 9056 3200

South Belfast

- Bradbury Centre, telephone 028 9091 2100

West Belfast

- Beech Hall Centre, telephone 028 9504 0043
- Shankill Centre, telephone 028 9004 0043

Castlereagh

- Knockbreda Clinic, telephone 028 9063 1200



Priority will be given to people who have diabetes or circulation problems.

FIRST AID AWARENESS

St Johns Ambulance is the leading first aid training provider in Northern Ireland. Services they offer include:

- First aid at major public events
- A range of courses for the general public; the workplace; health and safety courses and moving and handling courses
- Availability of first aid manuals and kits to buy
- Advice on: life saving procedures; heart attack and shock; wounds and bleeding; burns and scalds; first aid for asthma, fractures, sunburn, poisons, and hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar)

For more information contact the NI branch of St Johns Ambulance on **0780 243 5648** or visit their website: www.sja.org.uk where you can download first aid advice

The **Red Cross** in Northern Ireland provide first aid training for the public and groups. Their courses vary in length from 2 to 28 hours. They can also provide first aid at major events.

To book a course or first aid help at an event ring Red Cross on **028 9073 5350**

HEALTHY EATING/FOOD SAFETY

A healthy and varied diet can help to maintain a healthy body weight, enhance general wellbeing and reduce the risk



of a number of diseases including heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis.

Specific Dietary Advice for over 50's:

- Eat no more than 6g (teaspoon) of salt a day
- Eat plenty of fibre
- Cut down on fat and go for unsaturated fat instead of saturated
- Eat oily fish e. g. salmon, mackerel, trout and sardines
- Eat plenty of iron rich foods e. g. red meat, pulses (such as peas, beans and lentils), oily fish, bread, green vegetables and fortified breakfast cereals
- Eat calcium rich foods e. g. milk; cheese; yoghurt; green leafy vegetables; bread and fortified breakfast cereals; sardines; nuts, and soya beans
- Eat food rich in vitamin D e. g. oily fish, eggs, and foods with added vitamins. We get most of our vitamin D from the effects of the sun on our skin
- Don't have too much vitamin A (more than 1.5mg/day from food and/or supplements) as it might increase the risk of bone fractures. Liver is high in vitamin A so avoid or only eat once a week
- Eat dark green vegetables e. g. broccoli, spinach and brussels sprouts.

The **Food Standards Agency** has a leaflet called "The Good Life" which gives nutritional advice for men and women over the age of 50. The leaflet can be downloaded from the following website: www.food.gov.uk/about-us/publications/#branch8



EMERGENCY FOOD STORE CUPBOARD

A good idea especially during bad weather or in case of illness, is to have an emergency food store cupboard. Things to include in it are:

- Tinned meat and/or fish
- Tinned/packet soup
- Instant potatoes
- Pulses e. g. baked beans, dried peas or lentils
- Dried or tinned vegetables
- Breakfast cereals, porridge oats, pasta or rice
- Biscuits or crackers
- Dried milk or UHT long life milk
- Tinned milk puddings e. g. custard or rice pudding
- Tinned fruit in natural juice
- Cartons of fruit juice (with added vitamin C)
- Drinking chocolate or malt drinks.

FOOD SAFETY

The Food and Drink Federation have produced a leaflet on food safety which can be downloaded from their website (www.foodlink.org.uk). They suggest there are four key things you need to consider – cleanliness, cooking, chilling and cross-contamination.

- Cleanliness – ensuring hands and surfaces are clean and washed between handling raw food and after visiting the toilet
- Cooking – ensure food is thoroughly cooked, avoiding reheating food more than once, don't leave food such as meat and chicken at room temperature for more than two hours



- Chilling – never re-freeze food once it has started to thaw, and only thaw food in the microwave if cooking it immediately
- Cross contamination – keep raw meat and food away from cooked foods, never wash chicken before cooking and avoid touching your nose, teeth, ears and hair when handling food.

Always check date codes on food and don't buy or eat out of date food. 'Use by' dates are seen on food that goes off quickly. If you freeze it on the day of purchase this will extend its life beyond the 'use by' date, otherwise do not eat it after the 'use by' date. 'Best before' dates tell you more about quality than safety, so when the date runs out it might begin to lose its flavour and texture. You should never eat eggs after the 'best before' date.

For further information or advice on food safety contact Belfast City Council's Environmental Health Department on **028 9032 0202**

HEARING IMPAIRMENT AND DEAFNESS

Coping with diminished hearing or total loss of hearing can be a challenge. In Belfast the two main sources of help are the Action of Hearing Loss and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust who have dedicated teams to work with people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Action on Hearing Loss provides a range of services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and provide



information and support on all aspects of deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus.

For more information contact Action on Hearing Loss:

Telephone: **028 9023 9619**

Text phone: **028 9024 9462**

Fax: 028 9031 2033

Basic hearing test: **0845 600 5555**

Website: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Sensory Support

Team specifically work to help people who are deaf and hard of hearing as well as people with problems with their sight. They provide a range of services including: home visits; support and counselling for individuals and families; listening aids and an interpreting service.

You can self refer or be referred to the sensory support team through your GP, hospital consultant, health visitor, social worker or voluntary agency.

To contact the sensory support team for more information

Telephone **028 9091 2190**

A number of the large opticians (e.g. Specsavers and Boots) also offer a free hearing test carried out by professional Hearing Aid Audiologists, as well as free fitting of a range of digital hearing aids. Ask at your local opticians to see if they offer this service.



HEART DISEASE

Two of the main contributing factors that can lead to a heart attack or a stroke are high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Blood Pressure: if you are aged 30 and over you should have your blood pressure measured every 2 years. If you have a family history of high blood pressure you should have your blood pressure measured once a year.

Cholesterol: your total cholesterol should be less than 5. Ommol/l. A healthy lifestyle will help to reduce cholesterol. This will include a low-fat diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables, weight reduction if necessary, and regular exercise. Many people with high cholesterol will also require medication to reduce cholesterol.

Support Groups

A number of hospitals in the Belfast area run cardiac support groups which are patient led and meet regularly.

For more information on these support groups contact Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke on

028 9032 0184

HOSPITAL AND AFTER CARE: PATIENT RIGHTS

All patients have the right to be treated politely with respect for privacy and dignity. This applies to care given in hospital or in the community. When you need to go into hospital for treatment:



- Your consultant will put your name on a waiting list
- Your GP can give you information on waiting times for each hospital and consultant
- When you receive your admission date you should also receive a copy of the hospital information booklet
- You should be introduced to the nurse who is responsible for organising your care while you are in hospital
- If your operation is cancelled you should receive another appointment within a month and your operation should not be cancelled on the day your surgery is re-arranged for
- You have the right to read your medical notes written after 29 May 1994
- If you are not satisfied with the care you have received you can: discuss the problem with your consultant, your named nurse or the person in charge or contact the complaints officer.

Advice on your rights

The Patient Client Council is an independent body who seeks to represent the views of the public in all areas of health and social services. They provide information about health and social services including information on patient rights, as well as assistance in making a complaint.

Comments and Complaints

The Patient Client Council does not investigate complaints but will give you accurate and impartial advice on the options open to you including how to make a complaint, who to complain to, and help with making a complaint.



If you would like more information on your rights as a patient or how to make a comment or complaint contact the Patient Client Council on their freephone number **0800 917 0222** or visit their website: www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net

For information on managing medication go to the Safety in the Home section (page 85)

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

The MS Society is the leading charity providing support and information to people affected by Multiple Sclerosis in Northern Ireland.

For more information telephone **028 9080 2802** or visit their website: www.mssociety.org.uk/near-me/national-offices

OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis occurs when the inner part of bones becomes thin making them more fragile and prone to fracture. The food we eat plays a part in helping reduce the risk of osteoporosis. Calcium as well as other vitamins are important to strengthen bones. Foods rich in these include, milk and dairy products as well as plenty of fruit and vegetables (baked beans and spinach in particular are high in calcium), bread and cereals and meat and fish, will help provide the nutrients to strengthen bones. Weight bearing exercise is also beneficial to strengthening your bones. Exercise classes or simply climbing stairs can help.

The National Osteoporosis Society (NOS) run a helpline service that can provide you with information on drug



treatments; managing pain; diagnosis; and general information on osteoporosis.

For information, advice or to obtain a copy of their free information leaflets contact NOS Helpline: **0845 450 0230** or visit their website: www.nos.org.uk

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Parkinson's UK is the leading UK charity supporting all people affected by Parkinson's.

For more information telephone: **028 9092 3370** or contact the UK helpline on Freephone **0808 800 0303**

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

Having good mental health means feeling positive about yourself, being able to cope with everyday pressures and being able to form and maintain relationships. If you feel you cannot cope or are depressed, your GP is the best person to talk to in the first instance. They will have information about local services which may be able to help. The practice nurse or social worker will also be able to signpost you to help available. The following organisations may also be useful.

Organisation	Support offered	Contact details
CAUSE	Provides practical and emotional support to relatives and carers of people with serious mental illness	Telephone: 028 9056 5450 Helpline: 0845 6030291 (open 9am - 9pm) Website: www.cause.org.uk



CRUSE Bereavement Care	Supports people recently bereaved to understand their grief and cope with their loss	Telephone: 028 9023 2695 www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk
Aware Defeat Depression	Provides support and information for all those affected by depressive illnesses across Northern Ireland	Telephone: 028 9032 1734 Helpline: 0845 1202961 (10am - 4pm) www.aware-ni.org
Relate	Provides a confidential relationship counselling service for those who have relationship or marital problems	Telephone: 028 9032 3454 www.relateni.org/
Samaritans	Provides support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide	Telephone: 028 9066 4422 Helpline: 08457 909090 www.samaritans.org



Praxis Care	Provider of services for adults and children with a learning disability, mental ill health, acquired brain injury and for older people, including people with dementia	Telephone: 028 9023 4555 www. praxisprovides.com
No Panic	National (UK based) self-help organisation for phobias, anxiety and panic	Help-line: 0800 138 8889 Office: 01952 590005
Men to Men	Provides counselling on issues relating to: stress; alcohol problems; domestic violence; abuse; anger management; relationship difficulties	Telephone: 028 9024 7027 www.mentomen.org

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust provides a range of community mental health services which are targeted at those with severe mental illness and their carers, while



supporting GP's in their management of minor/moderate conditions. Normally referrals are made through the GP or psychiatrist to the mental health teams working in the Belfast area.

SEXUAL HEALTH

As people grow older, they are more likely to experience disabling conditions and illnesses that may affect how they respond sexually. Talk to your GP if you find that illness is preventing you from enjoying sex with your partner. They may be able to help and offer solutions or put you in touch with a therapist. There are a number of other voluntary organisations that can offer support/ counselling relating to sexual health and relationship problems. These include:

Name	Brief role	Contact details
Relate NI	Services include: confidential relationship and family counselling services and sex therapists	Telephone: 028 9032 3454 Website: www.relateni.org
College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists (CORST)	Their website contains a list of psychosexual therapists accredited and working throughout the UK including Northern Ireland	Telephone: 020 8549 2707 Website: www.cosrt.org.uk



Sexual Dysfunction
Association

Helps sufferers of
male and female
sexual problems

Telephone:
020 7486 7262
Website:
www.sda.uk.net/

Sexual Health Services offered by **Belfast Health and Social Care Trust** include a GUM (Genito Urinary Medicine) Clinic which provides help in dealing with all sexual health problems. Walk in service is no longer available. Telephone **028 9063 4050** to arrange an appointment or speak to your GP who can refer you.

The Genito Urinary Medicine Clinic is located at Level 3 Outpatients Department, Royal Group Hospitals. Telephone: **028 9063 4050**

SMOKING

Smoking dramatically increases your risk of heart disease, lung cancer, strokes and many other health problems. One in two smokers will die because of their smoking. It's never too late to stop smoking.

For support to stop smoking telephone the NI Smokers Helpline on **0808 812 8008**. The Ulster Cancer Foundation also provides information and advice, telephone: **028 9066 3281**

Belfast is a smoke free city meaning that it is against the law to smoke in most enclosed workplaces and public places.



For more information contact the Environmental Health Department within Belfast City Council on **028 9032 0202**

STROKE

Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke aims to improve the quality of life of the people of Northern Ireland by preventing and alleviating chest, heart and stroke illnesses.

For more information, or to receive a copy of any of their leaflets, telephone **028 9032 0184**. Leaflets can also be downloaded free from their website: www.nichs.org.uk

TEST RESULTS

If you get blood tests taken at your **GP practice** you will normally be asked to ring the surgery for the results. The length of time taken for results to come back will vary depending on the blood test – routine tests will generally only take a few days, however some blood tests needing to be analysed at a specialist hospital may take several weeks. The nurse should inform you of this when taking your blood. It is helpful if you ask the nurse for a list of the names of the blood tests that the GP has requested, to help you when you ring up looking the results.

If your GP has referred you to **hospital** for tests, once these have been carried out you will probably not get the results of these straight away. The hospital will send the results of tests back to your GP – this can take anything from a few days to two weeks. To obtain the results of these tests you will need to make an appointment with your GP



- it may be best however firstly to ask the receptionist to check if your test results have come back before making the GP appointment to save a wasted journey. If your GP has referred you to a specialist/consultant within the hospital and further tests are carried out on their request, the consultant will generally bring you back to the out-patients clinic to discuss the test results. The GP will also be informed of the results.

For information on help with travelling to the hospital or health and well being centres go to the Transport section. (page 135)



LEARNING AND LEISURE

LIFE LONG LEARNING

No matter what stage you are at in life, you can continue to learn new things and enter into further education or higher education. There are numerous opportunities available either: full-time or part-time courses; vocational; recreational; or degree level.

FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

Belfast Metropolitan College

Belfast Metropolitan College offer a full range of adult education courses for all ages including recreational type courses such as gardening and bird watching.

To obtain a copy of the full time or part time prospectus contact course enquiries on **028 9026 5265**

or E-mail: admissions@belfastmet.ac.uk.

Prospectuses can also be downloaded from their website: www.belfastmet.ac.uk

South Eastern Regional College

South Eastern Regional College is the new name for North Down, East Down and Lisburn Institutes.

For more information on courses available contact the course enquiry line on **0845 6007555** or Email: info@serc.ac.uk. Full and part-time prospectuses can be downloaded from their website: www.serc.ac.uk



UNIVERSITIES

University of the Third Age (U3A)

The University of the Third Age (U3A) runs a number of short courses specially designed for older people and are designed purely for personal interest and enjoyment. The Belfast U3A group run a number of activities including: gallery visits and water colour painting classes; book clubs; bridge games; meals out; going to the cinema; gardening tours; walking groups; music sessions and pilates. They meet in Belvoir Players Theatre, Belvoir Estate, Belfast, on the last Thursday of the month at 11.00 am.

For more information on the Belfast U3A visit their website on www.belfastu3a.org.uk.

For more information on the Belfast group contact the NI secretary on **028 9066 4780**

For more information on on-line courses available through the main UK U3A website go to www.belfastu.org.uk/

Queens University Belfast

Copies of the prospectus outlining courses offered by Queens University can be obtained by ringing **028 9024 5133** or can be downloaded from their website: www.qub.ac.uk/

University of Ulster (UU)

The University of Ulster have four campuses from where courses are run (Belfast, Jordanstown, Magee and Coleraine). They also have a 'virtual' campus called Campus One which offers a range of distance learning programmes.



Copies of the prospectus for each of the UU campuses can be obtained by ringing **08 700 400 700** or can be downloaded from their website:
www.prospectus.ulster.ac.uk/

The Open University

The Open University offer a wide range of ‘distance learning’ courses which allow you to study from home by reading course material, working on course activities, writing assignments and perhaps working with other students.

Copies of the prospectus can be obtained by ringing the Belfast Branch of the Open University:

Telephone: **028 9024 5025**

Alternatively you can download the prospectus from the following website:www.open.ac.uk

OTHER TRAINING PROVIDERS

Workers Educational Association (WEA)

WEA provides adult education in community and workplace settings including courses such as: computing; employment skills; women’s self development; leadership; community development; community relations; literacy; numeracy and creative industries.

For more information on courses available telephone WEA on **028 9032 9718** or visit their website where you can view courses and book on-line www.wea-ni.com



EGSA (Educational Guidance Service for Adults)

EGSA is a local, independent, not-for-profit service that aims to connect adults of all ages with learning opportunities. EGSA advisers provide information, advice and guidance on learning and career opportunities including advice on changing careers. This can be relevant at all stages of life especially if you are considering changing careers to a less stressful job later in life.

For more information or advice, contact EGSA on their learners' Line: **028 9024 4274** or visit their website: <http://egsa.org.uk>

Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

DEL is the Government department responsible for promoting learning and skills, as well as preparing people for work. Their website provides links to further and higher education courses and provides information to help individuals acquire jobs, including self employment. A range of publications/leaflets can be obtained on topics including: your rights at work; unfair dismissal; and resolving disputes at work.

For more information or to obtain leaflets contact DEL on **028 9025 7777**. Website: www.delni.gov.uk

LIBRARIES

There are a number of libraries located within the Belfast area. The largest is the Belfast Central Library located on Royal Avenue, Belfast. They offer the following services:

- Belfast Ulster and Irish Studies Library



- Business Library
- Central lending library
- General reference library
- Life long learning services
- Music library
- Newspaper library
- Exhibitions.

They also offer a number of outreach services to day centres; hospitals residential homes and sheltered dwellings as well as a housebound service. For people with hearing or visual problems the library has talking newspapers, audio books and sub-titled videos.

For more information on services offered by Belfast Central Library telephone: **028 9050 9150**. For more information on the local of libraries in Belfast and beyond visit the following website: www.ni-libraries.net

LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

Community Centres

Community Centres run by **Belfast City Council** offer a range of activities including homework/after school clubs; keep-fit sessions; yoga; dancing events; bowls; craft classes; women's groups and parent and toddler clubs. Some community centres also have a range of meeting facilities and computer equipment for you to use. Each community centre run their own range of activities so contact your nearest community centre to find out what activities are run in your area.



Ardoyne Community Centre

40 Herbert Street, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9074 8523

Concorde Community Centre

36 Alliance Road, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9071 2450

Dee Street Community Centre

12-16 Dee Street, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9045 8113 or
028 9045 5039

Divis Community Centre

9 Ardmoulin Place, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9024 2551

Donegall Pass Community Centre

25 Apsley Street, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9032 7661

Duncairn Community Centre

Upper Mervue Street, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9074 0212

Finaghy Community Centre

1-6 Geeragh Place, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9062 0474

Glen Road Community Centre

2 Carrigart Avenue, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9062 7189

Hammer Community Centre

Agnes Street, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9033 2860

Highfield Community Centre

High Green, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9039 1009 or
028 9071 7065



Horn Drive Community Centre

44a Horn Drive, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9060 4860

Inverary Community Centre

Inverary Avenue, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9047 1456

Knocknagoney Community Centre

41a Knocknagoney Drive, Belfast,
Telephone: 028 9076 1432

Ligoniel Community Centre

144 Ligoniel Rd, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9071 9337

Markets Community Centre

Market Street, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9023 5969

Morton Community Centre

Lorne Street, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9068 1874

North Queen Street Community Centre

46a Victoria Parade, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9032 3945

Olympia Community Centre

Boucher Road, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9024 7547

Sandy Row Community Centre

Sandy Row, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9032 5403

Suffolk Community Centre

Carnamore Park, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9060 2564



Whiterock Community Centre

Whiterock Road, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9032 8623

Woodvale Community Centre

79a Disraeli Street, Belfast, Telephone: 028 9035 1548

Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is vital for good health. Walking is one of the easiest ways to exercise. Aim to walk briskly for 30 minutes on most days – this will give you most benefit. Before going walking, put on comfortable shoes and wear bright clothes or clothes that reflect light so that you are clearly seen. If you are going out walking alone tell someone where you are going and what time you intend returning. Carrying personal alarms may be considered if you are wary of walking at night.

Active Belfast

The aim of Active Belfast is to promote healthy living and encourage people to be more physically active which can improve their health and social wellbeing. There are many benefits to being more active including maintenance of good physical and mental health, improved balance and coordination and mobility and reduced risk of disease.

Being more active can also help with increasing your life expectancy and if you are living within a disadvantaged area can be up to ten years less than those living in another area.

Active Belfast aims to address these inequalities through working with our partners to encourage people to get more



active under the three categories of Active Living, Active Leisure and Active Sport.

If you would like more information on keeping physically active and how we can help you contact the Active Belfast Team on **(028) 9050 2073** or email activebelfast@bhdu.org

Belfast City Council can provide information on activities run within leisure centres and parks that are suitable for older people.

Leisure centre activities specifically aimed at older people include: swimming lessons; aqua aerobics; art classes; bowls, ladies cycling; ladies aerobics; old time dancing; seniors tea dance; synergise; yoga; pilates; senior citizens fitness; wellness classes; tennis sessions and senior classes.

If you are aged 60 or over, you can have free access to the fitness suites, activity classes or the swimming pool at any Belfast City Council leisure centre up to 11am, Monday to Friday. All you need to do is apply for a Boost card. Application forms are available from all leisure centre reception areas. If you want to use your card outside these times, it costs between £1.50 - £2.00 per activity.

Many of Belfast City Council Leisure Centres offer leisure classes designed specifically for older people. These include,



Wellness Classes - that involve aerobic exercises and relaxation techniques to create a gentle but effective workout. They are available from

Centre	Day	Time	Contact Details
Falls Leisure Centre	Monday	10am to 11am	028 9091 8731

Seniorcise - is a gentle exercise session designed especially for those aged 50 for more. Seniorcise classes are available from

Centre	Class	Time	Day	Contact Details
Olympia Leisure Centre	Senior Citizen Fitness	10.30am	Mon	028 9091 8746
Olympia Leisure Centre	Senior Citizen Fitness	10.30am	Wed	028 9091 8746
Andersonstown Leisure Centre	Seniorcise	11.30am	Thur	028 9072 6311
Olympia Leisure Centre	Senior Citizen Fitness	10.30am	Fri	028 9091 8746



For more information on Belfast City Council Leisure Centres in your area contact Parks and Leisure department on **028 9032 0202** or visit www.belfastcity.gov.uk/leisurecentres/olderpeople.asp

Parks and open spaces: Belfast has hundreds of miles of paths and trails, including historical and challenging routes. Belfast City Council has a variety of maps, taken from their A Walk in the Park guide, to help you choose the route that's best for you. You can pick up your free copy of A Walk in the Park at Malone House, Belfast Castle and the Belfast Welcome Centre (Donegall Place).

For more information on leisure centre and park events or activities contact Belfast City Council on: **028 9032 0202** or visit the website www.belfastcity.gov.uk/seniors/leisurecentres/olderpeople.asp

Highway to Health routes incorporate a 2.5km route which runs throughout the city centre, starting at Belfast City Hall and continuing until Laganside and back again. There is also a Highway to Health route around Musgrave Park. It uses a yellow walking sign at one kilometre intervals on established routes.

For more information on Highway to Health walking routes contact Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke on **028 9032 0184** or visit their website: www.nichsa.com



Walking Groups

There are a number of organisations/ groups that run walking groups in the Belfast area. Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Health Improvement Department are currently compiling a full list of walking groups in the Belfast area and can also provide you with more information on request. Telephone: **028 9056 5421**

Dancing

Dancing is a great way to stay active and can be good for socialising. In Belfast many of the community centres hold regular dancing events for people aged 50+ including sequence dancing and country and western dancing. Contact your local community centre for details of events being held in your area. Many community groups and older peoples groups also run tea dances from time to time. Belfast Metropolitan College run a number of dancing courses e.g. line dancing, ball room dancing, country and western dancing, modern sequence dancing. Full details of these courses are listed on their part-time prospectus.

For a copy of the part-time prospectus on contact Belfast Metropolitan College on **028 9026 5265** or visit their website where you can download a copy of the prospectus: www.belfastmet.ac.uk/

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust: Health Improvement
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's (HSCT) Health Improvement Department offer a number of courses where



participants are trained to deliver activities or programmes such as: chair based activity programmes; social dance; health awareness programmes; and walking groups. They also offer first aid awareness training for walk leaders and a weight management education programme targeted at community groups.

For more information on any of these courses contact the Health Improvement Department within Belfast HSC Trust on **028 9041 7457**

Volunteer Now: Who, What, Where Booklet

Volunteer Now have put together a 'Who, What, Where' booklet which provides useful contacts in relation to groups in Belfast organising activities e.g. music, health, beauty etc.

To obtain a copy ring Volunteer Now on **028 9023 2020**. You can also download it from their website: www.volunteernow.org.uk

Older People's Organisations and Groups

There are a number of organisations/groups in Belfast that provide support/information and organise activities specifically for older people. These include: Volunteer Now; Engage with Age and older people's forums (of which there are 6 across Belfast which support many more smaller groups).

For more information on these groups including contact details go to the Support Organisations section.



For more information on these groups including contact details go to the Support Organisations section. (page 161)

ARTS AND LEISURE IN BELFAST

Useful contacts include:

	Website Address	Telephone
Grand Opera House	www.goh.co.uk	028 9024 1919
Old Museum Arts Centre	www.oldmuseumartscentre.org	028 9023 3332
Queens Film Theatre	www.queensfilmtheatre.com	028 9097 1097
Crescent Arts Centre	www.crescentarts.org	028 9024 2338
Lyric Theatre	www.lyrictheatre.co.uk	028 9038 5685
Belfast Civic Arts Centre	none	028 9031 6901
Belvoir Players Drama Group	www.belvoirplayers.org	028 9049 1210

Belfast Welcome Centre

Belfast Welcome Centre provides a wide range of information on activities/events happening in Belfast as well as general tourist information; information on getting around Belfast and maps; accommodation; and places to visit.



For more information visit Belfast Welcome Centre at:
47 Donegall Place, Belfast; Telephone: **028 9024 6609**;
website: www.gotobelfast.com

Northern Ireland Tourist Board provide regional information on events, places to see etc. You can also download the Belfast Visitors map from their website: www.discovernorthernireland.com.

All Ireland Tourism Information can be found on the following website: www.tourismireland.com

SHOPPING: BUYING GOODS

When you buy goods the law says that you are entitled to expect those goods to be of satisfactory quality (free of flaw/damage); fit for the purpose it was made for; and as described on the box/or by the retailer. If the goods are not of satisfactory quality then you are entitled by law for a full refund if you complain to the retailer within a reasonable time. In most cases you will need to show your receipt as proof of purchase. You have no right to a refund/repair if the fault in the goods was pointed out to you at the time of sale, or should have been evident on reasonable inspection, or the fault was due to fair wear and tear. For goods bought in a sale the same rights apply except when the goods are marked 'seconds' or 'shop soiled'.

When buying goods from a private individual the goods should be as described however you have no rights if the goods are not of satisfactory quality or not fit for a particular purpose.



The Consumer Council suggest that paying for goods by credit card can give you extra protection if something goes wrong. However you should use credit cards wisely, ensuring you have the finances in place to pay for the credit card bill, and be aware of interest charges that will be added if you do not pay your credit card bill in full each month.

For further information on your rights when buying goods contact the Consumerline on **0845 600 6262** or visit their website: www.consumerline.org

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL CONSUMER ADVICE CENTRE
The Consumer Advice Centre in Wellington Place offers free specialist advice to consumers and traders in Belfast on a range of issues such as consumer rights, faulty goods, shopping complaints, bad customer service and holiday complaints. They can also help by advising you of your rights, drafting letters on your behalf and following up on your complaints.

For more information contact the Consumer Advice Centre on **028 9032 8260** or by emailing consumeradvice@belfastcity.gov.uk

HOLIDAYS

If you plan to go abroad for your holiday and are currently being treated for a medical condition it is advisable to speak to your GP to check he/she is happy with you flying. You should also make sure you have good travel insurance



to ensure you are fully covered for any medical emergency that may occur whilst on holiday. Your local travel agency will be able to give you advice on travel insurance. If you are travelling to Europe you should also have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which gives you reduced cost or free, state-provided medical treatment in countries throughout Europe for up to five years. The EHIC is free for the whole family. It is not an alternative to travel insurance as you still need to be covered for things like cancellations, loss and theft, but it does mean that you'll get the response you need in the event of a health emergency.

To find out more about the EHIC or get an application form:

- Pick up an application form from the post office
- Visit the Department of Health website: www.dh.gov.uk/travellers
- Call the Department of Health customer service centre on **020 7210 4850**
- Call the EHIC enquiry line on **0845 605 0707**

For information on flying, go to the Transport section. (page 153)

A number of church organisations organise holidays for adults/ older people – ask your minister/priest/religious leader to find out more.

BCM (Belfast Central Mission)

BCM run holidays for 'older people' at BCM's Childhaven Centre in Millisle. The holidays include day trips and evening entertainment such as Old Time Dancing or musical groups.



The aim of the holidays is to provide socially isolated older people with an opportunity to meet and mix with others. They also provide stimulation, fun and friendship at an affordable price.

For further information contact the Community Services Manager within BCM on **028 9024 1917**

SAGA

SAGA group specialise in holidays for the over 50+ age group. They can also provide holiday insurance.

For more information visit their website: www.saga.co.uk or telephone **0800 096 0074** to request a brochure.

DAY CENTRES

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust have a number of specialist Day Centres in the community which caters for the needs of frail elderly, physically disabled and mentally ill people and those with dementia. A wide range of activities and services are available through their multi-disciplinary staff teams. Speak to your doctor or social worker for more information on day centres in your area.



HOUSING

DIFFERENT HOUSING OPTIONS

SOCIAL HOUSING

A single application form from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive will allow you to apply for social or sheltered housing and also specialist accommodation where extra support is available for people with special needs.

SHELTERED HOUSING

Sheltered accommodation is a term used to describe a group of dwellings designed for older or disabled people and with support provided on site.

To apply for social or sheltered housing or to apply for a transfer:

- Obtain an application form from either a NIHE district office or local housing association office.
- Download an application from the following website:
www.nihe.gov.uk/index/yh-home/apply_for_a_home/application_process.htm
- You can apply over the phone by calling **03448 920 900**.

To find sheltered accommodation please visit http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/advice/sheltered_accommodation.htm

PRIVATE RENTING

The Housing Executive website offers advice on renting private property:

http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/yh-home/renting_privately.htm



If you are having problems with your landlord or in connection with your private tenancy you can contact:

Housing Rights on Telephone: **028 9024 5640**
Citizens Advice Northern Ireland on Telephone:
028 9026 1970 or you could consider getting legal advice.

HOMELESSNESS

If you are homeless or at risk of losing your home you should seek help at your local Housing Executive District Office or the Homeless Advice Centre. The level of help the Executive can give you depends on your particular circumstances.

Homeless Advice Centre: 32-36 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7BA. Telephone: **03448 920 900**

For more information see the NIHE website at www.nihe.gov.uk/index/yh-home/homelessness-4.htm

MOVING HOME

It is advisable that you undertake a number of checks when moving into a new home.

- Check the smoke alarm
- Take gas, electricity and water readings
- Arrange to have your gas and electricity appliances serviced
- If necessary register with a new doctor/dentist/optician.

People and companies to contact:

- Gas and Electricity at the old and new address (at least two weeks before the move)



- Water (at least a week before the move)
- Telephone companies (landline, mobile, and internet) to advise the change of address and the date you want your new number to operate (at least a week before the move). If you are moving locally you may be able to keep your number
- Your landlord if you are moving out from rented accommodation
- Post Office (give at least seven days notice for redirection of your mail)
- Bank/Building Society/Credit Card Companies
- Benefits Agency/Pension provider
- Life/Private Healthcare policy provider
- Insurance Company (car, contents, building etc)
- Inland Revenue
- Doctor/Dentist/Optician (make sure you have enough medication/prescription to last until after the move).
- The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- TV Licensing Centre
- Provider of any cable or digital television service (find out if you will still have coverage in your new area)
- Subscriptions
- Social Clubs/Societies
- Vet
- Friends and Family.

RENOVATIONS AND BUILDING WORK

If you are considering doing renovations or building work on your home you need to consider whether or not you need planning permission.



The **Planning Service for Northern Ireland** can provide you with information on what adaptations you need planning permission for, how to apply, and how to make an appeal against a refusal for planning permission.

For more information contact Planning Service Headquarters on **028 9041 6700** or visit their website: www.planningni.gov.uk

The **UK Planning Portal** provides a simple guide to planning permission and building regulations around your home. It outlines your responsibilities when considering renovations to your home. It also provides information on how to make your home more environmentally friendly.

To visit their website go to: www.planningportal.gov.uk

‘Secured by Design’ is a website developed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in the UK. This website provides guidance for the general public as well as guides for architects and constructors on how to carefully design your home to make it as secure as possible. This information is particularly useful if you are considering making adaptations to your home.

To visit this website go to: www.securedbydesign.com or alternatively call **020 7084 8962** to speak with the PSNI Crime Prevention Design Adviser.



BUYING YOUR HOME

Housing Executive Tenants

Housing Executive tenants wishing to purchase their homes can get an application form and advice leaflet from your local District Housing Executive Office or Belfast Land and Property Department.

Tenants can also now buy their house in stages under 'equity sharing' – part ownership and part rental.

Telephone: **08448 920900** or look on the following website: www.nihe.gov.uk/index/yh-home/buying_a_home/housing_executive.htm

This website also gives general advice on buying a home.

Equity Release

Equity release is the term used to cover the various ways that older homeowners can use their homes to generate income or lump sums while continuing to live there. Age NI has developed an information leaflet on this topic.

To receive a copy telephone: **0808 808 7575**

CARE HOMES

Care homes provide accommodation, personal care and sometimes nursing care for older people whose care and support needs mean that they can no longer live independently. Your General Practitioner can refer you to a care manager who will be able to give you advice and assess your need for this type of care including a financial assessment. If you have assets (including savings, income,



property) of £23,500 you may be eligible to pay the full cost of your care. The value of the property will not be included as assets if the husband or wife of the person moving into the care home remains at home or if a relative aged 60+ or a disabled relative remains at home.

Care managers will be able to give you all the information you need and will provide you with an information pack. Full details of nursing home regulations can be found on the following website: <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/health-and-well-being/health-services/residential-care-and-nursing-homes.htm>

If you have a complaint against a care home which cannot be resolved with the care home and/or the local Health and Social Care Trust, you should contact the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) who have responsibility for standards and quality of health and personal social services provision.

To make a positive comment or complaint to your local Health and Social Care Trust, Telephone: **028 9032 7156**

To make a positive comment or complaint to the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority Telephone: **028 9051 7500**

LIVING WITH FAMILY

Moving in with relatives can seem like an attractive option and in many cases works well. However, if you are planning



to invest in a relative's property, or purchase one together, take legal advice and consider having a formal agreement drawn up. This can prevent misunderstanding and ill feeling later on.

For information for carers, go to the Health and Wellbeing section. (page 16)

STAYING IN YOUR OWN HOME WITH SUPPORT

Managing Poor Health at Home

If your health has deteriorated and your GP is managing your condition at home but you have worries that you can no longer manage without support at home then it is important that you talk to your GP about this. The GP will refer you to a social worker/care manager who will be able to carry out an assessment of your needs and link in with other health professionals as necessary.

Adaptations/Safety Equipment

If you are having difficulty with everyday activities such as washing, dressing or getting around, an Occupational Therapist may be able to offer advice and/ or equipment to allow you to be more independent and safer.

To contact an Occupational Therapist please ring:

South and East Belfast (including Castlereagh)

- **028 9056 5565**

North and West Belfast - **0845 606 6596**



For information on wheelchair hire, go to the Transport section. (page 135)

The **Centre for Independent Living Belfast** is a voluntary organisation run by disabled people for disabled people. They provide information on living independently and provide information/advice on using Direct Payments which is a benefit that allows you to employ a personal assistant or buy services from an agency of your choice to support you at home, as well as daytime activities and respite. Direct Payments are available to disabled people with any impairment, including learning disability, mental health service users etc. If you are not already getting a service from the Health Trust you can refer yourself to social services who will organise an assessment of your needs.

For further information on direct payments Telephone:

028 9064 8545 or textphone **028 9064 0598**.

Website: www.cilbelfast.org

To self refer yourself to social services please ring one of the following numbers depending on the area you live in:

South and East Belfast - **028 9056 5565**

North and West Belfast - **0845 606 6596**

Disability Living Foundation (UK)

Disability Living Foundation (UK) provides free, impartial advice about all types of disability equipment and mobility products for older and disabled people. They produce a wide range of fact sheets.



For more information telephone the Disability Living Foundation helpline on **0845 130 9177**.

Leaflets can be downloaded free from their website:
www.dlf.org.uk

Age NI: First Connect Service

The First Connect Service aims to support disadvantaged older people to access a range of services to improve their quality of life, help them remain independent and enable them to access the right support. The service works directly with older people and their local communities. An assessor will visit the person at home to discuss their needs, provide information on services and signpost to the agreed services.

For more information call Freephone **0808 808 7575**

For information on housing related benefits go to the income section (pg 107).

Supporting People

The Supporting People programme, administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive provides funding for housing support services for vulnerable people, for example older people living in sheltered or specialist accommodation, to help them live as independently as possible, but does not cover personal or care services. For more information about Supporting People and the housing related support services you receive please contact your housing association.



Housing Support for Older People: is an initiative run by Belfast Central Mission and funded by Supporting People. It provides housing related support to people aged 55+ living in Belfast including help with maintaining tenancies, home maintenance and safety and security of the home. Support is offered from six weeks up to two years depending on the circumstances. A referral can be made by any community or hospital based health and social care staff as well as directly from older people who would like support from the service.

For more information telephone **028 9024 5716**

Website: www.belfastcentralmission.org/what-we-do/for-older-people/housing-support

UPKEEP OF YOUR HOME

Grants may be available for repairs or to upgrade your heating system (see Heating your Home section for more information on the Warm Home Plus Scheme or Freephone **0800 988 0559**).

If you receive Pension Credit you may be entitled to a community care grant or budgeting loan from the Social Fund to help with the cost of minor repairs or decoration (see Income section for more information on these grants or contact your local Social Security Office or Citizens Advice office).

Grants available from NIHE

Grants available to homeowners and private tenants include:

- Home Repair Assistance Grants to carry out moderate repairs, improvements to those in receipt of Pension Credit, Income Support or Housing Benefit



- Disabled Facilities Grant

Due to the reduction in grants funding, NIHE are currently only accepting applications for mandatory Disabled Facilities and Repair grants. Discretionary Renovation, Replacement and Home Repair Assistance grants are only available in exceptional circumstances.

For more information and application forms contact the NIHE Grants Office on **08448 920 900** or look on the following website:
http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/hig_home.htm

You can only access the disabled facilities grant if you have firstly been assessed by an Occupational Therapist (*see information on the disabled facilities grant within the Heating Your Home section*) (**page 97**)

Helping you Through the Grants Process

The local Housing Executive grants office will be pleased to answer your questions at any stage of the process. If you are elderly or have special needs the Housing Executive has made arrangements with some independent agencies to help you.

The “Staying Put” service provided by Fold Housing Association assists older people and/or people with a disability and offers advice and support to repair or adapt their homes through the Housing Executive Grants Scheme.



For help from FOLD Telephone: **028 9042 8314** or
download information from the FOLD website at:
www.foldgroup.co.uk/publications

Oasis Cleaning and Maintenance Services

Oasis Cleaning and Maintenance Services is a Social Economy Project of Oasis Caring in Action. They provide cleaning and maintenance services for private residence, rental and commercial properties. They can help you with

- Domestic cleaning
- Painting and decorating
- Garden and maintenance
- Small building work, and
- General DIY.

For further information on the service please contact Oasis Centre on **028 9087 2277** or visit www.oasis-ni.org

NIHE Repairs

If you live in a Housing Executive property they will carry out a range of emergency and routine repairs for you.

If you need repairs done Telephone: **03448 920 901**

Call Response Service/Personal Alarms

A number of organisations provide personal alarms which can summon help in the case of an emergency, such as a fall (see *Safety in the Home* section for more information)



HOUSING ADVICE SOURCES

Housing Rights

Housing Rights is a charitable organisation providing independent specialist housing advice.

You can telephone the advice line on **028 9024 5640** or call in to see the duty adviser between 9.00am - 5.00pm (Monday to Friday) at the following address: 4th Floor Middleton Buildings, 10-12 High Street, Belfast BT1 2BA.

If you have a housing problem outside their opening hours you can contact Shelter's helpline on **028 9024 7752** between 8am and midnight seven days a week. Website: www.northernireland.shelter.org.uk/advice/index.ofm to www.housingadviceni.org

Energy Advice

The Energy Advice section of the Housing Executive website can help you with energy saving tips and provides a Free Home Energy Check (www.nihe.gov.uk/energy_advice/)

The Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre can also provide information on saving energy in the home as well as advice on heating the home. Contact them on free phone: **0300 123 1234**

Housing Advice NI Website

'housingadviceNI' has been developed by the Housing Rights Service in partnership with Shelter and supported by NIHE www.housingadviceni.org



District/City Councils

Belfast City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council Environmental Health Departments can deal with complaints and enquiries about housing and public health. They can also give advice if you have a complaint about repairs in your rented flat or house; harassment or eviction. Other services include: dog wardens; noise control; pest control service; waste collection and disposal.

For more information telephone:

Belfast City Council on **028 9032 0202**

Castlereagh Borough Council on **028 9049 4600**

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

Flooding

Contacts for sources of flooding

Flooding Incident Line.

Telephone **0300 2000 100** - the single point of contact for reporting flooding

Overflowing rivers and watercourses - contact

Rivers Agency Telephone: **028 9260 6100** for the office responsible for the Belfast area

Burst water mains or blocked sewers - contact Water

Service. Telephone: Waterline **08457 44 00 88**

or textphone **08457 02 32 06** for those with hearing difficulties.

Roadway, footpath or blocked gullies - contact Road

Service. Telephone: **028 9054 0540** for the office responsible for the Belfast area.



Other Safeguards

Electricity

Electricity circuits affected by flooding should be checked by a qualified electrician. Northern Ireland Electricity can provide advice to customers (telephone: **08457 643643**).

Insurance

Contact your insurance company as soon as possible. They may offer advice regarding replacement or cleansing of damaged items.

Burst Water Pipes in the Home

Homeowners are responsible for burst pipes which occur inside the home. If a pipe does burst:

- Turn off the stop tap/valve
- Try and block the escaping water with thick cloth like towels
- Open all taps to reduce flooding
- Call a plumber (see below)
- Don't forget to turn off taps once the problem is fixed.

Northern Ireland Water Service recommends using plumbers registered with SNIPEF (Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation) – see yellow pages for full list of plumbers including SNIPEF registered plumbers

For advice on avoiding and dealing with frozen pipes see Northern Ireland Water website www.niwater.com or Telephone: **08457 440 088**



Use Water Wisely

Report all visible leaks on roads and footpaths to Northern Ireland Water.

The Freephone Leakline number is **08000 282011**

Repair all leaks, dripping taps and overflows on your premises promptly.

Power Failures

In the case of a power/electricity failure contact Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE).

For information on fault/supply enquires including new electricity supply; any physical supply matter or new supply and alterations to lines and equipment telephone:

08457 643643 (8.30am – 5pm Mon – Fri, 24hrs for faults)

or email: customercontact@nie.co.uk

Minicom telephone for customers who are deaf:

0845 714 7128

Fire

In the case of a fire in the home always call the Fire Brigade (see Safety in the Home section for advice on preventing a fire).

Emergency: Telephone **999**



Gas Fumes

If you think you smell gas leaking in the house telephone the Gas Emergency Number.

Telephone: Phoenix Natural Gas on **0800 002 001**

Medical Emergency

In the case of a medical emergency, telephone **999**.

If it is not an emergency contact your General Practitioner (GP). Keep your GP's number (including the out of hours GP), close to your phone.

INSURING YOUR PROPERTY/MAKING A CLAIM

If you are a home owner, your insurance should cover both buildings and contents. The amount you insure the buildings for should equal the amount of money it would cost to rebuild the house including fixtures and fittings (e.g. kitchen, bathroom etc) rather than the current saleable valuable of the property. If you live in rented accommodation you need only insure your personal property. Some insurance companies offer insurance for 50+ age group but it is advisable to shop around before making a decision. If you require advice on making a claim, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

WASTE AND RECYCLING

Waste Collection

Your local Council is responsible for the collection and disposal of household refuse. To report any **missed collections** contact your local council on:



Belfast City Council Customer Support Centre:

028 9027 0297

Castlereagh Borough Council Technical Services:

028 9049 4600 or **028 9049 4602**

If your blue or brown bin is missing, or needs to be replaced, you can order a new one by calling your local council. Blue and brown bins are free of charge but there is a charge for a black bin.

Belfast City Council: **0800 0328 100**

Castlereagh Borough Council Technical Services:

028 9049 4600 or **028 9049 4602**

Bulky Waste Collection/ Special Collections

Belfast City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council offer a free bulky waste/ special collection service for people over the age of 60 for items such as sofas, cookers, doors, mattresses and beds.

To book a collection call Belfast City Council:

028 9027 0230

Castlereagh Borough Council Technical Services:

028 9049 4600 or **028 9049 4602**

Assisted Bin Lifts

Applying for an assisted lift can take up to four weeks; the steps for Belfast Council area are as follows:

1. Call **028 9027 0230** or email refusecollection@belfastcity.gov.uk
2. A registration form will be sent to you



3. Get a health care professional to stamp or sign the form to prove that you are unable to leave your bin out for collection
4. Return the completed stamped or signed form to us.
5. An assessment will be made to decide whether you are eligible for an assisted bin lift
6. If you are eligible, you will be added to the assisted bin lift register and be notified in writing.

For more information about getting help with your bin you can call Belfast City Council on **028 9027 0230**

If you are physically unable to wheel your bin to the footpath, Castlereagh Borough Council can also lift your bin on your behalf, providing you submit a note from your doctor. Please contact Technical and Environmental Services on **028 9049 4600** to arrange a pull-out of your bin.

Belfast City Council Address:

Operations Manager Waste Collection and Recycling
Belfast City Council
Duncrue Complex, Duncrue Road, Belfast, BT3 9BP
Telephone: **028 9027 0230**

Castlereagh Borough Council Address:

Technical and Environmental Services Department
Castlereagh Borough Council
Civic and Administrative Offices
Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB
Telephone: **028 9049 4600**



Recycling Bins/Boxes

People living in Belfast City Council or Castlereagh Borough Council area will have several recycling bins or a Bryson Recycling 'kerbside' black box for recycling purposes. If you have any questions on recycling and are unsure what items should be placed in these boxes contact:

Belfast City Council: **0800 032 8100**

Castlereagh Borough Council Technical and Environmental Services on **028 9049 4600**

For more details about black Bryson Recycling kerbside boxes contact Bryson Recycling on **028 9084 8494**

Recycling Centres Locations

In Belfast City Council area there are four centres for recycling household waste, free of charge located:

- **Alexandra Park Avenue** off Antrim Road, North Belfast
- Blackstaff Way off Kennedy Way, West Belfast
- **Ormeau** off Ormeau Road, South Belfast
- **Palmerston Road** off Hollywood Road, East Belfast.

Belfast City Council can also provide free heavy duty plastic sacks to make it easier for you to carry your waste to your nearest recycling centre. These are available at the recycling centres.

Castlereagh Borough Council recycling centres are located:

- Cregagh Road Household Recycling Centre, Belfast
- Comber Road Household Recycling Centre, Carryduff



DOMESTIC WATER CHARGES

The Consumer Council have from April 2007 legal responsibility to represent the interests of water consumers in Northern Ireland.

For more information contact the Consumer Council on:
028 9067 2488. Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

Information is also available from the Water Reform helpline.
Telephone: **0800 051 5445**;
Minicom 0800 051 5446
Website: www.waterreformni.gov.uk

NIHE DISTRICT OFFICES IN BELFAST/CASTLEREAGH

Shankill District Office

Address: Spencer House, 71 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1FE

Telephone: Main: 0344 892 0900;

Repairs: 0344 892 0901; Housing Benefit: 034 4892 0902

- **North Belfast District Office**
- **South Belfast District Office**
- **West Belfast District Office**
- **East Belfast District Office**

The Address and Telephone numbers below cover the District Offices listed above

Address: 38 Great Victoria St, Belfast, BT2 7BA

Telephone: Main: 0344 892 0900;

Repairs: 0344 892 0901; Housing Benefit: 0344 892 0902



Castlereagh District Office

Address: 30 Church Road, Dundonald, BT16 2LN.

Telephone: Main: 0344 892 0900; Repairs:
0344 892 0901; Housing Benefit: 0344 892 0902



SAFETY IN THE HOME

HELPFUL ADVICE

Tips for Preventing Falls

- Ensure floor surfaces are non-slip, securely fixed and in good general repair
- Arrange your furniture so that you can move around easily
- Make sure there are no trailing flexes from electrical appliances
- Clear away any clutter from your hallway and stairs and ensure that your stairs are well lit
- Take extra care with stairs and steps and use the hand rail
- Fit safety rails in the toilet and bathroom
- Leave a low energy light bulb on all night on the landing and keep a torch or lamp by your bed
- Regular physical activity helps to improve your balance and keep your muscles strong. Check with your doctor before you start new exercises
- A diet rich in calcium and vitamin D and regular weight bearing exercise will help keep your bones healthy and reduce the risk of breaks or fractures
- Have your eyes checked every year – eye tests are free if you are aged 60 or over
- Wear shoes with rubber soles and non-slip heels.

If you do have a fall or accident:

- Don't panic – try to stay calm. If you are alone attract attention by banging on the floor or a wall



- Use your personal alarm if you have one or call 999 if you can reach the phone
- Keep warm, pull a coat or blanket over you if possible, keep your arms and legs moving by tensing your muscles
- If you can, try to get up off the floor. Roll over on to your hands and knees first. Use a piece of sturdy furniture to try and pull yourself up. Ideally you should crawl over to a heavy chair or settee and get into a sitting position to rest before trying to stand
- If you do fall, inform your doctor even if you are not hurt – there may be a medical reason for your fall, or your doctor can advise you on how to prevent further falls
- Some medicines can make you feel dizzy and increase your risk of an accident. If you take more than four medicines ask your doctor or pharmacist to review them.

Prepare for emergencies

Place details of your doctor and close relatives or friends in an obvious place, perhaps behind the front door, so that people know who to contact in an emergency.

Tips for Preventing Fires in the Home

- Fit a smoke alarm and check it every week. Use a pole or brush shaft to reach the test button – do not stand on chairs!
- At night time take out plugs; close internal doors; move curtains/clothes/papers away from heaters; empty ashtrays and put a guard on open fires
- Draw up a fire escape plan so that everyone in the house knows what to do if the smoke alarm goes off



- Never leave a chip pan or any cooking unattended
- Never overload electric sockets and always use the correct fuse
- If you smoke use deep ashtrays and never smoke in bed
- Make sure that all smoking materials are put out properly and are disposed of in a metal container, not a waste paper bin
- Always keep matches and lighters safely out of reach of children
- Avoid using plug in air fresheners as they can be a fire hazard
- Never leave candles unattended and keep them away from anything that could catch fire
- Don't leave electric blankets folded. Store them flat or rolled up to protect the internal wiring
- Get your electric blanket serviced regularly and check for damage signs such as frayed fabric, worn flex and scorch marks. Unplug your electric blanket when you go to bed, unless you are absolutely sure it is the type that can be left on overnight
- Have your gas and electrical appliances serviced at regular intervals. Central heating boilers need to be serviced annually and chimneys swept every year.

Tips for Avoiding Scalds

- Consider having Thermostatic Mixing Valves (TMVs) fitted to bath taps. These valves regulate the temperature of the water coming out of the tap to a maximum of 48°C
- To avoid scalds always put cold water in the bath first and check the temperature with your elbow before getting in



- Try not to carry hot liquids further than necessary
- When using the cooker, always use the rear hot plates and turn the panhandles away from the front of the cooker
- Ensure your hot water bottle is of good quality and replace if they show signs of wear. Hot water bottles should be used to pre-heat your bed and removed before you get in.

Tips for Managing your Medication

As well as getting advice from your doctor, pharmacists based in local community pharmacies are trained to give people advice on medicines including issues like: storage, disposal, side effects, and how to best take your medicines. Some tips for managing medicines include:

- Make regular appointments with your doctor to make sure that the medicines that have been prescribed for you are still appropriate
- All medicines have possible side effects. Many people experience no side effects at all. If you do experience symptoms that you think might be side effects from your medicines, speak to your doctor or pharmacist
- You need to be extremely careful when taking medicines such as sleeping pills and painkillers that are physically addictive. Only take painkillers according to the instructions on the packet. Never take a larger number of painkilling tablets or capsules or take them more frequently than is stated on the label. If you are already taking painkillers prescribed for you by your doctor, never



purchase additional painkillers without speaking to a pharmacist first

- Never share your medicines or give them to anyone else
- Avoid taking out of date medicines. Check the box or container for the expiry date
- Take medicines you no longer need or use back to the pharmacy. Never throw them out with the household waste or put them down the sink
- It's useful to keep a list of all the current medication you are taking in a place that health professionals and family members can access in case of an emergency
- Care should be taken if drinking alcohol while taking any medicine but for some medicines it's important not to take any alcohol. Check with your pharmacist
- Keep all medicines in a lockable container or cupboard and out of the reach of children
- When ordering repeat prescriptions you will normally have to collect your script from your GP practice. However, some pharmacies offer a prescription collection service from local surgeries and a home delivery service to people who are unable to leave their home. Ask at your local pharmacy if they offer these services.

MEDICATION SERVICES

You can speak to your pharmacist if you require any information on your medicines or how to take them. All pharmacists will be able to provide you with advice and help, however, a large number of pharmacists can offer you additional help and support through the 'Managing Your Medicine' service. Ask your pharmacist if they offer this



service or look for the poster in the pharmacy showing that they can provide this service.

TELEPHONE SUPPORT SERVICES

Call Response Service and Personal Alarms

A number of organisations provide a 24-hour immediate call response service. At the touch of a button you can be connected to a response team who will summon the help you need. Unlike a phone, you don't need to dial an emergency service number and the system will work from anywhere in your home or garden using a remote button or pendant that can be worn on your wrist or around your neck.

This service can summon help in the case of an emergency or can be used more generally if you:

- Are anxious about unwanted callers
- Have health or mobility problems
- Are worried about the risk of falling
- Need additional support.

Financial assistance may be available to pay for the service through a community care grant from the social fund if you are in receipt of pension credit and have savings of less than £1,000.

For more information contact Age NI or Fold Housing Association.



Age NI Enterprises

Telephone: **0808 100 4545** (Lines are open 9am-5pm

Monday to Friday)

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Fold Housing Association

Telephone: **028 9042 1010**

Website: www.foldgroup.co.uk

Good Morning Projects

Good Morning Projects are a free and confidential telephone service in Belfast for older and vulnerable people. A support team phones clients each morning to check on their well being. Two contact names and phone numbers are kept on record in case of emergency. If you live in an area in the table below and would like to register for your local service, please contact the good morning project between 9am – 1pm.

Good Morning Project	Geographical area covered	Contact Details
Good Morning West Belfast	West Belfast	Telephone: 028 9020 0228
Good Morning Ballysillan	North Belfast	Telephone: 028 9071 9200
Good Morning Colin	Colin area and greater Dunmurry	Telephone: 028 9062 7863
Recall Project*	South & East Belfast	Telephone: 028 9046 9946

*This project also offers befriending and advice services.



HOME AND FIRE SAFETY SERVICES

Home Safety Check Scheme

Belfast City Council provides a free Home Safety Check for older people. Advisors can show you the risk areas in your home; check all electrical sockets and replace any burnt, damaged or broken plugs. Advice can be provided on the various specialist services available and referrals made to other agencies, such as Occupational Therapists and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

Telephone Belfast City Council on **028 9091 8715** and ask for the Home Safety Officer

Castlereagh Borough Council also provides a free Home Safety Check for people aged over 60. They will call at your home to provide advice and will supply some small pieces of safety equipment where appropriate. With your permission, they can make referrals as necessary to ensure you get the support you need to keep you safer in your home.

Telephone Castlereagh Borough Council on **028 9049 4670** and ask for the Home Safety Officer

Home Fire Safety Check Scheme

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) provide a free home fire safety check scheme. On request fire officers will come to your house and give you advice on fire hazards; how to avoid fires and fit a free battery powered smoke alarm if necessary.



Telephone: NIFRS on **028 9266 4221** to register for a free home fire safety check. For further information please visit www.nifrs.org/fire_safety

Electric Blanket Testing

D M Electrics currently offers an electric blanket testing service to groups wanting to check the safety of electric blankets in their area. Electric blankets can be a fire hazard if they are not kept in good working order so it is useful to have them checked regularly.

Telephone: DM Electrics on **028 4372 6067** or 078 8943 0555 if you would like them to come along to an event organised by your group to test electric blankets. The cost for their service is £315. They can give you guidance on how to organise such an event in your area.

Ligoniel Improvement Association

Ligoniel Improvement Association run information sessions including practical demonstrations on chip pan and electrical fires and safety in the home.

For more information telephone **028 9039 1225**

FALLS PREVENTION SERVICES

Falls Prevention Classes

If you have had a number of falls, are at risk from falling or have a fear of falling, your GP may consider referring you to a Falls Assessment clinic in your area.



For information on safety equipment/adaptations and the Centre for Independent Living go to the Housing section. (page 66)

RoSPA

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents is a registered charity actively involved in the promotion of safety and the prevention of accidents in all areas of life: at work, in the home, and on the roads, in schools, at leisure and on (or near) water.

Telephone: RoSPA in Northern Ireland on **028 9050 1160**

Email: info-ni@rospa.com for general advice on home safety and accident prevention.

Website: www.rospa.co.uk/ni/aboutus.htm



HEATING YOUR HOME

HEALTH EFFECTS OF LIVING IN A COLD HOME

- A cold home is more likely to have problems with damp and condensation. This encourages mould and dust mites to thrive which can make conditions such as asthma worse
- Living in temperatures below 12°C can lead to an increased risk of heart attack or stroke as the heart has to work harder to pump blood around the body due to a thickening of the blood
- Hypothermia occurs when the body temperature drops to 35°C (normal is 37°C). If a vulnerable person (sick or immobile) is exposed to temperatures of 9°C for two hours or more, hypothermia can occur. Hypothermia can lead to death. Symptoms include a slow, weak pulse, shallow breathing, being very cold to the touch, a change in skin colour (blue or greyish), and drowsiness. Seek medical help immediately if these symptoms occur.

Tips for avoiding Hypothermia

- Make sure your home is adequately heated especially during the winter. Living room temperature for older people should be around 21°C and bedroom temperature around 18°C. You can buy temperature thermometers cheaply in most chemists or call Bryson Energy on 0800 1422 865
- Wear several thin layers of clothing. Wools are warmer than synthetic fabrics



- Eat regular meals, including at least one hot meal per day, and take hot drinks during the day. Keep some emergency food in the house in case of bad weather or illness
- Move about at regular intervals throughout the day
- In bed, make sure there are adequate bed clothes. If you use a hot water bottle make sure it is in a good condition
- When sitting down keep a blanket over your knees to provide more heat
- Illnesses such as the flu can leave you more vulnerable. If you're over 65 it's recommended by doctors that you get the flu vaccination every year.

Energy Efficiency Advice

One way to ensure you keep warm but at the same time keep bills down is to make your home more energy efficient.

Energy efficiency tips for the home:

No cost tips

- Take the free home energy check – call the Energy Savings Trust advice Centre on 0300 123 1234
- Avoid leaving appliances such as TV's, video's, printers on standby; they are still using electricity and costing you money
- Always wash a full load of clothes
- To stop wasting money; turn your thermostat down by 1°C. Keep your thermostat at between 18-21°C
- Close all curtains and blinds at dusk and tuck longer curtains behind radiators to slow down heat loss through the windows.



- Close doors to keep heat in the occupied rooms
- Switch off lights when not in use.

Low cost tips

- Insulate your hot water tank and pipes
- Fit low energy light bulbs. They cost more but last longer and use much less electricity
- Draught-proof doors and window. It is important however, in bathrooms and kitchens that these are adequately ventilated through open windows or extractor fans, when cooking, bathing or showering
- Use the timer on your central heating to turn the heating on and off when you need it
- Fit reflective radiator panels behind radiators to reflect heat out into the room. A small shelf fitted a few inches above a radiator can help send warm heat back into the room
- Use the microwave oven for heating some food. They use 70% less power than conventional ovens.

Higher cost tips

- Insulate your cavity walls and loft; over 50% of heat is lost through the walls and roof. You may be eligible to get this free (see the section on Warm Home scheme)
- Look for the Energy Efficiency Recommended logo when buying new appliances
- Install a fully controlled central heating system. Blow heaters and electric bar heaters are much more expensive to run.

(Source: Bryson Energy and NEA NI)



Condensation and damp

If you do not heat and ventilate your home adequately you may get problems with condensation or damp.

Ways to produce less moisture include:

- Cover boiling saucepans
- Drying washing outside or in the bathroom, with the door closed and window open
- If you use a tumble dryer make sure that it is vented to the outside (unless it is a self-condensing machine).

Ventilating your home is important to allow circulation of air. Simply opening the trickle ventilator on windows can aid ventilation without causing a draught.

Insulation and draught proofing will keep your home warm and will also cut fuel bills. When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely. Loft and cavity wall insulation, as well as double glazing can help retain heat. In cold weather keep low background heating on all day; using thermostatic valves set low will help avoid over heating your home and high heating bills.

HELP WITH HEATING YOUR HOME

Warm Home Scheme

If you receive certain benefits you could be eligible for help through the Warm Homes Scheme.

The scheme provides insulation and heating measures to eligible households who own or rent their property and are on a specified qualifying benefit. Measures include:

- cavity wall insulation



- loft insulation
- hot water tank jackets
- energy advice
- conversion of an existing bottled gas, solid fuel central heating system or Economy 7 to oil or natural gas
- installation of a fully controlled, energy efficient oil or gas central heating system where no system currently exists
- householders with an operational oil or natural gas central heating system who meet the criteria will be eligible for insulation measures only.

For more information or to register, freephone
0800 988 0559 or visit the Warm Homes website

If you are disabled and cannot manage your existing heating system, an Occupational Therapist may be able to recommend that a switch operated heating system is provided.

To speak to an occupational therapist for more information call Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's management centre on **028 9056 5565** if you live in South and East Belfast or **0845 606 6596** if you live in North and West Belfast

Heat Smart project

Bryson Energy Agency operates a heating advice service specifically for people living in Northern Ireland Housing Executive homes. This service is free. It provides a home visit and offers help with operating heating systems



efficiently and information about how to save energy in the home.

For more information on Heat Smart, freephone
0800 1422 865

Disabled Facilities Grant

If you own your own home, or are a landlord or a private sector tenant, and have been assessed by an Occupational Therapist (OT) as needing adaptations to your home because of disability, you may be entitled to apply for the disabled facilities grant operated through the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

As well as other adaptations the grant can sometimes be used to improve your heating system (e.g. changing from open fire to a switch operated system).

To speak to an occupational therapist for more information call Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's management centre on **028 9056 5565** if you live in South and East Belfast or **0845 606 6596** if you live in North and West Belfast

Winter Fuel Payments

A winter fuel payment is an annual tax-free benefit to help older people with the costs of keeping warm during the winter.



For more information about who is eligible, payment details and application forms, call the Winter Fuel Payment helpline on **08459 151 515**, text phone **0845 601 5613**, (lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm) or visit the [nidirect website](#)

Cold Weather Payments

If you're on a low income, a cold weather payment may be available to help you for each week of very cold weather in your area.

You don't need to apply. You'll get a cold weather payment automatically as long as you qualify. Tell the state pension service or your local social security office if you think you should have received a cold weather payment but you have not had one.

For more information on cold weather payments, visit the [nidirect website](#) or contact your local Social Security Office.

HEATING BILLS

Budgeting for heating bills can be a worry. There are a number of ways that you can pay for your electricity, gas or oil bills. These are outlined below.

Gas

Gas companies operating in Belfast offer a number of different methods of payment including monthly direct debit, quarterly bills, an energy saver card and a pay as you go meter.



For more information about payment methods, contact your gas provider.

Oil

Prices of home heating oil may vary depending on market conditions. By law, all tankers must have metered delivery and the driver will leave you a record of the quantity pumped into your tank. Prices are quoted per litre with many suppliers offering monthly payment plans and other services. If possible, consider ordering large amounts of oil as the price per litre is often cheaper.

You can pay for oil in different ways including cash, cheque, debit or credit cards, direct debit or pre-payment at your local PayPoint sites located in newsagents, convenience stores and petrol stations.

You can also pay for your oil using the Be Warm oil saving stamp scheme. This saving stamp scheme helps householders spread the cost of fuel by purchasing stamps from a range of retailers and using them to pay for all or part of your oil when you place an order with your supplier. Find out more about the Be Warm oil saving stamp scheme on <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bewarm/>

Electricity

You can pay for your electricity in different ways including cash, cheque, debit or credit cards, direct debit or using a pay as you go meter.



For more information on paying your electricity bill, contact your electricity provider.

Solid fuels

Open fires are nice to look at but a lot of heat is lost up the chimney. They can be an expensive way of heating your home. Closed stoves or room heaters with glass or cast iron fronts are more efficient than open fires. It's best to shop around for the best deal when purchasing solid fuels.

If you're considering switching from a solid fuel central heating system or Economy 7 to either oil or natural gas you may be entitled to financial help through the Warm Home Scheme by visiting <http://www.warm-homes.com>

You can get more advice on switching fuels from Bryson Energy by phoning **0800 1422 865**.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

With rising fuel bills more and more people are looking to alternative sources of energy to heat their home, heat water, and produce electricity. Bryson Energy can provide advice on renewable energy technologies and the current grants available for home owners. For more information, contact Bryson Energy on **0800 1422 865**

COMPLAINTS AND ADVICE

The Consumer Council offers consumers advice and help with complaints regarding electricity, gas and coal. If you want to make a complaint or need more information, phone **0800 121 6022** or visit www.consumerline.org



NEA is the national energy action charity working in Northern Ireland to eradicate fuel poverty through campaigning, information, training, education and demonstration of good practice. NEA has been working in Northern Ireland for over 18 years and has built up expertise around all aspects of the causes, consequences, nature and extent of fuel poverty across Northern Ireland.

For advice and information Telephone: **028 9023 9909**
or visit www.nea.org.uk/nea-northern-ireland/nea-northern-ireland.htm



INCOME, BENEFITS AND MONEY

The table below shows contact details for Social Security benefit offices in Belfast. These offices can offer advice and information on benefits and what you may be entitled to. A home assessment may be carried out on request if you are unable to visit an office due to disability or illness. Advisors working within the Benefit Shop can also come out to groups to give talks on benefits on request (ask for the manager).

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES

Office	Address	Telephone/email
Benefit Shop	Ground Floor, Castle Court, Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DF	Telephone: 028 9033 6958 Textphone: 028 9033 6206
Corporation Street Social Security Office	24-42 Corporation Street, Belfast, BT1 3DR	Telephone: 028 9025 1411 Fax: 028 9054 3316
Shankill Jobs and Benefits Office	15-25 Snugville Street, Belfast, BT13 1PP	Telephone: 028 9025 1456 Fax: 028 9054 3500
Falls Jobs and Benefits Office	19 Falls Road, Belfast, BT12 4PH	Telephone: 028 9054 2800 Fax: 028 9054 2750



Shaftesbury Square Jobs and Benefits Office	Conor Building, 107 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AG	Telephone: 028 9054 5500 Fax: 028 9054 5511
Andersonstown Social Security Office	35-37 Slieveban Drive, Belfast, BT11 8HL	Telephone: 0800 022 4250 Fax: 028 9030 6697
Knockbreda Jobs and Benefits Office	Upper Knockbreda Road, Belfast, BT8 6SX	Telephone: 028 9054 5600 Fax: 028 9054 5610
Hollywood Road Jobs and Benefits Office	106-108 Hollywood Road, Belfast, BT4 1JU	Telephone: 028 9052 8900 Fax: 028 9052 8905

All offices are open 9.00am-4.30pm Monday to Friday except Thursday 10.00am-4.30pm

BENEFITS AND GRANTS RELEVANT TO OLDER PEOPLE

Pension

For more information or queries relating to state pension telephone the Pension Service on: **0808 100 2658**

The Social Security Agency has developed 'a guide to benefits for people who are retiring or have retired'.

To obtain a copy of this leaflet contact your local Social Security Office/ Jobs and Benefits Office. The leaflet can also be downloaded from the DSD website. www.dsdni.gov.uk/



Pension Credit

Pension Credit is a top-up to the basic pension providing a guaranteed level of income.

If you or your partner is **aged 65 or over**, you will probably get Pension Credit if the money you have coming in is less than £130.00 a week if you are single; or £198.45 a week if you have a partner. If this applies to you, you are likely to get Guarantee Credit. This will top up your weekly income to at least the levels shown above.

If you or your partner is **aged 65 or over** and you have saved some money towards your retirement, such as savings or a second pension, you may get extra Pension Credit. This is Savings Credit and could be up to: £20.40 a week if you are single; or £27.03 a week if you have a partner. You may still qualify for Pension/Savings Credit if your weekly income is higher and you are responsible for caring for someone, are severely disabled or have certain housing costs.

Phone the Pension Credit Helpline for more information on pension credit on **0845 601 8821**.

Textphone: **0800 232 1271**.

Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance is paid if you need help looking after yourself. It is paid if you became ill or disabled on or after your 65th birthday. People under the age of 65 can claim Disability Living Allowance if they are ill or disabled for 6 months or over. Attendance Allowance is not taxable and



is not affected by the amount of savings you have. It is not usually affected either by other money you have coming in.

You need to complete an AA1 form which is available from your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office.

Community Care Grant

Community Care Grants are non repayable payments for essential items. Grants are intended to promote Community Care by: helping you re-establish yourself in the community following institutional or residential care; helping you remain in the community rather than enter care; easing exceptional pressure on families; helping you set up home as a planned programme of resettlement; or helping with some travelling expenses. To apply for a Community Care Grant you must be receiving Pension Credit or Income Support.

Ask your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office for a SF300 form.

Budgeting Loan

Budgeting loans are repayable, interest free loans for essential items such as: furniture and household equipment; clothing and footwear; rent in advance and/or removal expenses to secure new accommodation; improvement, maintenance and security of the home; travelling expenses; hire-purchase and other debt. To apply you must be receiving Pension Credit or Income Support.



Ask your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office for a SF500 form.

Funeral Payment

A Funeral Payment is intended to help you pay for certain funeral costs if you are on a low income and you are responsible for arranging the funeral. It is recoverable from any money available from the deceased's estate. To apply you must be receiving Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Income Support.

Ask your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office for a SF200 form.

Crisis Loan

Crisis loans are repayable, interest free loans payable in emergency situations. The loan is for expenses in an emergency or as a consequence of a disaster and the loan must be the only means of preventing serious damage or serious risk to your health or safety or that of your family. You do not have to pay National Insurance contributions or be in receipt of benefits to qualify. If you are aged 16 or over and are without sufficient resources to meet an immediate short term need you may be eligible.

To apply you need to complete a SF400 or SF401 form which you can obtain from your local Social Security Office. Applications can also be made over the telephone on freephone **0800 028 8822**. Loan limit will depend on individual circumstances.



For information on Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payment go to Heating your Home section.

Housing Benefit/Rates Relief

If you are a tenant or own your own home you may be entitled to Housing Benefit depending on your financial circumstances. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) assesses Housing Benefit claims for Housing Executive and housing association tenants and also private rented tenants.

If you have a query or wish to claim Housing Benefit and Rates Relief and are a Housing Executive, housing association tenant or private tenant, contact NIHE on **0344 892 0902**

For more details see the Housing Executive website at: www.nihe.gov.uk/index/hb_home.htm

Housing Benefit and Rates Relief for Owner Occupiers

If you own your own home and want to get an application form for Housing Benefit and Rate Relief

Phone the Rates and Housing Benefit helpline on

0300 200 7802; or email housingbenefit.rating@lpsni.gov.uk

You may be entitled to a reduction of 25% in your domestic rate bill if you are eligible for the Disabled Person's Allowance Scheme.



To find out about eligibility and to apply for the Disabled Person's Allowance Scheme, the person who pays rates on the property needs to fill in an application form. To get an application form:

- phone Land and Property Services on **0300 200 7802**; Textphone 18001101 or
- download an application from the following website: www.lpsni.gov.uk

Lone Pensioner Rates Allowance

If you are over 70, own your own home and live alone you may be eligible for the "Lone Pensioner Allowance", which is a new scheme introduced in April 2008 to give eligible pensioners a 20% discount on your rates. The scheme is NOT means tested so it does not depend on income or savings and in certain circumstances some people over 70 who do not live alone may still be eligible.

If you own your home and want to find out more, phone the Helpline number **0300 200 7802**
Textphone 18001101

If you rent your home contact the Housing Executive on **0344 892 0902**

Disabled Facilities Grant

The Disabled Facilities Grant available through NIHE for homeowners, landlords and private tenants, provides adaptation work to your home if you have a disability. This grant is only available if an Occupational Therapist (OT) recommends the adaptation. Speak to your GP if you are not



already under the care of an OT or contact the OT directly.

To get in contact with an Occupational Therapist (OT) contact one of the following numbers depending on where you live: South and East Belfast (and Castlereagh) - **028 9056 5565** North and West Belfast - **0845 606 6596**

Carers Allowance

Carers Allowance is the main benefit for carers. It is intended to replace the income you might otherwise earn from a job if you were not caring.

For more information telephone Belfast Carers Centre on: **028 9073 0173**. Website: www.carers-centre.org

The introduction of welfare reform in Northern Ireland will bring changes to benefits over the next couple of years. See pages 115-119 for sources of advice for when this change takes place.



MANAGING PERSONAL FINANCES

Paying Bills

With the rising cost of living, it may be useful to have a budget plan, looking at income and outgoings on a weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly basis, to ensure that you are able to budget and keep on top of bills.

- Make a list of all your sources of your household income and how much you get from each (e.g. wages; state pension/ pension credit; personal pensions; benefits/ allowances; other income)
- List your household expenses, these may include: rent/ mortgage; rates (if applicable); life insurance; buildings/ contents insurance; car insurance/tax/servicing (if applicable); TV rental/licence (if applicable); telephone (landline/mobile); electricity; gas/oil/solid fuel; clothing; food/housekeeping; home repairs; transport costs (petrol/diesel/public transport); entertainment; Christmas/holidays; saving policies; loans/repayments; other. For items that are paid quarterly, yearly, or ad hoc then calculate how much you would need to save each week or month to pay for these
- Budgeting – if most of your income is weekly then you may want to budget weekly. Where possible spread the cost of big bills over the year. To do this you may want to pay some bills by monthly direct debit or alternatively have a separate bank/post office/building society account that you can regularly put money into which will be used to pay for big yearly bills
- If your outgoings/expenses is greater than your income you may want to seek advice on how you could increase



your income, for example, are there allowances/benefits that you may be entitled to that you are not currently claiming for. See advice sources for a list of organisations that may be able to help.

For information on various payment methods for electricity, oil and gas bills go to the Heating your Home section. (page 95)

For information on financial support for home repairs, and advice on insuring your home go to the Housing section. (page 70)

TV Licencing

If you are 75 or over you can apply for a free TV license. The free license will not be issued automatically - you still need to apply for it. If you are 74 you can apply for a special short term license that lasts until you are 75.

For more details call **0300 790 6131**

Opening a Bank Account/Setting up a Direct Debit

To open a new bank account you will normally be asked for identification (including current valid passport or current driving licence; electrical voting card) and verification of your address (including one of the following: a utility bill issued within the last 6 months; current driving licence; credit card statement; rates bill issued within last 12 months; house/motor insurance certificate).



Once you have a current account, direct debits can be set up by filling out a direct debit form from your bank/building society. You will need to write to your bank/building society to cancel a direct debit. A number of organisations can help with either setting up a bank account or a direct debit (see income advice sources).

Dealing with Debt

Debt can affect anyone. If you feel you are at risk of losing control of your financial affairs or already have then it is important that you deal with this immediately. There are a number of organisations that can provide advice on dealing with debt, including Citizen's Advice Bureau, Age NI and Independent Advice Centres (see income advice sources for their contact details).

Making a Will

Writing a will enables you to plan what will happen to your money and possessions (your estate) after your death.

Age NI produces Will to Change, a publication containing information on a wide range of issues. Age NI also works in partnership with local solicitors who help to run free legal clinics for older people and offer advice with will writing services at a reduced rate.

To find out more or to request a copy of Will to Change, contact Age NI on **0808 808 7575**



Avoiding Scams

Scams can be sent to you through the post, by email or over the phone. They all have one thing in common, and that is to make money by **TAKING YOUR MONEY!**

If you think you have been the victim of a scam, report it to the police immediately.

For further advice contact your local PSNI Crime Prevention Officer

Police Non-emergency Telephone: **0845 600 8000**

In an emergency call **999**

Crimestoppers Telephone: **0800 555111**

Further information and advice can also be found from the Office of Fair Trading on the following website: www.oft.gov.uk or by ringing the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0845 454 0506**

PREPARING FOR RETIREMENT

It is essential to plan ahead for retirement especially with regard to what finances you will have after you retire. Finances may include: pensions (state and private); investment policies and benefits you may be entitled to when you retire. If you feel the yearly income from the above will not be enough when you retire, you may consider putting more money aside each month to contribute to your retirement or carrying on working past the standard retirement age.



You may also consider getting advice from a financial advisor to help you make important financial decisions that will affect your future. The Financial Services Authority (UK) produces a wide range of material to help consumers make informed choices about financial products and services (<http://www.fsa.gov.uk/>).

You can also get advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

Volunteering opportunities

There are a wealth of volunteering opportunities available for those approaching retirement and beyond. These can help you to meet new people, help out with projects close to your heart or in your community, stay healthy and active as well as pursue some of the activities you never had a chance to before. Volunteering can fit in around your schedule at a time that suits you. The Unlocking Potential project focuses on helping more older people to experience the benefits of volunteering. This is managed by Volunteer Now.

For advice on any aspect of planning for retirement contact Age NI Advice & Advocacy Services, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm on Freephone **0808 808 7575**

For more details on the Unlocking Potential project and other volunteering opportunities call **028 9020 0580** or visit www.volunteernow.co.uk



Information on planning for retirement can also be found on the following website: www.laterlife.com/ (Laterlife.com is a website specifically designed to provide older people with the latest news, information on many aspects relevant to later life)

ADVICE SOURCES

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Citizens Advice provide advice and information on a wide range of topics such as benefits employment; tax; debt; health; housing; education; consumer affairs; travel; communications; discrimination; civil rights; immigration; and the legal system. They can also help with form filling and represent clients in court and at tribunals. For more information visit their website: www.citizensadvice.co.uk or contact one of the CAB offices listed on the next page.

CAB Offices	Address	Telephone
Suffolk and Andersonstown	208 Andersonstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9EB	Telephone: 028 9030 1916
Shankill	268 Shankill Road Belfast, BT13 2BL	Telephone: 028 9026 1970
Falls	8 Springfield Road, Belfast, BT12 7AG	Telephone: 028 9034 7780
East Belfast	The Arches Centre 1a Westminster Ave North, Belfast, BT4 1NS	Telephone: 028 9050 3000 (general) Telephone: 028 9022 3747 (appointments)



Central Belfast	Merrion Business Centre, 58 Howard Street, Belfast, BT1 6PJ	Telephone: 028 9050 3000 Telephone: 028 9050 3000
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Benefit Enquiry Line

The Benefit Enquiry Line provides general information and advice on the full range of benefits. It will help you with assessing eligibility for benefits and completion of benefit forms.

Benefit Enquiry Line Freephone: **0800 220 674**;
Minicom: 0800 243 787

Consumer Council

The Consumer Council have a home budget planner that can help you budget for bills and plan for occasions like holidays and Christmas. It is available in English, Polish and Portuguese. The Consumer Council also have a “Consumer Advice Handbook”.

The budget planner and the Consumer Advice Handbook can be downloaded from their website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk (under publications) or Telephone: **028 9067 2488**

Advice NI

Advice NI is a membership organisation which provides support for independent advice organisations/centres around Northern Ireland to delivery high quality advice



services. Advice NI also provides advice to the general public and have trained advisors who can help with enquiries on a range of matters including: social security, housing, debt, consumer and employment issues.

For more information contact Advice NI on **028 9064 5919** or visit the following website: www.adviceni.net

Age NI Advice & Advocacy Services

Age NI provides an advocacy services for people experiencing difficulties negotiating the health and social care system; accessing appropriate levels of community care; dealing with issues relating to residential and nursing care. The charity's advice and advocacy services also provide direct access to advice, information and practical support on a wide range of issues including welfare benefits, community care, housing and health.

Contact Age NI Advice & Advocacy Services, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm on Freephone **0808 808 7575**

Belfast Carers Centre

Belfast Carers Centre is an independent organisation providing support to Carers including providing help with claiming benefits.

For more information telephone **028 9073 0173**
Website: www.carerscentre.org



North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum (NBSCF)

North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum (NBSCF) provides an outreach benefits advice service for older people.

For more information Telephone: **028 9074 9944**

Post Offices

State Pensions are now paid by direct payment into an account of your choice. Post offices can give you advice on the type of accounts that will allow you to continue withdrawing your cash, free of charge, at any post office branch. Post offices can offer a number of other services/products, as well as dealing with letters and parcels, these include: savings; post office accounts; credit cards; insurance; broadband and phone top up cards; gift vouchers (that can be used in outlets nationwide); and car tax and licences (driving and fishing).

For more information visit your local post office or alternatively look on the following website: www.postoffice.co.uk.

A2B: Access to Benefits for Older People

This is an online benefit calculator for older people supported by Citizen's Advice (Northern Ireland).

For more information go to the following website: www.a2b.org.uk or telephone: **028 9075 4070**



NICVA: Grant Tracker for Groups

Grant Tracker helps the voluntary and community sector including older people's groups fundraise by providing information on all the funding sources available. The cost to subscribe is from £100 which allows you access information on over 1000 funding schemes. NICVA also provide free fundraising news on a daily basis and provide guidance on fundraising.

For more information telephone **028 9087 7777**

On visit their website: www.grant-tracker.org

Volunteer Now

Volunteer Now regularly produce information on funding opportunities for older peoples groups in North and West Belfast.

If you would like to be placed on the mailing list to receive a copy of this free information sheet contact Volunteer Now on **028 9023 2020**



RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY

LEGISLATION

Equality Legislation

Individuals in Northern Ireland are protected against discrimination on grounds of race, religious belief or political opinion, sex, sexual orientation, age (from 1 October 2006) or because of a disability. Discrimination is not simply unfairness. To be discriminated against means to be treated less favourably than others. If you have been discriminated against you may be able to bring a complaint to a tribunal or to a county court.

Disabled Persons Rights

The Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order, 2006 (DDA) provide protection for disabled persons against discrimination on the grounds of disability. The legislation provides protection in the areas of: employment and vocational training; goods, facilities and services; education; and premises.

Age Discrimination and Ageism

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) came into force on 1st October 2006, making it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on grounds of age in the areas of employment, vocational training and further and higher education. The Age Regulations also introduced a new duty on employers to consider requests by employees to continue working beyond



retirement. The Equality Commission has produced the following guidance:

- Age Discrimination in Northern Ireland - A Guide for Employers
- Age Discrimination in Northern Ireland - A Guide for Workers and Employees.

If you think you have been discriminated against on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, political opinion, race, age or disability the Equality Commission may be able to help you with advice or legal representation. Contact the Equality Commission Discrimination Advice team on **028 9089 0890**

The Equality Commission also has a range of information booklets giving advice on your rights. These booklets can be obtained by ringing **028 90 500 600** for a hard copy. Alternatively they can be downloaded from their website: www.equalityni.org

CONSUMER RIGHTS

The **Consumer Council** has produced an extensive A to Z guide called the “Consumer Advice Handbook” to raise awareness of consumer rights and to highlight existing sources of information and advice on consumer issues. Within this guide you will find information about your general consumer rights and how to complain effectively.

The Consumer Council also manage a separate consumerline website (www.consumerline.org) giving



information on a wide range of consumer issues and problems ranging from goods and services; travel and transport; consumer law; services to your home; money matters; taking legal action and consumer organisations.

The Consumer Advice Handbook can be accessed by either downloading it from the Consumer Council website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk or by ringing **028 9067 2488**

Information on your consumer rights can also be obtained by ringing the Consumerline on **0300 123 6262** or **028 9025 3900**

LEGAL ADVICE

Before taking legal action on consumer issues it is a good idea to talk things over at your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) or Advice Centre. They may be able to tell you whether you have grounds for legal action and suggest a suitable solicitor. CAB have trained advisers that provide specialist information and advice on 14 different areas of the law including consumer issues, employment legislation, social security benefits, money advice, health, housing rights and other legal matters.

If you're thinking of taking legal action about goods or services that you have bought, contact the Consumerline on **0300 123 6262** for advice or visit the Consumerline website: www.consumerline.org.



BELFAST CITY COUNCIL CONSUMER ADVICE CENTRE

Belfast City Council provides free specialist advice to consumers and traders in Belfast on consumer issues, such as: faulty goods; shopping complaints; bad service; and holiday complaints. Their advisors can also give talks on consumer law and consumer rights to voluntary groups, traders and other organisations.

For more information contact Belfast City Council's Consumer Advice Centre on **028 9032 8260**

COMMISSIONER FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Claire Keatinge was appointed in November 2011 as the first commissioner for older people for Northern Ireland. The principle aim of the commissioner is to safeguard and promote the interests of older people.

For more information contact **028 9089 0892** or visit the COPNI Website www.copni.org



PREVENTING CRIME

HELPFUL ADVICE

Crime against older people is not very common, but we recognise that it can have a much greater impact upon older people, their friends and their families. It's important that fear should not stop you doing things but that you know how to stay as safe as possible.

Bogus Callers

Most callers to your home will be genuine. However, there are some who may not be. Always get proof of the person's identity - a genuine caller will be only too happy to provide this.

- Stop to think if you're expecting someone to call
- Before you answer the door, make sure your back door is locked
- If you have a door chain remember to use it before you open the door
- Ask the caller for their identification and check it carefully
- Ask them to wait outside and close the door - genuine callers will not mind
- Ring Quick Check on freephone **0800 013 22 90**. Your call will be answered personally and promptly by a trained operator. They will check with the company on your behalf, that the person at your door is genuine. If they are not or they think that there is something suspicious, they will contact the police immediately
- Do not let anyone into your home until you are satisfied as to who they are.



Quick Check is a free telephone service, which is available 24 hours a day all year round to residents throughout Northern Ireland. If you are in any doubt simply check your caller out by phoning Quick Check on Freephone **0800 013 22 90**

General Crime Prevention Advice

- When you are in the house keep all doors locked
- When you go out close all windows and lock doors – don't leave spare keys under mats/flower pots etc
- Use timer switches with lamps to make your house look occupied
- Don't carry large amounts of cash and don't carry your house keys and identification together. If you are carrying a handbag use one that has a zip. Avoid keeping pin numbers with bankcards
- Consider carrying a personal attack alarm
- Shred bank documents and utility bills when you no longer need them. Criminals can make use of your personal details if they find them
- Mark valuable property with your postcode and house number using a permanent UV pen. You can also register your property with immobilise.com
- Never leave the keys in your car and never leave valuables in your car where they can be seen. Lock them out of sight (Source: Home Accident prevention Northern Ireland, Crime Prevention and Home Safety Tips for Older People leaflets).



POLICE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHEMES

PSNI

The role of PSNI is to prevent and detect crime. They deal with a wide range of issues including: community policing; crime prevention; road safety; domestic violence; child abuse; animal and wildlife crime; and firearms.

Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership and Castlereagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Both Belfast and Castlereagh have established Policing and Community Safety Partnerships which host a number of public events, and support local projects, that tackle crime and community safety issues. If you're interested in finding out more about their work or future events contact them on:

Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership team:

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/communitysafety

Tel: **028 9027 0556** Email pcsp@belfastcity.gov.uk

Castlereagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership:

<http://www.castlereagh.gov.uk/communitysafety.asp>

Tel: **028 90494546**

Crimestoppers is an independent charity which works in partnership with the police and the media to help to solve crime. It offers the public a free telephone number which you can call anonymously to give information on any criminal activity.



For further advice contact your local Crime Prevention Officer, Police Non-emergency Telephone: **0845 600 8000** In an emergency call **999** Crimestoppers telephone: **0800 555111**

Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood watch aims to help people protect themselves and their property, and to reduce the fear of crime. It involves appointing a local scheme coordinator; encouraging other neighbours to participate; meeting with your local police team; and keeping other local residents up-to-date with crime prevention advice. Anyone can belong to a neighbourhood watch scheme and every community or neighbourhood can have one.

If you would like to set up a scheme or would like more information contact your local neighbourhood police on **0845 600 8000**

NIHE Neighbourhood Warden Service

NIHE have appointed 14 Neighbourhood Wardens in the Belfast Area who provide a range of on-site services to residents. Duties of the wardens include:

- Ensuring that estates are kept free of illegal dumping, litter and abandoned vehicles
- Inspecting empty properties, provide accompanied viewing to prospective tenants, check for abandoned properties and take repair requests. Wardens provide advice and assistance on a wide range of housing related matters including home safety, service standards and energy conservation



- Acting as a first point of contact in the reporting of anti-social activity or nuisance or breach of tenancy.

For further information telephone: **08448 920 902**

CRIME AND SAFETY ISSUES

Noise and Nuisances

If you are having problems with noise in your area and you do not wish to speak directly to the noise maker or if you have made an appeal to them which has been unsuccessful, you can contact the Noise Control Officers in the Council for help. Noise Control Officers need direct evidence of the noise problem so it is important to contact them when the noise is affecting you. An officer will take the details of your complaint and arrange a visit.

Night-time noise - telephone: **028 9037 3006**

Day-time noise - telephone: **028 9027 0428**

Other types of Noise

The Council does not answer complaints about all types of noise. Below is a list of agencies who deal with other types of noise.

Noise in the street - For complaints about shouting, rowdy behaviour, car alarms or horns contact the Police Service of Northern Ireland, telephone: **028 9037 3006**

Noise from road traffic - Contact the Roads Service, Belfast Division, telephone: **028 9025 3000**



Noise from civil aircraft - Contact: Ports and Public Transport Division, telephone: **028 9093 5020**

Noise from military aircraft (planes and helicopters) - Contact: Army Headquarters Northern Ireland by email on: ni38x-eru-mailbox(multiuser)@mod.uk

Anti-Social Behaviour

Antisocial behaviour could be defined as acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons.

If you are a victim of antisocial behaviour report all incidents to the PSNI, Housing Executive or District Council giving details of what happened, where, what time, names or descriptions of who was involved and the effect the behaviour had on you.

(Source: NIO Community Safety Unit, Tackling AntiSocial Behaviour in NI leaflet).

Belfast City Council antisocial behaviour officers

Belfast City Council has four antisocial behaviour officers within its Community Safety Team who are area focussed north, south, east and west of the city. They can resolve some reported problems easily by sign-posting to the relevant services within BCC and other statutory agencies, however many more problems require more personal intervention and they will be happy to meet with the concerned residents in order to facilitate an acceptable solution. Contact during office hours, which are 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday: **028 9027 0469**



Hate Crime

Tension Monitoring is a system involving an inter agency group which meets on a regular basis to look at information and develop plans to prevent the potential for hate crime developing. This group consists of a range of representatives from statutory and voluntary organisations including PSNI, NIHE, Belfast City Council Good Relations Unit, NICEM, Islamic Centre, Rainbow, Chinese Welfare Association, Polish Association, Include Youth, NIACRO, South Belfast Roundtable, and other key partners.

We would encourage residents to report any incidents of Hate Crime to firstly to the police on 0845 600 8000 however the Council's Community Safety Unit may also be able to offer support. Contact the team on **028 9027 0469**

Neighbourhoods

If you have an interest or have concerns about any of the following areas: flags, emblems and sectional symbols; segregation/ integration; race relations; communities in transition; interface areas, the Community Cohesion Unit (CCU) within the Housing Executive may be able to help.

Telephone: CCU on **028 9031 8234**

General Disputes with Neighbours

The Housing Executive offers a free mediation service to Executive tenants or anyone who finds themselves in dispute with Housing Executive tenants.



For further information please contact Housing Executive Community Safety Team on **028 9031 8224** or visit http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/community/community_safety/our_services/community_safety_mediation.htm

Domestic Violence

The Police Service Northern Ireland has officers who are specially trained to deal with domestic violence. To speak to one of these officers contact your local police station and ask to speak to the Domestic Violence Officer.

District Command Unit Area (PSNI)	Direct number	Extension
North Belfast	028 9025 9207	30207
South Belfast	028 9025 9738	30738
East Belfast	028 9025 9823	30823
West Belfast	028 9025 9907	30907
Castlereagh	028 9056 1792	Ask for Domestic Violence Officer for Castlereagh

Women's Aid

Women's Aid provides confidential support, information and emergency accommodation for women, with or without children, whose lives have been affected by domestic violence.



For advice or support telephone Belfast and Lisburn branch of Women's Aid: **028 9066 6049** Open 9am - 5.30pm or call their 24 hour Helpline on **0800 9171 414** (for anyone affected by domestic violence)

SUPPORT AND INFORMATION SOURCES

Victim Support Northern Ireland is a charity which helps people affected by crime. It is a completely independent organisation, offering a free and confidential service, whether or not a crime has been reported. They can provide: information on police and court procedures; liaison with other organisations on your behalf; provide advice and information on compensation insurance matters; put you in contact with other sources of help and provide emotional support.

Telephone: **028 9024 3133** (North and West Belfast branch) or email: nwbelfast@victimsupportni.org.uk
Telephone: **028 9032 8152** (South and East Belfast branch) or email: sebelfast@victimsupportni.org.uk

Belfast Safety Leaflets

Belfast Community Safety Partnership has developed a series of safety leaflets. These include a number of leaflets on the following topics: personal safety; internet safety; driving down vehicle crime; home security; behaviour; going on holiday; respect; bogus callers; road safety; fireworks; Christmas – Get Home Safe; and keep your money safe.



Leaflets can be downloaded from the following website:
www.belfastcity.gov.uk/communitysafety

Northern Ireland Policing Board: Older People's Reference Group

The Northern Ireland Policing Board has recently set up reference groups, one of which is the Older Person's Reference Group. This is made up from members who represent organisations or networks that work with older people. Some of the issues that the groups are currently looking at are: the fear of crime, communication and awareness raising, and collating key issues for consideration in the Annual Policing Plan.

If you wish to find out more about the work of the Board or if your organisation would be interested in being part of the reference group, contact the Community Engagement Branch on **028 9040 8623**.

For information on the Board, visit the following website
www.nipolicingboard.org.uk

Registering your Possessions with Immobilise

Immobilise is a website that allows you to register your possessions online. You will be asked for ownership details. This is a free service endorsed by all UK Police forces which gives police a greater chance to return stolen items.

For more information go to: **www.immobilise.com**



How Secure is my Home Website

'How Secure is my Home' is a website developed by the Community Safety Unit for Northern Ireland. It allows you to assess the level of security of your home and provides advice on how to improve it.

To visit this website go to: **www.howsecureismyhome.com**



TRANSPORT

PUBLIC BUSES

Two main public bus services operate in Belfast - Easibus service and the Metro service (Translink pink buses).

Easibus

Easibus is a bus service for all the community that provides localised routes to services such as health centres and clinics; local shops; housing for elderly people; and shopping centres such as Connswater, Forestside and the Abbeycentre. Easibus services only operate on particular days of the week depending on the route. They usually run every couple of hours. There are 10 Easibus services in Belfast. They have a number of set pick up points but there are also a number of bus stops along the route through residential areas that you can hail the bus to stop. On some roads you may not even need to be at the bus stop to hail the bus to stop. If you live on one of the Easibus routes you can ring Easibus and request a stop at or near to your home within the scheduled timetable.

Easibus services have a ramp to make boarding easy for older people. There are 2 spaces inside the bus for passengers in wheelchairs. Drivers have been trained to enable them to meet the needs of disabled passengers.

Standard Ulsterbus or Metro fares apply on Easibus services and concessionary fares are available for those who qualify (see section on concessionary fares).



For information on routes and timetables telephone Easibus Belfast: **028 9073 1117**

Timetables can also be viewed on the following website:
www.translink.co.uk/metroeasibustimetables.asp

Metro (Belfast bus service)

The Metro service operated by Translink provides buses every 5-10 minutes during the day (Mon-Fri) along main roads (also referred to as corridors) in Belfast. All **the main Metro Corridors** are operated by low floor vehicles and 70% of other Metro buses allow wheelchair access (space for one wheelchair).

Call **028 9066 6630** for information on timetables (Monday – Sunday 7am to 8pm) or textphone 028 9038 7505.

Timetables are also available on Translink website: www.Translink.co.uk/MetroCorridorTimetables.asp

Some Ulsterbus services operating in the Greater Belfast area set down and pick up on Metro corridors. These services are numbered 500-599 and generally serve the Metro network after 6.30 pm and all day Saturday and Sunday.

Accessible Facilities at Bus Stations

The two main Ulsterbus stations in Belfast – Laganside and the Europa Bus Centre are wheelchair accessible and both stations have adjacent multi-storey car parks with 9 designated parking bays for Blue Badge holders. Most



wheelchair users should be able to travel on low floor buses and trains. However some types of mobility vehicles cannot. As guidance, manual and powered wheelchairs up to a maximum width of 70cm and length of 120cm can usually be carried.

For information on the accessibility of bus stations outside of Belfast, go to the “Out and About” website (www.ni-transportguide.info). Alternatively a hard copy of the “integrated access guide to bus and rail passenger facilities” can be obtained from the Marketing department of Translink (Telephone: **028 9089 9400**).

Bus Services Outside of Belfast/Accessibility

Ulsterbus and the Goldline express coaches serves other towns and villages across Northern Ireland. Not all of these vehicles as yet meet accessibility standards. Translink have an ‘accessible’ timetable for Goldline Express services across NI outlining bus services/routes that are accessible to wheelchairs. This timetable is available at bus stations or alternatively can be obtained by ringing **028 9066 6630**

If you are making a specific journey and require a bus with wheelchair access contact your local Ulsterbus depot where, if possible, staff will ensure that the bus you require is wheelchair accessible. A wheelchair space can be reserved by giving Translink a minimum of twenty four hours notice by contacting the Translink Call Centre on **028 9066 6630**



Concessionary Fare Scheme/SmartPass

The concessionary fare scheme (**SmartPass**) provides free public transport on scheduled bus and rail services throughout Northern Ireland to men and women aged 60 and over; those registered blind and war disablement pensioners. Application forms can be picked up at any bus or rail station, or by telephoning **028 9066 6630**

Passenger Charter/Policy

Translink updated their 'Passenger Charter' in September 2008, outlining their commitment to providing a high quality service. The charter outlines performance standards in relation to reliability; targets in terms of buses and trains; what to expect from their staff; facilities to deal with passengers with particular needs; refunds; complaints and comments; and what is expected from passengers. Translink also have an 'Access Policy' which contains information and advice on how to use their services, information for customers with disabilities or mobility problems, and contact number to help you plan your journey.

Copies of the Passenger Charter and Access Policy are available in bus/railway stations. Copies can also be obtained by ringing Translink on **028 9066 6630**

If you have a problem or concern regarding the accessibility of buses contact the Access Manager within Translink on **028 7963 2218**



Comments or Complaints

If you have any comments, suggestions or complaints on any aspect of Translink services, or on ways to improve their service contact:

Metro

Your local District Manager or contact Customer Services Co-ordinator, Milewater Road, Belfast.

Telephone: **028 9035 4035**

NI Railways

Your Route Line Manager or contact Customer Services Manager, Central Station, Belfast.

Telephone: **028 9089 9400**

Ulsterbus

Your local District Manager or contact Call Centre Complaints, Customer Services Co-ordinator.

Telephone: **028 9038 7503**

Textphone: 028 9038 7505

Email: feedback@translink.co.uk

Translink will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and will respond to all complaints within 15 working days of receiving them.

If you have a specific complaint about a bus driver or an unsatisfactory journey, all of the information you need to make a complaint will be on the bus ticket you received for example, the route number, driver number, bus number, date and time.



You can also complain to the Consumer Council about buses (telephone: **0845 601 6022**).

BUS SERVICE TO ROSELAWN CEMETERY

Belfast City Council are currently running a free bus service for older people who live in the Council's electoral area travelling to and from (and around) Roselawn Cemetery and City of Belfast Crematorium. It is available on Tuesdays and Fridays from various locations around Belfast.

For more information on timetables or to book a place, call Belfast City Council on **028 9027 0296**. You can view the timetables on the following website: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/roselawn/

TRAINS

There are 12 train stations/stops in Belfast. Train fares are free to older people who have a senior SmartPass.

Call **028 9066 6630** (Monday – Sunday 7am to 8pm) for information on timetables and accessible facilities or textphone 028 9038 7505.

Timetables are also available on Translink website: www.Translink.co.uk

SHOPMOBILITY AND WHEELCHAIR HIRE

Shopmobility Belfast provides free daily loan and long-term loan (at a small cost) of electric scooters; powered wheelchairs and manual wheelchairs. They can also provide



information on blue badges, door to door service, Motability Radar key etc. Anyone who finds access to the city centre difficult including older people and people with disabilities can use the service. You need to apply for membership to use the service. The service can be booked by contacting **Shopmobility Belfast** on **028 9080 8090**

Location of Shopmobility Branches in Belfast

Westgate House	028 9080 8090
Gresham Street	028 9031 9191
Forestside Shopping Centre	028 9064 0994
Connswater Shopping Centre	028 9045 5133
Europa Buscentre/Great Victoria	
Street Railway Centre	028 9080 8090
Royal Group of Hospitals	028 9031 0923
Victoria Square Shopping Centre	028 9032 4466

Additional Sources of Wheelchair Hire

Red Cross	07872 843 840
John Preston	028 9267 7077

DOOR TO DOOR TRANSPORT

If you have a disability, cannot use public transport, and do not have access to a car, there are a number of door-to-door transport schemes in Belfast you may be able to use.

Door to Door Scheme: Disability Action

Disability Action Transport operate a door to door scheme throughout Belfast on behalf of the Department for



Regional Development (DRD). You can use this scheme if you receive one of the following benefits: higher rate mobility component or care component of Disability Living Allowance; higher rate care component of Attendance Allowance; or people registered blind; or people over the age of 80. If none of these apply you can also apply for membership through your doctor.

To become a member contact the Department for Regional Development on **028 9054 0609**, Textphone 028 9054 0642 for an application form or apply on-line at www.door2door-ni.info

To book a journey call: 028 9029 7870 (if you live in Belfast) or Textphone 028 90297882.

You will need to book at least 24 hours in advance. Membership is free, fares are £1.50 (one way) £3 (return journey) within the Belfast area. 50p per mile for travel outside of Belfast (subject to availability).

Red Cross Transport and Escort Service

Red Cross volunteers provide a transport service to anyone with limited mobility or no access to transport. The service is available on weekdays until 5.00pm and costs 48p per mile. Wheelchair users can usually be accommodated providing prior arrangements are made.

For more details contact Transport and Escort Service on **028 9073 5350**



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Community transport provides affordable accessible transport for individuals, groups and associations where there is limited public transport or where conventional transport is not appropriate for the passengers needs. There are three community transport providers in the Belfast area: **Disability Action**; **Direct Links**; and **Ardoyne Community Transport**. Journeys need to be booked in advance, preferably with one day's notice. Ask for costs on booking.

To apply for membership call:

Disability Action on **028 9029 7880**;

Direct Links on **028 9024 3459**

Ardoyne Community Transport on **028 9074 1479**

Group Hire: Community transport vehicles can also be hired out by community/ voluntary groups.

Contact Community Transport Association for a full list of low cost vehicles for hire on **028 9094 1661**

TRANSPORT TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FACILITIES

Non-Emergency transport

As a general rule patients are expected to make their own way to hospital appointments. However in some cases transport may be provided by the Health and Social Care Trust if a GP or Hospital consultant assesses there is a medical problem that prevents the use of other forms of transport.



Social Care Transport

The Health and Social Care Trust can also provide transport to social care services such as to and from day care facilities. The same criteria that are used for assessing non-emergency transport are used to assess the need for provision of transport to social care services. The social worker is the main person responsible for making decisions on eligibility for transport to social care services.

Hospital Travel Cost Scheme

The hospital travel cost scheme is provided by hospitals to help with the cost of travel to hospital. Patients who are automatically entitled to the scheme include those who are under the care of a hospital consultant and are in receipt of Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (Income-based), Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit), Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit. Eligible patients may also claim travelling expenses for an escort if medically necessary.

The cost refunded to the patient is calculated on the basis of the cheapest form of public transport available. Patients travelling by private car may claim the lesser of the estimated cost of fuel actually used, or the equivalent cost of public transport. Parking charges will also be refunded. Patients may claim help with travel costs up to three months after the date of travel.



Claim forms and leaflets can be obtained from Hospitals, Social Security Office or Jobs and Benefit offices, Benefit Shop, Castle Court, Royal Avenue, Belfast, Telephone: **028 9033 6958** or from the Pension Service if you are aged over 60 Telephone: **0808 100 2658** or text phone: 0808 100 1165 Leaflets are also available on the following website: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/2003/hc11_booklet.pdf

Hire of Health Service Vehicles

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust may hire out their vehicles in the evenings and weekends to groups with members who are elderly or have a sensory physical or learning disability or those with mental illness. The cost is £15 per hour.

For more information telephone: **028 9004 0802** or email: transport.services@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Access to Health Services - Transport to Hospitals in Belfast

Hospital Details	Travel by bus
Royal Hospitals 028 9024 0503	A special Royal Hospitals bus (route 95) leaves from Donegall Square East at the side of the City Hall at 7.10am, 7.30am and every half hour after that, stopping at Howard Street and the Europa Bus centre and railway stop in Great Victoria Street



Belfast City Hospital 028 9032 9241	Metro Bus routes 9A and 9B pass the Lisburn Road while route 92A bus goes to the Donegall Road entrance Flexibus Translink FREE bus between Belfast City Hospital and the Royal Hospitals - runs every 20 minutes between 9-5pm and picks up outside the Royal/Maternity Hospital and Belfast City Hospital Tower block
Mater Hospital 028 9074 1211	Metro Bus route 12B bus which leaves from Donegal Square North stops near the main entrance
Musgrave Park Hospital 028 9090 2000	Metro Bus Services 90, 92, 92A and 92B all operate along Stockmans Lane past the hospital
Forster Green Hospital 028 9094 4444	Metro Service 6a which operates along the Cregagh Road passes the Forster Green Hospital
Ulster Hospital 028 9048 4511	Metro Services 4A and 19 operate past the Ulster Hospital at Dundonald as well as Ulsterbus Service 5 which operates from Laganside Buscentre to Newtownards
Shaftsbury Square Hospital 028 9032 9808	Metro Services 90, 91, 92 and 92a serve Shaftsbury Square



Knockbracken
Healthcare Park
028 9056 5656

Metro Corridor 7 and Ulsterbus
Services to Ballynahinch, Newcastle
and Downpatrick operate along the
Saintfield Road

Transport to Health and Wellbeing Centres

Health and Wellbeing Centres

Travel By Bus

Arches Health and Care
Centre 1 Westminster
Avenue North, Belfast,
BT4 1NS
028 9056 3200

Metro Corridor 3 and 4 from the
City Centre

Carlisle Health and
Wellbeing Centre
38-56 Antrim Rd, Belfast,
BT11 9EA
0845 300 6650

Metro Corridor 1 from the City
Centre and Ulsterbus Service
573

Bradbury Health and Care
Centre 1-17 Lisburn Rd,
Belfast, BT9 7AA
028 9091 2100

Metro Corridor 9 from the City
Centre and Ulsterbus Service
523, 525 and 526

Grove Wellbeing Centre
120 York Road, Belfast,
BT15 3HF
028 9063 6800

Metro Corridor 2
(2A/2B/2D/2E/2F) from
Donegall Square West to
Monkstown or Carnmoney



The Knockbreda Centre, Forster Green Hospital site 110 Saintfield Road Belfast BT8 6GR 028 9063 1200	Metro Corridor 7 from the City Centre
Beech Hall Centre Wellbeing and Treatment Centre 21 Andersonstown Road Belfast BT11 9AF 028 9504 0044	Metro Bus Number 10A, 10D, 10C, 10H from Belfast City Hall
Shankill Wellbeing and Treatment Centre 83 Shankill Road Belfast BT13 1PD 028 9504 0043	Metro Bus number 11A, 11B or 11C from Belfast City Hall

Door to Door/Community Transport

Door to Door services in Belfast can be used for transport to hospital appointments. Community transport cannot be used for hospital appointments but can be used for GP appointments.

DRIVING

Driving Licenses

There is no upper age limit on driving a car however all drivers have to renew their license on reaching the age of 70 and every three years from then on. The renewal form will be sent to you automatically by Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA).



You must write and inform the DVA if you have a medical condition which has become worse since your driving license was issued or if you develop a new medical condition as it may affect your fitness to drive. Failure to do so is a criminal offence punishable by a fine of up to £1,000. It is also important that you inform your car insurance company as it may affect your insurance. If you have any doubts about your eligibility to drive, consult your GP.

For further information on driving licenses and medical conditions contact DVA on **0845 402 4000**.

Address: Driver Licensing Medical Section, DVLNI County Hall, Castlerock Road, Coleraine BT51 3TB

Road Safety Advice

If you are experiencing problems coping with driving, traffic or road conditions think carefully about whether you should continue driving. If you need to wear glasses you must wear them at all times whilst driving. The police have the power to require a driver at any time to undertake an eyesight test in good daylight. The Department for the Environment (DoE) have a Road Safety for Older Drivers leaflet which provides information on road safety tips.

To obtain a copy telephone: **028 9054 0094**

Driving Refresher Courses

Refresher courses are good for people who have not driven for a long time or are anxious and have lost confidence in driving.



The Institute of Advanced Motorists offer a “drive check” which will assess the drivers strengths and weaknesses and give advice (cost £25). People can proceed to doing an advanced driving course if they want at an additional charge.

For more information contact the Institute of Advanced Motorists on **0845 370 0144** or email: Belfast@amni.org.uk

Many professional driving instructors also offer refresher courses for people who have been driving for some time. Look out for driving schools that specifically offer refresher courses and discuss your requirements with the trainer before booking any lessons.

Motability

Motability is a charity which helps disabled people and their families to become more mobile by helping them to use the Higher Rate Mobility Component of their Disability Living Allowance (DLA), or their War Pensions Mobility Supplement (WPMS), to lease or buy a car, or to buy a powered wheelchair or scooter. You do not need to be a driver to qualify.

For more information contact Motability on **0845 456 4566** or visit their website: www.motability.co.uk

Road Tax Exemptions

You will not have to pay road tax if you are a disabled person who:

- is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance with the higher rate of the Mobility Component



- were in receipt of Attendance Allowance before 13 October 1993 and have a valid Exemption Certificate
- receive War Pensions Mobility Supplement.

For further information on road tax exemptions contact Disability and Carers Service on **028 9090 6182**

Blue Badge Scheme

The purpose of the Scheme is to give disabled people and older people the ability to park on-street, close to the facilities and services they need so as to improve their lifestyle, independence and freedom of choice. The scheme only applies to on-street car parking. For off-street car parking such as shopping centres and multi-storey car parks, badge holders must check the concessions offered as these can vary widely.

The cost of the blue badge is £2.

For an application form and more information on who qualifies for a badge and its use, contact:

Disabled Persons Badge Scheme Central Office, Castle Barracks Wellington Place, Enniskillen, BT74 7NH

Telephone: **028 6634 3700**, website: www.roadsni.gov.uk

Car Park Concessions

'City Car Parks' situated in Francis St./King St. (next door to the Castlecourt Shopping Centre) currently offer concessionary parking rates for pensioners. To avail of the concessionary fare you will need to bring with you proof that you are a pensioner and show this to the pay station on leaving the car park along with your ticket.



For more information contact City Car Parks on
028 9024 2220

TAXIS

Public hire

Public taxis (often known as black taxis) work from a designated stand and can be hailed in the street. In Belfast a public hire taxi will have yellow licence plates on the front and back of the vehicle. Public taxis outside Belfast will have white licence plates.

Taxi Buses

Taxi buses work like buses on routes picking up and leaving off passengers at bus stops on demand. Taxi buses will have a blue and white taxi licence plate. You will be charged a set fare and you may have to share the taxi with other people. Taxi buses in Belfast serve North and West Belfast and the Shankill. There is no taxi bus service available to people living in South and East Belfast.

Private Hire

Private taxis must be pre-booked. Most taxis are saloon cars however some of the larger Belfast companies have wheelchair accessible vehicles. It is advisable to check with the cab firm prior to booking of the availability of such cabs if needed. Private hire taxis will have a green licence plate (see yellow pages for full list of taxi firms available in Belfast). All licensed taxi drivers must have a green badge showing their photograph and licence number.



CYCLING

Sustrans, in partnership with others, has produced a “Belfast By Bike” route map which highlights the opportunities for both novice and experienced cyclists wishing to explore Belfast by bike.

To get a copy of the “Belfast By Bike” route map call in at Belfast Welcome Centre (Royal Avenue, Belfast) or telephone **028 9043 4569**. Alternatively you can download it from the following website: www.sustrans.org.uk/default.asp?sID=1090921062122

Translink have also produced in partnership with Sustrans a “Bikeit with Translink” guide on how to travel with your bike on public transport across Northern Ireland.

For more information telephone translink on **028 9066 6630**.

A copy of the “Bikeit with Translink” guide can be downloaded from the following website: www.translink.co.uk/bikeitwithtranslink.asp

FLYING

The Consumer Council recommend that if your flights or holiday package costs more than £100 you should book by credit card as this gives you extra protection if something goes wrong.

Disabled access

By law all airports in Northern Ireland and the UK (including those in the European Union) have to be fully accessible to



people with disabilities. New laws have come into force from July 2008 which means that airports must provide services and assistance to enable disabled people and others to access flights. There are minimum standards set out for what sort of assistance should be provided. Airports are not allowed to charge passengers for this service.

When booking a flight, tell the airline company what your travel needs are. Before leaving for the airport remember to bring photographic identification with you when flying to UK destinations. You will need an up to date passport for international flights.

A guide is available with information and advice for disabled people who want to travel by air. To get a copy of the guide contact the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) on **020 7944 8011**. Website: www.dptac.independent.gov.uk

Information on disabled rights when flying can also be sought from the Consumer Council, telephone: **028 9067 2488**

Travel to Airports

By Bus

International Airport: Translink run an Airport Express 300 bus from Belfast Europa Buscentre to the International Airport every 10 minutes at peak times. The approximate journey time is 30-40 minutes subject to traffic. The Airport Express 300 is operated by low floor vehicles.



City Airport: Translink run an airport Express 600 from the Europa Buscentre to George Best City Airport every 20 minutes at peak times.

Dublin Airport: Translink run an hourly bus service from Belfast City Centre (side of City Hall (also stopping at the Europa Buscentre)) to Dublin Airport. Approximate journey time is 2 hours 20 minutes.

For more information on bus times contact Translink timetables on **028 9066 6630**. Website: www.Translink.co.uk

Aircoach

Aircoach provides a 24-hour coach service between Belfast (Jurys hotel, Great Victoria Street) and Dublin Airport. The first coach leaves from Belfast at 6:30am and the last is at 8.30pm. You can buy tickets from their travel shop based in the Europa Bus Centre Belfast. Cost for a return ticket for an adult is £15 and £10 for a child. The service is free for Senior SmartPass holders.

For more information on timetables go to Aircoach website: www.aircoach.ie/table.routes.belfast.php or ring **0870 225 7555**

By Car

Car parking at airports can be quite expensive especially if you park at the short stay car park which is closest to the



terminal. Long stay car parks are cheaper however there is usually a moderate/long walk to the terminal. A mini bus is available which regularly tours around long stay car parks collecting passengers and bringing them to the terminal. You will need to leave additional time on top of your check in time to allow waiting time for the mini bus.

TRAVELLING BY BOAT

Some boat companies have a special minibus to help you get to the boat. When you book your boat journey you should tell the travel company what your travel needs are.

Travel to the Boat Terminal

By Bus

Translink run a bus service from the Europa Buscentre to Larne Harbour, and from the Europa Buscentre and Belfast City Hall to Stena Line terminal (West Bank Road Stena Line).

Translink also offer an Ulsterbus cross channel service which will allow you to travel by bus/boat to a number of British destinations.

For more information on bus times to boat terminals as well as bookings on the cross channel service contact Translink on **028 9066 6630**. Website: www.Translink.co.uk



ADVICE SOURCES

Out and About website

The “Out and About” website (www.ni-transportguide.info) provides a guide to accessible transport in Northern Ireland for people who may have mobility problems. It provides information on transport services available by: bus; train; taxi; car; sea, and air. It also provides information on SmartPasses, door to door services, shopmobility and sources of advice.

Translink Enquiries

For information on Translink bus and rail timetable contact the Call Centre on **028 9066 6630**. Textphone: **028 9038 7505** if you are deaf or hard of hearing. Website: www.Translink.co.uk

The Action on Hearing Loss typetalk system can also be used to contact local bus and rail stations. Textphone users can dial 18001 followed by full telephone number.

Ricability

Ricability is the trading name of the Research Institute for Consumer Affairs (RICA). They are a national research charity dedicated to providing independent information of value to disabled and older consumers.



To obtain a copy of any of their reports telephone:

020 7427 2460, textphone: **020 7427 2469**.

Website: www.ricability.org.uk

Easibus Travel Club has been set up by Translink to provide a more personal service for people who are apprehensive about travelling because of health problems. Membership is free and it enables you to let the Easibus Team know about your concerns.

For more information contact Translink on **028 9073 1117** or write to Easibus Travel Club, Translink, Freepost Bel3036, Belfast, BT1 3BR.

Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory

Committee (IMTAC) IMTAC is a committee of disabled people and older people, plus others including key transport professionals. Their role is to advise Government and others in Northern Ireland on issues that affect the mobility of older people and disabled people.

For further information contact IMTAC on: **028 9072 6020**

Textphone: **028 9072 6016**

Email: info@imtac.org.uk, Website: www.imtac.org.uk

Consumer Council

The Consumer Council handles consumer complaints about planes, trains, buses, ferries, electricity, natural gas and coal. They aim to speak up for consumers and give them a voice.



Making a complaint

If you have a complaint about transport contact the Consumer Council's complaints team by letter, telephone or email.

For more information contact Consumer Council on
0800 121 6022.

Email: complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk

Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk



SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

AGE NI

Age NI is the new charity combining Age Concern NI and Help the Aged in Northern Ireland. Age NI provide services including advice and advocacy, supporting older people to access services, improving home safety and specialist support for people with dementia.

For more information about the work of Age NI contact
028 9024 5729

For direct access to advice, information and practical support on a wide range of issues contact Age NI Advice & Advocacy Services, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm on Freephone **0808 808 7575**

BELFAST HEALTHY AGEING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The aim of Belfast HASP is to provide leadership in developing a joined up approach to the planning and delivery of services which promote the health, wellbeing and independence of older people in Belfast. The partnership is currently focusing on three key outcomes: enabling older people to effect policy change, improving the health and wellbeing of older people and joined up planning across organisations.

For more information about the work of Belfast HASP or the progress of the key themes please call **028 9050 2073**



ENGAGE WITH AGE

Engage with Age work to improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of older people in South and East Belfast and Castlereagh. They are a partnership of older people's forums, statutory and voluntary organisations working together. Engage with Age also support three older people's forums: **South Belfast Lifestyle Forum; Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum** and **Belfast East Seniors Forum**

For more information about the work of Engage with Age or any of the three older people's forums, telephone: **028 9064 9649** or visit their website: www.engagewithage.org.uk

VOLUNTEER NOW

Volunteer Now support, encourage and promote citizenship and participation through voluntary activity. They are the Volunteer Centre for Belfast, Castlereagh, North Down and Ards and also manage a range of in-house projects committed to supporting older people throughout Belfast. Volunteer Now also support **West Belfast 50+ Forum** and **Greater Shankill Senior Citizens Forum**, a weekly older persons radio programme and a programme of group activities for older men.

For more information on Volunteer Now and its range of services for older people telephone: **028 9023 2020**
Website: www.volunteernow.co.uk



NORTH BELFAST SENIOR CITIZENS FORUM (NBSCF)

North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum (NBSCF) provides an outreach benefits advice service as well as lobbying, advocating and fundraising on behalf of older people.

For more information contact NBSCF on **028 9074 9944**

AGE SECTOR PLATFORM

Age Sector Platform (ASP) is an organisation set up to campaign and lobby for older people in Northern Ireland. It aims to influence legislation; improve older people's understanding of legislation which affects them; and help older people participate in the political and decision-making processes that affect them at local and regional government level.

Contact ASP if you would like more information or if your group is interested in becoming a member of the organisation. Telephone: **028 9031 2089**.

Website: www.agesectorplatform.org

ADVICE NI

Advice NI is a membership organisation which exists to provide support for independent advice organisations and centres around Northern Ireland to deliver high quality, advice services. Advice NI also provides advice to the general public on a range of matters including: social security, housing, debt, consumer and employment issues.



For more information contact Advice NI on **028 9064 5919** or visit their website: www.adviceni.net

For information on Citizens Advice Bureau go to the Income section

CONSUMER COUNCIL

The Consumer Council's role is to speak up for consumers and give them a voice. Some of the key issues that they are currently working on include: unfair bank charges; household costs; fuel poverty; financial capability; water charges; energy market opening; and transport. They can also help individual consumers with complaints about buses, trains, planes, ferries, natural gas, electricity, coal and water.

For general enquires Telephone: **028 9067 2488**
Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

Complaints: If you have a complaint about buses, trains, planes, ferries, natural gas, electricity, coal or water telephone: **0800 121 6022** or send them an email: complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk

CONSUMER ADVICE CENTRE

The Consumer Advice Centre provides free specialist advice to consumers and traders in Belfast on consumer issues, such as: faulty goods; shopping complaints; bad service and holiday complaints.



For more information telephone: **028 9032 8260** or
email: consumeradvice@belfastcity.gov.uk
Address: Consumer Advice Centre, 14 Wellington Place,
Belfast

NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES (NICEM)

NICEM provide a range of services for people from Ethnic Minority living in Northern Ireland including: community interpreters; training for interpreters; support to people who have experienced racial harassment and asylum seekers.

For more information or to book an interpreter contact
NICEM on **028 9023 8645** Telephone: 028 90 242025 for
24 hours emergency enquires only.
Website: www.nicem.org.uk

BRYSON GROUP

Bryson Charitable Group deliver a number of care services for older people in the Belfast area. These include: a domiciliary care service which is available in the North Belfast locality of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and provides personal care and emotional support; a Home from Hospital service providing support for up to six weeks after discharge from hospital; and a Laundry Service providing clean bed linen on a weekly basis for incontinent patients. To avail of these services you need to be referred by a healthcare professional from the Health and Social Care Trust.



For more information on any of these services contact the personal assistant to the Director of Social Services within Bryson Group on **028 9032 5835**

CHURCHES

Churches can provide spiritual, emotional and social support to older people. Many churches have special events that they run specifically for older people providing an opportunity to get out of the house and mix with others. Church leaders can also provide valuable support at the time of bereavement. Contact your local minister/priest/religious leader for information on activities provided in your area.

BCM (BELFAST CENTRAL MISSION)

BCM is involved with all sectors of the community, irrespective of religious or political affiliation. Their aim is to support those most in need in our society. Some of the services they offer include: a 'LITE 60+' project for people aged 60 plus requiring assistance to remain living independently in their own home. In addition BCM run a Wednesday lunch club, tea dances, and a befriending scheme which aims to provide companionship and practical support to lonely and isolated older people in the community. They also run holidays for 'older people' at BCM's Childhaven Centre in Millisle and a residential home 'Kirk House'.



For further information on services offered by BCM
telephone **028 9024 1917**

For further information on Kirk House
telephone **028 9040 2938**

HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES

Healthy Living Centres provide a wide range of services to local communities, especially in deprived areas. There are nine Healthy Living Centres in Belfast. Services outlined below include those specifically tailored to older people.

Wispa (Women in Sport and Physical Activity)

Activities for over 50's run by Wispa include: monthly tea dances, ladies Wellness Class and walking groups.

For more info telephone: **028 9031 4298**, Address: Unit 3,
331-333 Shankill Road, Belfast, BT13 3AA

Ardoyne and Shankill Health Partnership

Ardoyne and Shankill Health Partnership have a day centre service for elderly people and run events such as Boccia, chair based aerobics and bingo. Transport is available on request and a warm meal is provided each day. Day outings and shopping trips are also arranged once a month along with seasonal parties at Halloween, Christmas, St Patrick's Day and Easter.

For more information contact Ardoyne/Shankill Health
Partnership on **028 9075 6638**



H.E.A.R.T. Project

The H.E.A.R.T project runs the following classes for people aged over 50: a wellness class; yoga class; pool therapy; Tai Chi; swimming class; line dancing; and a walking club. They also run four health days throughout the year (two for men and two for women) as well as tea dances.

For more information contact H.E.A.R.T. Project, telephone **028 9031 0346**. Address: The Maureen Sheehan Centre, 106 Albert Street. Belfast, BT12 4HL.

New Life Counselling

New Life Counselling offers counselling services to people of all ages. Services tailored to older people include: a history group; information on substance abuse; advice and advocacy service with home visits made to elderly, infirm and house bound (home support by means of befriending and assistance is also available on request); gardening and small DIY jobs and annual trips and cross community activities.

For more information contact New Life Counselling on **028 9074 6184** or **028 9039 1630**.

Top of the Rock Healthy Living Centre

Services for older people include counselling, complementary therapies, a focus on men's health, and dancing.

For more information telephone **028 9023 6677**. Address: Top of the Rock Healthy Living Centre, 689 Springfield Road, Belfast, BT12 7FP



New Lodge and Duncairn Community Health Partnership

Services for older people include complementary therapy sessions; health days in sheltered accommodation; armchair aerobics; walking groups; and general health information sessions.

For more information contact **028 9074 5588**

Address: New Lodge and Duncairn Community Health Partnership, 206 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GN

EBCDA Health Development and Connections Programme

East Belfast Community Development Agency supports a social network of lay health information workers predominantly over 50 years of age throughout East Belfast. They meet fortnightly to advance health improvement through campaigns, training, events and lobbying. Support is also provided to the 'Wise Men of the East Network' targeting men over 50 years of age who take part in health promotion workshops and meetings often using cross border connections to explore health on an all island basis. Quarterly men's Health Clinics are also organised.

For more information contact East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA) on **028 9045 1512**

Address: East Belfast Community Development Agency, 269 Albertbridge Road, Belfast, BT5 4PY.



BEFRIENDING SERVICES

Volunteer Now Befriending Service

Volunteer Now operates a one to one volunteer befriending project primarily for older people living in South or East Belfast or Castlereagh, who have limited opportunities for social interaction and could benefit from the company of a volunteer befriender. Referrals are accepted from social workers operating in South or East Belfast or Castlereagh. Please note that the project is not accepting any new referrals at present.

Volunteer Now also provides information and guidance to both organisations wanting to set up a volunteer befriending scheme and organisations currently delivering volunteer befriending services.

For more information telephone **028 9023 2020**

Alzheimer's Society Befriending Service

Alzheimer's Society has a befriending service which provides one-to-one support to people with dementia.

For more information ring their Helpline on **028 9066 4100** or look on their website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Praxis

Praxis Care operates a volunteer befriending scheme which offers friendship and support to someone who has become isolated because of mental ill-health as well as individuals with a learning disability or acquired brain injury.



If you require further information or are interested in volunteering as a befriender, you can get an application form from the Belfast office. Telephone: **028 9023 4555**

BCM (Belfast Central Mission) Befriending Scheme

BCM run a befriending scheme which aims to provide companionship and practical support to lonely and isolated older people in the community.

If you would like more information on the befriending service or are interested in volunteering to work as a befriender, contact the Community Services Manager within BCM on **028 9024 1917**

Recall Project Befriending Service

Recall offers a befriending service in South & East Belfast

For more information call **028 9046 9946**

For information on telephone support services including Good Morning schemes, see the Safety in the Home section (pg 88).

Orchardville CLASP Programme

The Orchardville Society is a voluntary organisation working in Belfast supporting people with learning disabilities in the community. CLASP is their Community Living and Support Programme which provides support for adults with learning disability to be involved in their local community. The project operates in South and East Belfast.



A range of projects in have been developed in local communities to combat isolation. For up-to-date details contact HASP on 028 9050 2073

For more information on the CLASP programme contact Orchardville on **028 9073 2326**

NI DIRECT DIRECTORY

The NI Direct Directory is a structured listing of some 4,500 websites all based in NI, carrying information on public services in the province. Information is categorized under the following headings: agriculture; arts and culture; benefits; consumer, community and voluntary; education; employment; environment; faith and belief; health; land and property; law and justice; sport and leisure; taxation; transport and travel.

For more information go to: www.nidirect.gov.uk

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance/Fire/ Police Service	Emergency calls only	999
Police	Non emergency	0845 600 8000
	Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Electricity	Billing enquiries, meter readings, general advice	0845 745 5455
	Faults/ supply enquiries	0845 764 3643



Street lighting	Faults with street lighting	028 9025 3051
Gas suppliers	Phoenix gas emergency number	0800 002 001
	Billing enquiries	0845 455 5555
Flooding/Water Leaks	Flooding Incident Line - the single point of contact for reporting flooding	0300 2000 100
	Flooding from overflowing rivers and watercourses	028 9060 6100 (Belfast area)
	Flooding from roadway, footpath or blocked road gullies	028 9025 3000 (Belfast area)
	Minor leaks on roads and footpaths	Leakline number: 08000 282011
	Flooding from burst watermains or blocked sewers	0845 744 0088
	Burst pipes within the home (homeowner)	Ring a plumber – (see yellow pages) Insert your own number:



	Burst pipes (Housing Executive tenant)	0844 892 0901
Belfast City Council	Out of hours number to report serious chemical spillage, flooding, fatal accident in the workplace or a dangerous building likely to collapse	078 5049 9622 or 028 9027 0275
Doctor (9am - 6pm weekdays)	Insert your own number	
Beldoc (out of hours doctor – 6pm to 8.30am weekdays; all times at the weekend)	Covering North and West Belfast	028 9074 4447
	Covering South and East Belfast and Castlereagh	028 9079 6220
Hospitals	Belfast City	028 9032 9241
	Mater	028 9074 1211
	Royal Group	028 9024 0503
	Musgrave Park	028 9090 2000
Dental pain clinic (out of hours)	Belfast City Hospital	028 9032 9241
Pharmacist	Insert your own numbers	



Family members	Insert your own numbers	
Religious contact	Insert your own numbers	



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Seniors Info was developed in 2008 by Belfast Healthy Cities in partnership with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations including older people. Many thanks go to everyone who contributed.

Resource working group members

Name	Organisation
Ruth Fleming (led the process) and Caroline Scott	Belfast Healthy Cities
John McMullan (chair of group)	Bryson Group
Adele Keys, Valerie Brown	Belfast City Council
Elma Greer	Age Concern
Jacqui Corscadden	Help the Aged
Claire McAteer	Volunteer Now
Fiona McCallion; Rosaleen Lagan and Ida Ross	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Joan Finn	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Mimi McAlinden	Investing for Health, Eastern Area
Olaf Hvattam	North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
Anne Greenan	Older person representing Belfast East Senior Forum
Malachy Turley	Older person representing Southlink Day Centre



Additional groups that contributed

Name	Organisation
Transport forum, Eastern Area	Includes representatives from: Translink, Dept for Regional Development, IMTAC, Community Transport Association, Community transport providers, Shopmobility, Health and Social Care Trusts, VSB, Investing for Health, Belfast Healthy Cities, and Eastern Health and Social Services Board.
Belfast Home Accident Prevention Group	Includes representatives from: Belfast City Council, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Sure Start, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Investing for Health and Northern Ireland Housing Executive.
Fuel Poverty Community of Interest Group, Belfast	Includes representatives from: Investing for Health, Belfast