



NEWSLETTER

Association for Real Change
Northern Ireland

Making Moves

Learning disability resettlement programme in Northern Ireland

In 1984 Muckamore Abbey Hospital had 1,428 patients. Most of these patients are now living in the community. This is called resettlement. Today there are over 30 patients waiting to be discharged from Muckamore. Many have been there for a very long time.

In September, a report was released about resettlement in Northern Ireland. It told us what the learning disability community has known and voiced concern over for years.

It said

- there is not a plan for working together as a sector to get resettlement done
- there is not enough funding for resettlement
- there is a lot of crisis management – dealing with things when they go wrong instead of stopping them from happening in the first place
- family carers are worried, tired and have lost trust in everyone
- and there are people at Muckamore Abbey Hospital who call the hospital their home.



On the 24th October Minister Swann launched a public consultation asking whether Muckamore Abbey Hospital should be closed. You have until the 24th January 2023 to share what you think.

ARC NI continues to meet with the Department of Health and the Health and Social Care Trusts. We voice your needs and concerns. We offer our help for effective future planning.

We need a big picture plan that thinks about the future needs of people with a learning disability, their family and carers.

We also need a plan for now. A plan that brings together everyone involved in resettlement to talk about what we need to do and how. We need a person centred plan to support individual choice and control.

As a community we need to keep doing the great work we do supporting people with a learning disability to live happy and full lives in the community. The following stories show different ways we do this.

Community News

Inspiring stories from our ARC NI community.



A life transformed

For 46 years, Paul lived in Muckamore Abbey Hospital. He was admitted at the age of nine and didn't leave until he was 55.

But he has had another chance at life since moving into his new home in Magherafelt eight months ago with round-the-clock support from Positive Futures. He is now able to go out in the car twice a day, his communication has improved greatly, and he is seeing his family more often. He has also begun singing along with the radio – something that brings a huge smile to his face.

“It sounds easy when you read it on paper,” says Dr Agnes Lunny, Chief Executive of Positive Futures, “but in reality it took a great deal of patience, compassion and teamwork to make it happen. Paul is a man who became very distressed even when moving between wards in Muckamore Abbey, so living in an entirely new environment was a major challenge. Having familiar faces who are dedicated and committed to him has been vital in his transition, and our staff are a credit to the organisation. I'm so proud of what they have achieved in a relatively short space of time.”

When Paul first moved to his new home, he needed to have all the lights in the house illuminated all day and refused to let staff switch them off. Now, he turns them off himself, checking that nothing has been left on when he leaves the house. Staff believe this is evidence that he feels safe in his environment.

While in hospital, he was unable to tolerate visits or appointments with health professionals like the dentist or podiatrist. The last time he had a check-up, he shook the dentist's hand. He also loves having his hair cut or foot spa treatments, which is a huge departure for him.

He talks to his mother on the phone, which he had never done before, and has learned the names of local places. He has also learned the names of all the staff. There has been a significant reduction in behaviours of concern and his need for medication has also reduced.

Agnes Lunny said: “Paul is proof that a dedicated staff team taking a person-centred approach can transform someone's life. What makes me sad is that he had to spend so much time in hospital before getting the opportunity to live his best life.”

Positive Futures transform the future of people with a learning disability, acquired brain injury or autistic spectrum condition.



"The area is such a peaceful place
-gives you space to think"
-Margaret T

A haven at Harmoni

HARMONI recently opened a fully accessible sensory garden at their beautiful site at Stricklands Care Village, Bangor, County Down. With a covered seating area looking out to the bay, this is a quiet and peaceful place to chat with friends, enjoy lunch or simply relax.

The sensory garden was built by people supported at Utility Street Hostel through the Keys to Life Programme. Utility Street Men's Hostel provides supported living for single men who are experiencing homelessness. The Keys to Life project gives people the opportunity to take part in meaningful activities to grow their skills and confidence in the hope they can live independently.

There was a fantastic commitment from all involved This project is a great example of putting Harmoni's "People and Potential" ethos into action. Residents at Stricklands Care Village look forward to enjoying the space for many years to come.

HARMONI provides support for individuals living with disability or societal disadvantage.



Colourful Community Support

In August Mainstay DRP hosted a craft fair and colour run to support a member of their local community, John Magee.

When John was five years old, he suffered a brain injury after a fall. He was told that the right side of his body would be paralysed forever. Stem cell treatment offers him hope of a cure but is not available in the UK.

For years the local community have rallied around Mainstay DRP and got involved in fundraising for new projects. The John Magee Event was an opportunity for Mainstay DRP to give back to their local community and help someone in need.

Mainstay's community hub service users showcased their art and pottery as part of the craft fair. They sold framed paintings, prints collages and mixed media – all produced as part of their busy art and pottery programme at Mainstay DRP. Service users were on cloud 9 as they sold their creations. Their stunning pieces attracted customers from far and wide. One customer from San Francisco bought a jug to display as a centrepiece in her office.

After a BBQ, and a motivational speech from John himself, a 1km colour run began. The atmosphere was electric as runners dashed to the finish line in all the colours of the rainbow.

To make a donation towards John's treatment, go to his [Go Fund Me page](#).

Mainstay DRP want any individual with a profound and multiple learning disability to lead a happy, healthy, fulfilled life of independence within their local community. All whilst being given choice and support enabling them to live their best life possible.





Making Inclusion Work

Cedar Foundation's Inclusion Works service have been celebrating service user's achievements and paying tribute to their local community partners. Service users were presented with certificates of accreditation and achievement at Armagh City Hotel on Wednesday 12th October.

The Inclusion Works service supports people with disabilities to explore opportunities and choices for training, employment and participation in their community. This work could not be done without local community partners. Their continuing support helps make the project a great success.

Speaking at the event, Fionnuala McGrath, mother of Service User Cormac, told the group, "Cedar provided a life jacket when Cormac was in some very choppy water. He can swim - he just needed the encouragement and support to get ashore. Finding the right people and the right place were essential to him staying afloat."

This project is part funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014-2020 and the department of the economy. Funding is also provided by the Department for Communities and all five local HSCTs in Northern Ireland.

Cedar Foundation

support people living with disability, autism & brain injury to live the lives they choose.



Open Consultations

RQIA'S Draft Strategic Plan 2022-27

RQIA is seeking views on its Draft Strategic Plan 2022-27. There will be a 12 week public consultation. It closes on 17 November 2022.

This consultation looks for views on

- the core purpose of RQIA
- their strategic objectives
- actions they plan to take to deliver on those objectives.

[Respond now.](#)

Public consultation on future of Muckamore Abbey Hospital

The Department of Health is considering the future role of Muckamore Abbey Hospital, and is proposing its closure as a regional specialist Learning Disability hospital. They welcome your views on this proposal.

Consultation opened on 24 October 2022. Closing date 24 January 2023 at 17:00.


[Respond now.](#)

Making policy more accessible

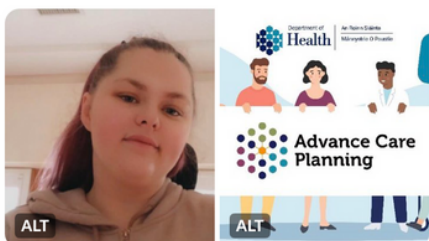
Telling It Like It Is (TILII), an advocacy group of adults with a learning disability, have worked with the Department of Health to help make Advance Care Planning easier to understand.

TILII made 5 films and an easy read about Advance Care Planning. These were celebrated at the launch of the Advance Care Planning Policy for Adults in Northern Ireland.

They will shortly be available on the Department of Health website.

Thanks to Bethany & Lou for saying a few words for the launch of For Now and For The Future An Advance Care Planning Policy For Adults in Northern Ireland Thanks too for the wonderful work on the easy read and videos 

I was so pleased to represent TILII at the launch of Advance Care Planning. All TILII worked hard to make 5 films to help everyone understand Advance Care Planning & how important it is for us all to forward plan for our future 💕 Bethany. @RobinSwannMoH @arcnidirector @Cgrimes3



Health Minister launches Advance Care Planning policy

In October, Health Minister Robin Swann encouraged adults in Northern Ireland to have conversations about what matters to them for their future.

The Health Minister was speaking following the publication of 'For Now and For the Future – An Advance Care Planning Policy for Adults in Northern Ireland.'

Advance Care Planning is an umbrella term covering personal, legal, clinical, and financial planning. It helps a person to think about what matters to them now and for the future, and to make choices that reflect this.

Minister Swann said "Advance Care Planning is about people having the opportunity to have conversations with those important to them, and those who provide care, support or treatment. Clarifying your wishes, feelings, beliefs and values, can inform future care, providing peace of mind and reducing the potential for confusion or conflict." For more information click here.





TILII behind the camera

Our TILII Translates Easy Read Service continues to grow and diversify. We have started to make plain English scripts for films that make hard information easier to understand.

Over summer the BHSCT [Health Improvement Team](#) kindly gave us funding to support co-production at every level of our film making. The funding meant TILII members could go on a [Belfast Met](#) course to learn more about video and film production. Chris Lynch, a disabled film maker, talked to the group about how to plan and design a film. TILII also interviewed the actor James Martin, from Ups and Downs, Marcella, and The Irish Goodbye for their film project. TILII found out about what it is like to be an actor on set. You can watch the interview [here](#).

6 TILII members achieved the Belfast Met Film and video award and 3 TILII members achieved the L2 OCN award in film and video production. We are very proud of them!

A big thank you to the Health Improvement Team and Belfast Met.



How to encourage more choice and control?



IMPACT
Improving Adult Care Together

[IMPACT](#) is a new £15 million UK adult social care research centre. Impact stands for 'IMProving Adult Care Together'.

One of the things IMPACT is trying to encourage are Community of Common Interest Networks in the four nations of the UK to achieve change in adult social care.

The aims of IMPACT Networks are to

1. To improve practice and outcomes in adult social care at the local level and solve common, yet complex, challenges
2. To collate practical solutions at the community level to create scalable solutions that inspire and inform change across the UK.

ARC NI has been asked to bring together a Community of Common Interest Network in Northern Ireland. This will look at approaches that offer a 'middle way' between commissioned services and direct payments for people with learning disabilities and/or mental health.

We look forward to telling you more in our next newsletter when the Network has had its first meeting.

ARC UK Annual General Meeting



ARC UK Board 2022

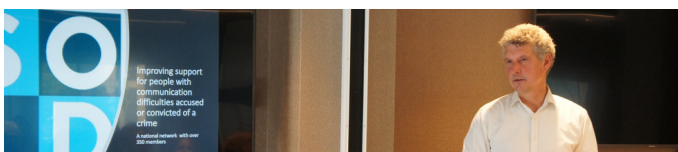
In September ARC UK had its Annual General Meeting (AGM). We heard from our friends in ARC Scotland and ARC England.

ARC Scotland spoke about their SOLD project. It supports people with communication difficulties who are accused or convicted of a crime.

ARC England told us about the creation of a Learning Disability Research Unit. This aims to gather information for the sector, about the sector.

ARC Northern Ireland TILII members talked about the future of our TILII Translates Easy Read Service.

You can view these presentations [here](#).



We took this opportunity to say goodbye to our Trustee Dr Agnes Lunny OBE. Agnes has supported ARC UK for over 23 years. We gave her our heartfelt thanks and a beautiful sculpture. The sculpture was created by Kate, Mandos and Anna McGurn from Camphill Community Clanabogan.

We warmly welcomed our new Trustee Fiona McCabe from Positive Futures.

It was wonderful to host our friends from across the UK on Northern Irish soil and introduce them to our NI community.





Meet the team

Telling It Like It Is (TILII) Downpatrick

We are the smallest TILII group but that does not mean we do not pack a punch. We like to be up front and centre - making sure our voices are heard.

Making change happen so life is better for us and our peers is really important. We do this in lots of ways for example workshops, presentations, consultations and helping to do easy reads.

One of our favourite things is the Learning Disability Induction training. We give this to new staff to help them understand how to support people with a learning disability.

We also love having good craic and one of the ways we do that is by creating and starring in TILII TV. From important films about world issues to lip sync battles - we love to see ourselves on screen!

WHAT IS IMPOTANT TO YOU?



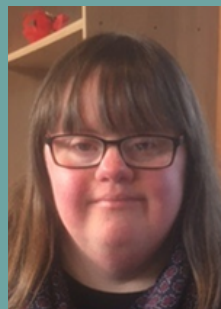
Jonathan

- Spending time with family at home and on zoom.
- Going to the sports club in Downpatrick
- All the hard work we do to make a difference at TILII. All the fun too!



Kevin

- I love football and support Man United
- I love music and do a great impression of Freddy Mercury
- I get bored sitting still . I like to be on the go unless I am asleep.



Catherine

- My faith is really important to me.
- Spending time with my family and my boyfriend.
- I love being part of TILII having my voice heard is really important to me.



Derrick

- I am getting to that age now where I like to take it easy sometimes.
- I love Elvis Presley and do a mean impression.
- I am a gentleman and treat everyone as I like to be treated.

If you want to ensure to get our next newsletter [join up now](#)

Upcoming Training

Train the Trainer: Supporting Medication in Social Care Settings (Refresher*)

14 November 2022, 10.00am - 3.00pm

The Registered Manager: Roles, Responsibilities & Requirements

16 November 2022, 9.30am - 12.00pm

Human Rights & Restrictive Practice

18 November 2022, 9.30 - 12.30pm

Creating Well-Formed Outcomes for Yourself

22 November 2022, 10.00am - 4.00pm

Safeguarding Adults Level 3

22 November 2022, 9.30am - 3.30pm

Epilepsy Awareness and Emergency Management of Seizures Using Buccal Midazolam

24 November 2022, 9.30pm - 3.30pm

Communicating Skills to Help you Support People with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities

30 November 2022, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Dementia Awareness and Learning Disability

30 November 2022, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Values and Human Rights in Social Care Practice

6 December 2022, 10.00am - 4.00pm

Promoting Positive Behaviour and Behaviours that Challenge

7 December 2022, 9.30am - 12.30pm

[Book now](#)

The National Learning Disability and Autism Awards

Taking place at the Hilton Hotel in Belfast on the 9th March 2023, these awards celebrate excellence in the support for people with learning disabilities.

Nominations are now open.



Workstream Meetings

RQIA and ARC Executive Exchange

21st November 2022

11.00am - 12.30pm

Registered Manager Peer Network

7th February 2023

10.00am - 1.00pm

Senior Managers Think Tank

9th February 2023

10.00am - 12.30pm

Workforce Development Group

21st February 2023

10.00am - 12.00pm

Adult Safeguarding Champions Peer Network

15th March 2023

10.00am - 12.30pm

For more information [email us](#).