



**FUNDING FOR PROJECTS  
WHICH TACKLE THE ROOT  
CAUSES OF POOR HEALTH**

**FUNDING ROUND NOW OPEN**

May 2024

# BCPP NEWS

Building the  
Community-  
Pharmacy  
Partnership



This newsletter is brought to you by  
Community Development & Health Network (CDHN)

## BCPP success at the Pharmacy in Focus Awards:

The Pharmacy in Focus Awards are the Oscars of Community Pharmacy. They offer a fantastic opportunity to celebrate all that is positive about Community Pharmacy and the 2024 awards did not disappoint.

Each year the BCPP team has the pleasure of nominating Community Pharmacies and Pharmacists to highlight the success of their BCPP projects and share their dedication to enhancing the role of community pharmacy. This year three of our wonderful community-pharmacy partnerships received awards demonstrating the commitment of local pharmacies to engaging and building relationships with local communities and supporting them to achieve their best health outcomes.



**Richard Garvey, Pharmacist of the Year celebrates his achievement with Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, Professor Cathy Harrison and Laura Harper and Kathy Martin from the BCPP Team.**



Community  
Development  
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**Richard Garvey - Pharmacist of the Year**

Alice has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to several BCPP projects over the last few years, including a very successful partnership with The Well in Killeel supporting a group of local people with complex mental health issues.

Sarah Jane, Manager of The Well said...

*“the group had no confidence, but Alice recognised this and instilled confidence and boosted their self-esteem in her delivery as she spoke to our clients with admiration and acknowledged their strengths and encouraged them to go further and try new things”.*

It is so fitting therefore that Alice has won the commitment to health and well-being award.

Richard carried out his first BCPP project with Meigh Community Association in 2005. Over the last 19 years Richard has been involved in 20 projects engaging with a diverse range of organisations and communities. Richard’s innovative and creative approach to community engagement ensures inclusion for all. This was demonstrated through his work with the local Traveller community that resulted in several urgent referrals for undiagnosed diabetes and high blood pressure.

*“I had high blood pressure and had no idea I did. Richard took my reading and gave me advice on what to eat and sent me to my doctor. Had I not got my tablets I would have been dead”.* (Traveller participant)



**Alice Hempkin, McKeagney's Pharmacy - Commitment to Health and Well-being**

Murphy's Pharmacy have been engaging with BCPP for many years. Pharmacist, Stephen Toland has been involved in community partnerships since 2017, working with several local groups such as Waterside Women, ARC Fitness and The Churches Trust.

We think this quote from Waterside Women's centre says it all...

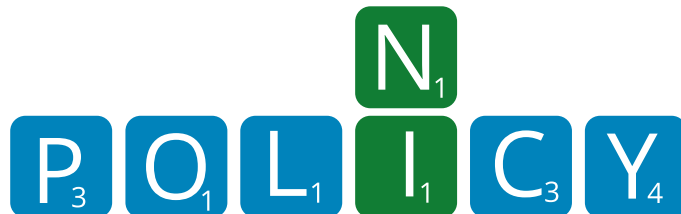
*“I think Stephen is very aware of how partnership working between the local pharmacy and community organisations can only be beneficial in enhancing service delivery provided by the Pharmacy. These types of project (BCPP) embed the pharmacy within the local community more deeply whilst also establishing stronger links between community providers and local organisations”.*



**Murphy's Pharmacy - Working in Partnership**

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# BCPP News Policy Context - Poverty



**In Northern Ireland (NI), approximately 300,000 people are living in relative poverty, unable to afford anything above the basics and have a decent standard of living.**

There is a growing number of people relying on food banks with 81,084 emergency food parcels distributed last year, children going to school hungry and the daily struggle of people unable to heat their homes. Poverty levels are at an all time high in NI, with over a decade of austerity policies, Covid-19, the cost of living crisis with rising inflation pressures and significant budget cuts to vital services.

Policies such as the five-week wait of Universal Credit and the two child limit are pulling people into a poverty trap, forcing them to borrow from illegal paramilitary loan sharks to survive. The two child limit restricts families claiming social security benefits if they have three or more children, losing £323 per child, every year. This loss could cover the cost of essentials, helping to pay towards food, electricity, and heat, which are sadly considered a luxury for some. We urgently need welfare reform to reverse these cruel policies. The five-week wait should be scrapped, and replaced with non-repayable loans to help people get back on their feet, avoiding debt.

Lack of affordable and appropriate social housing has led to a housing crisis here in NI. 2,605 households were accepted as homeless last year and 45,615 people on a waiting list. There is a close link between homelessness and health inequalities, for example the average life expectancy for a homeless person is 47 years compared to 78 for men and 82 for women.

Women are shock absorbers of poverty, with research highlighting that 90% of women's mental and physical health were negatively impacted as a result of cost of living crisis. On a daily basis, they were faced with difficult decisions such as heating or eating and skipping meals to feed their children. There are many reasons women are trapped into poverty, for example, females are more likely to take up care giving roles which are often unpaid, rely on social security benefits, work part-time and have precarious zero-hour contracts, risking them financially later in life.



It is not surprising that child poverty is the highest on record, with 1 in 4 children living in poverty in NI. Poverty has long-term implications for children's life chances and health in adulthood. Unemployment, low-paid work, inadequate benefit entitlements, unaffordable and poor-quality housing and living in deprived neighbourhoods have negative health impacts. Living in poverty can be isolating and stigmatising for a child, often excluded from school trips and participating in social activities with friends.

Older people are another group at risk of poverty as they are on a fixed income, with statistics showing that 16% are living in relative poverty. With the current financial situation, older people will be impacted the most. Price hikes in energy costs is gravely concerning for those that struggle to heat their homes, as they are more vulnerable to the effects of the cold as they age. The recent proposal by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) regarding the reduction in community transport and the removal of free travel for over 60's could cause serious harm to older people's health, increasing feelings of isolation and loneliness. Research indicates that this has consequences for older people's physical health, increasing the risk of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

People living with disabilities are more likely to experience financial hardship due to their ill health. NI has the lowest rate of disabled people in employment in the whole of the UK, with just 36% in paid work. There is a price tag that comes along with living with a disability, with extra costs of specialist equipment, higher reliance on energy costs and locked out of the labour market due to higher levels of inequality. Research by Scope calculated it would cost an additional £1,122 per month with the current rate of inflation.

We urgently need an Anti-Poverty Strategy; it has been twenty years too long. A clear Anti-Poverty Strategy should be at the heart of the Programme for Government (PFG) now that the NI Executive and Assembly has been restored. It is time for real change, people shouldn't be faced with unthinkable decisions such as heating their homes or eating, nor should children be going to school hungry in these times.

**For a full version of this policy piece visit our website - <https://www.cdhn.org/policy>**





# Milburn Community Development Ltd and Henderson's Pharmacy, Coleraine

*Exploring talents and skills with each other*

**Millburn Community Development Ltd is a voluntary organisation which works for the benefit of the local community. To provide and continually develop the facilities it has, the services to the local residents, the programmes, projects and opportunities. Based in a community office where their programmes are run, including; Youth Clubs, Over 50's Club, Social activities, educational projects, Well Being projects, sporting activities and Luncheon Clubs. They run an award-winning social enterprise Cafe and Salon for the benefit of the local community.**

Poor physical health, and mental wellbeing is a problem in deprived communities which is identified as a strategic theme in the Causeway Coast and Glens Councils Framework for tackling Deprivation. Millburn falls within its top 20% most deprived within the Causeway Coast and Glens District Area. The Estate Millburn comes under DFC Neighbourhood Renewal as an area of deprivation and has 3 output census areas in the top 30% most deprived communities. Over the years the Millburn Estate has been an area of high unemployment which has had a negative effect on the area, with anti-social behaviour, drug dependency and alcohol abuse being on the increase.

This has led to increased isolation of the elderly and vulnerable as they feel disconnected from the community through fear of going out. This has resulted in many feeling depressed, anxious, isolated and having poor physical health and mental wellbeing.

The project participants come from 3 surrounding areas within Coleraine, with 50% coming from Millburn, 20% from Ballysally and 30% from Harpurs Hill. The need for the project arose from bringing a group of elderly residents together post Covid and during the energy crisis by providing them with a warm space within the community and having engaged with them, it highlighted their feelings and issues with health and well-being and the fears that they live with.





MCD Ltd started their 4th BCPP project working with the group of ladies that they brought together on the back of social isolation issues through the effects of the Covid pandemic. The ladies group called the Jolly Dollies met weekly and were believed to have been a perfect fit for this project as we know what benefits it has for participants through our experience of previous project delivery.



*Having worked with our local pharmacist Evan Reid over the years on our many projects. It is always a pleasure delivering some fantastic workshops for our community in partnership with him. Creating programs and services for our community will assist our beneficiaries to be able to find the community support to ensure that daily pressures on families are reduced to help people cope easier that's what this project enables us to do effectively.*

*Billy Ellis/ Millburn Community development Ltd*



*It was a privilege to be so quickly welcomed into such a well established group and to have great fun and banter with the group members. This building up of relationships allowed participants to be relaxed and resulted in many occasions where folks willingly shared real issues affecting their lives. Being open about struggles and conversations about mental health challenges. My time with this group was a great experience and although I may have been there as an 'educator', I personally learnt so much. Thank you.*

*Evan Reid/ Community Pharmacist*



After the project application was successful, MCD Ltd quickly readied the group and they started without delay. The project used arts and crafts sessions, cook it, sewing, knitting and crochet as the carrot to engage the participants and with of course a light lunch after the sessions. Then their secret weapon Evan Reid the local pharmacist was on hand to engage in lively debate and talks in between activities.

The group took part in many activities learning new skills, each week along with Evan taking part in all he became a dab hand at stone art and flower arranging using a pumpkin as the vase as well as many other skills. The group had a trip to the Causeway Coast organised by Evan, to learn about the ancient history which was educational as well as seeing glorious views that made your heart beat faster. The final trip saw the group along with Evan travel to Belfast to the Christmas Panto which myself, the ladies and Evan really enjoyed "oh yes we did". These outings gave Evan a chance on the journey, to chat to the women on a 1-1 basis on health issues that were concerning them.

The BCPP projects we now deliver in our community are very much needed and they are life changing to some families being able to offload some of the stresses in life through good project delivery and is making so much difference in community all over. Some of the ladies have remarked how this project has made them feel so much better about themselves; the learning, the support and the aftercare of the friendships they have made is all down to this funding. The really telling thing about the project is that the participants recognise the really beneficial effect the projects has in the pharmacist and his obvious enjoyment with them all.



# Crossfire Trust and McKeever's Chemist

*In the Crosshair – Bring the focus*

**Crossfire Trust is a registered charity established in 1984 and based at Darkley House, Keady that aims to support people in their community in a practical, non-judgemental way. They have an 'any situation through the door' policy when it comes to helping people including under represented groups, but the main issues they tackle are related to homelessness, reconciliation and community development, poverty and living on the bread line, social isolation, mental health and crisis and emergency situations**

They are grateful to have the support of over 100 volunteers who do amazing work and 3 paid full time and 2 part time employees. Their work is also further supported from the revenue they generate from their social enterprise Something More, their new & pre-loved clothes and accessories shop and community hub based in Crossmaglen. Crossfire Trust also has partnerships with local businesses including ABP Foods, Lidl and Sainsburys, donations and fundraising events, grants and funding awards and the help and support of our local community including the PSNI, NI Probation Board where we provide placements for people on Probation Orders, NI Housing Executive.

Homelessness and poverty are so much more than the lack of money or food – Poverty and homelessness are also loneliness, isolation, deprivation, brokenness and so much more.

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All of these things are just as close to each of us as the loss of a job, sickness, breakdown of a marriage, death of a loved one, or abuse, both physical and mental. We also understand that houses can sometimes be shells and not necessarily homes, which can be as cold inside as they are outside. We deal with all of the above, and more, on a daily basis in our own community and also now further afield. Bringing a group together and including the Pharmacist as a member of the group, who will also share stories and chat about their own experiences, means that the relaxed atmosphere rapidly builds trust and intimacy. This allows for a more powerful experience and sensitive sharing of hurts and vulnerabilities, (of which there are many) and this is where the magic happens! People recognise themselves in each other's' story and empathy is flowing.

Homelessness comes in many shapes and forms, so, unfortunately, it is difficult to tackle with one direct response. With this in mind we run several projects which separately encompass our principal efforts to welcome, care, provide clean clothing and showering facilities, peer mentoring and support etc.



Crossfire Trust were delighted to participate in the CDHN's Building Community Pharmacy Partnership. Aine from McKeever's chemist was a fantastic match with Crossfire Trust. The group (including residents in Crossfire's temporary accommodation, volunteers, staff and local residents) were quickly put at ease by the personable and accessible approach and expressed appreciation of the opportunity to voice questions and concerns to a health professional. Open conversation in the non-judgemental atmosphere ensued with plenty of laughs, on a wide range of health and social issues of relevance to the participants.

Informal education was delivered and discussed covering subjects such as smoking cessation, addiction, use of over the counter and prescribed medications. Factors that contribute to difficulties making healthy lifestyle changes such as stress, mental health issues, money worries were validated as well as support shared among participants. Group members were advised on sources of support and specialist intervention in the community and made aware of the agency signposting and advice role the local pharmacist can offer.

Participants benefitted from individual consultations with the pharmacist regarding health issues and prescribed medications. Several accessed treatments for minor ailments and availed of the ear health / micro suction service offered during the course.



Links were made with local agencies including Clanrye presenting on their Employ Me programme and Inspire Well-being gave a well-received session on 'Food and Mood' complimenting the ethos at Crossfire of preventing food waste and saving money by making use of the onsite community food larder stocked with food goods that would otherwise have been discarded.

The session on Financial Health from Community Advice ABC generated a lot of discussion on the despondency felt by the lack of resettlement options for residents seeking a secure home. Oonagh from Community Advice is kindly returning to Crossfire to do a follow up session on housing options e.g. rent to buy and co-ownership. All the hosted community services expressed how beneficial it was to learn more about Crossfire and be able to sign post appropriately.

The programme promoted cohesion and understanding among the participants as well as increasing awareness of community services available to meet a variety of needs. Due to the positive feedback from participants we are hoping to run the programme again in the autumn.



*I have greater confidence in asking my local pharmacist for help now that I know all they can do*

**Crossfire Trust Participant**



*This has been invaluable in giving me the confidence to go back to my GP*

**Crossfire Trust Participant**





# Causeway Volunteer Centre and Henderson's Pharmacy, Coleraine

*Connections underfoot*

**Causeway Volunteer Centre (CVC) is the leading Agency for volunteering in the Causeway Area covering Coleraine, Ballymoney and Moyle. CVC was established 1997 to further develop the volunteering infrastructure in Northern Ireland. CVC delivers a portfolio of volunteer-effective projects liaising with charities, voluntary and community organisations, local authorities, schools and colleges, health professionals and Government Departments.**

They recently completed a Level 2 BCPP project with local pharmacist Evan Reid from Henderson Pharmacy. The programme was called Build Connections and was aimed at doing exactly that, helping people from within our community make better connections to Evan, community partners, the wider local services and mainly to make connections within the group and with each other. Our aim was to explore coping strategies to support wellbeing and to highlight the importance of outdoors, learning new skills, volunteering, and friendships to root connectedness throughout our local community.

Participants came from all walks of life to join Build Connections, each person had their own reasons why they come along, may it have been to learn, make friends, to build in a routine into their week. 5 of our participants were not from the Coleraine area but had made Coleraine their home over the past few years.

Evan was an asset to work alongside in our BCPP project, he has a wealth of knowledge and was very approachable for both participants and the partners. Evan had one to one session with each participant, giving them privacy to discuss any health concerns or queries they may have had. Evan talked through any literacy, health questions and busting myths, he also spoke clearly, and no question was ever seen as too silly to ask (mainly from me lol). Thanks to Evan taking the time to talk to everyone and checking in weekly, one of our participants followed up on a concern they had and has since underwent major surgery.

**One participant had a great saying...**



*Use your food as medicine or later in life you will be using your medicine as food'. We all thought this was a great motto to reflect on a session we had about nutrition.*





As the programme is co designed by the participants, they selected the activities and the community partners they wanted to work alongside throughout the program. Participants enjoyed a wide variety of different activities to cover everyone's expectations. Build Connections enjoyed cooking, baking, arts and crafts, visits to local library, adventures to the oldest known settlement in NI, journeys on the train along the beautiful Foyle lough and walks around the Derry Walls to name a few.

A highlight on everyone's list was the behind the scenes visit to the pharmacy. This was a great visit and it opened everyone's eyes to what is involved in issuing one prescription, one participant past the comment 'I now understand why I have to wait so long for my prescription' lol. The program broke down barriers, people may not have known were there, and allowed participants time to feel comfortable to share their story in a safe environment surrounded by their new friends. At each session we always enjoyed a cuppa and some nice tasty treats.



“

*From our first contact with CDHN to our final evaluation the team were amazing, they were always on hand to help when needed. The application process was straightforward and easily navigated. On behalf of CVC, I would like to thank the whole team at CDHN for your help support and guidance and for granting us the opportunity to help an amazing group come together with Evan and our community partners over a 14week period to learn new skills, build friendships, educate themselves on local services and experience new activities.*

**Causeway Volunteer Centre / Lead Community Partner**

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Watching friendships develop as the program progressed was a rewarding experience, people were meeting for coffees and chats outside of the group and even going along to other groups they had learnt about from our community partners. This funding empowered CVC, Evan and Community Partners to connect with people who were isolated, lonely and unsure of where to turn in their community and gave them the opportunity to Build Connections.



“

*I was new to the area and have found coming along each week so enjoyable, I have made new friends and learnt so much about services which are on my doorsteps but just never knew what was behind the name. Thank you for the opportunity to be involved'.*

**Build Connections Participant**

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# BCPP IMPACT REPORT 2021-2023

Since 2001, the BCPP programme has supported over 1080 community pharmacies and community organisations to work in partnership with people in communities to address their health and social needs and tackle health inequalities. This report focuses on a two-year snapshot of 51 full BCPP projects (Level 2) completed between 2021-2023.



This impact report shows that Building the Community Pharmacy Partnership is much more than an individual health improvement programme, it is a tried and tested cross-sectoral partnership supporting collaborative working to tackle health inequalities locally and regionally. It clearly demonstrates how policy to reduce health inequalities that takes action on the social determinants of health can be addressed using a community development approach and targeted to those most in need, to create long-term positive social change, healthier and stronger communities and improve the lives, health and well-being of people in our society.

The programme successfully reached people and communities who often experience financial stress and health inequalities. Two fifths of the projects were delivered in the top 20% most deprived areas in NI and over two-thirds in the top 40% most deprived areas. Additionally, two-fifths of participants reported having health problems or disabilities that limited their day-to-day activity.



*The project provided a small intimate environment... as a result I found they opened up more in comparison to a more clinical healthcare environment.*

*(Pharmacy partner)*







**Knowledge Exchange Workshop (KEW)** was held on Wednesday 17th April 2024. This 2.5-hour workshop brought together BCPP community partners, pharmacy partners, DoH staff and CDHN staff (23 participants) to read and interpret the draft report and shape the conclusions & recommendations.

The BCPP Impact Report is due to be launched at the Long Gallery, Stormont on Thursday 6th June 2024

**Recommendations focus on;**

- BCPP model and implementation
- BCPP internal processes
- Public policy and practice
- Further enhancements to the existing programme
- Related areas of work
- Further research
- Scale and spread beyond NI

# 23+ YEARS OF BCPP



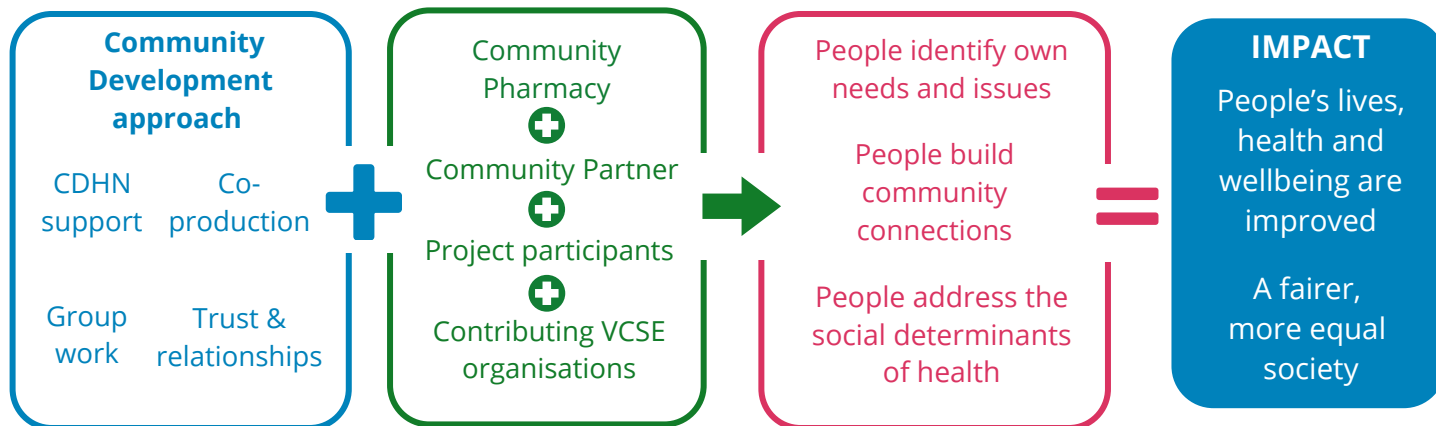
**1000+** Partnerships funded  
**£7,500,000+** Total Investment  
**90%** NI pharmacies engaged

“  
*Seeing the learning happening within the group and coming from peers, this was a major positive for me... Every week we were really blown away by their increased level of participation, their knowledge and how they were able to put that into place.*  
 (Community partner)  
 ”

“  
*I was connected to people, I was listened to, heard and understood for the first time.*  
 (Participant)  
 ”

## BCPP AIM

Bring pharmacy and community together to address health inequalities using a community development approach.



Application forms and guidance notes are available from [cdhn.org/bcpp](https://cdhn.org/bcpp) along with the closing dates for the next round of funding.

If you have an idea for a project, please contact a member of the BCPP team who will be happy to guide and support you.

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