



Better Days for people living with chronic pain

A co-designed community development approach to living well with long-term pain



Project supported by the PHA

Context



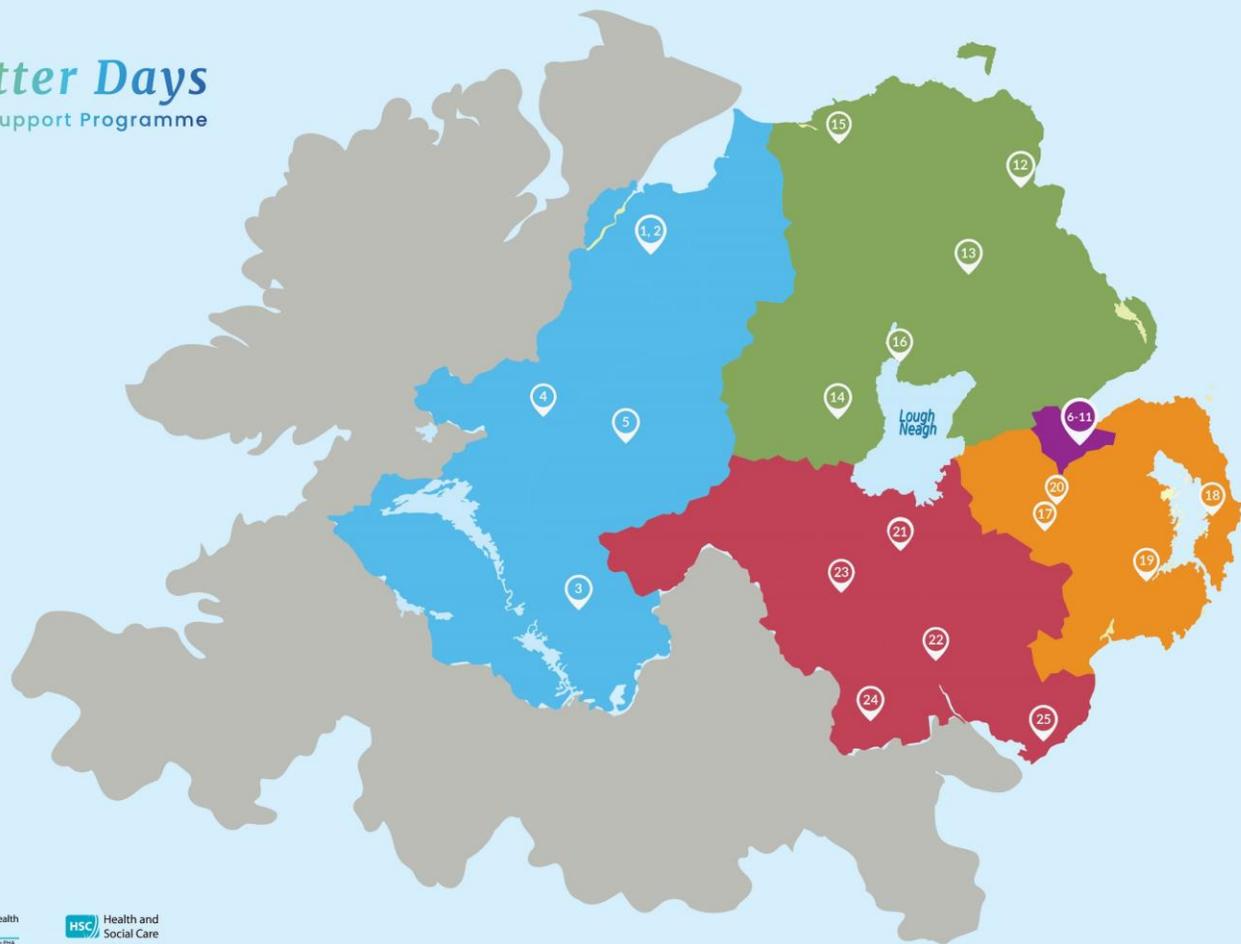
- Painful long term conditions affect 20- 30% of people in Western societies.
- They are the commonest physical cause of disability often accompanied by other illnesses, including mental health problems.
- They adversely impact people, carers, friends, families, communities and societies through the physical, emotional, mental, social, environmental and financial harm they do.
- They continue increasing due to sedentary lifestyles, lack of physical activity, obesity and an ageing population.
- Pain management services have not kept pace, and overreliance on medicines is worsening the quality of life of many through side effects without offering much benefit, but also fuels the global opioid epidemic.

Better Days Pain Support Programme

- Collaborative cross-sectoral project aimed at improving health and wellbeing for people experiencing chronic pain in NI.
- Partners include the Healthy Living Centre Alliance (HLCA), Public Health Agency (PHA), Health & Social Care Board (HSCB), Queens University Department of Psychology and independent doctors.
- Launched in 2017 and has evolved into a regional programme supporting a self-management approach to pain using a community development model.
- Flexible programme involving pharmacists, physiotherapists, complementary therapists, artists and community development workers facilitating a peer-led approach.

Better Days is delivered in 25 centres across all 5 Trust areas in NI

45 programmes take place each year



Better Days Pain Support Programmes (2021/22)

WESTERN AREA

1. THE OLD LIBRARY TRUST, DERRY
2. BOGSIDE AND BRANDYWELL HEALTH FORUM, DERRY
3. OAK HLC, FERMANAGH
4. DERG VALLEY HLC, CASTLEDERG
5. OMAGH FORUM FOR RURAL ASSOCIATIONS, OMAGH

BELFAST AREA

6. THE MAUREEN SHEEHAN CENTRE, BELFAST
7. TOP OF THE ROCK HLC, BELFAST
8. EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (EBCDA), BELFAST
9. SHAFTSBURY COMMUNITY AND RECREATION CENTRE, BELFAST
10. NEWLODGE DUNCAIRN COMMUNITY HEALTH PARTNERSHIP, BELFAST
11. LIGONIEL HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE, BELFAST

NORTHERN AREA

12. NORTHERN AREA COMMUNITY NETWORK, CUSHENDALL
13. LOUGHGIEL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, BALLYMENA
14. COOKSTOWN WESTERN SHORES AREA NETWORK, DUNGANNON
15. CAUSEWAY RURAL AND URBAN NETWORK, COLERAINE
16. TIDAL, ANTRIM

SOUTH EASTERN AREA

17. THE RESURGAM TRUST, LISBURN
18. PENINSULA HEALTHY LIVING PARTNERSHIP, NEWTOWNARDS
19. COUNTY DOWN RURAL COMMUNITY NETWORK, DOWNPATRICK
20. POLEGLASS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, DUNMURRY

SOUTHERN AREA

21. THE VERVE PROJECT, CRAIGAVON
22. THE CLANRYE GROUP, NEWRY
23. WEST ARMAGH CONSORTIUM, ARMAGH CITY
24. RURAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP IN SOUTH ARMAGH WALD CENTRE, NEWRY
25. KILKEEL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION, NEWRY

Pain Steering Group

Pharmacy advisor HSCB / Public Health consultant PHA/ Chair Pain Alliance NI /
Public Health Registrar PHA / Professor in Pain psychology QUB / GP advisor HSCB /GP /
2 x Reps Healthy Living Centre Alliance



29 Healthy Living Centre Managers



60 Pain Programme Facilitators

Who is the programme suitable for?

- People living with long-term persistent pain
- Willing to take part in a group programme
- Able to participate in gentle movement (can be chair based)
- Can sit for at least 1 hour (if face to face programme)
- Able to get to and from the programme (if face to face programme)
- Can access Zoom (if online programme)

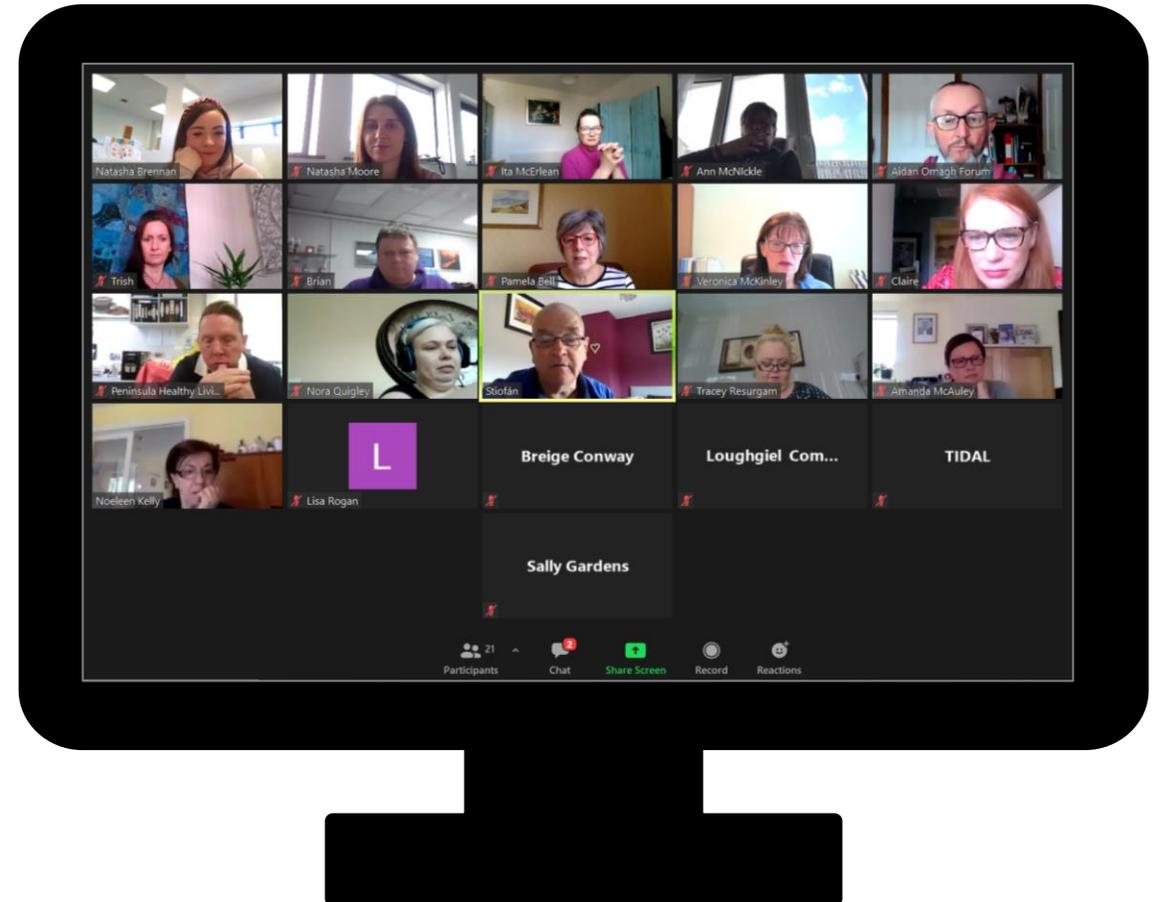
Facilitators



Our Facilitators generally have a background in health development roles

Training includes:

- Monthly support meetings
- Bi-annual and ongoing training programme
- Chi Me
- Pain management / Pain Toolkit
- Pharmacy and physio support
- Psychology
- Sleep
- Nutrition



Referral Process



- Participants can self-refer via our website, in person, via email and telephone
- Facilitated self-referrals can also be made via the booking form on the website (anyone can make referral)

www.hlcalliance.org



Topics include:

Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing

Pain Toolkit

Understanding Pain

Relaxation & Breathing

Nutrition

Sleep

Self Care

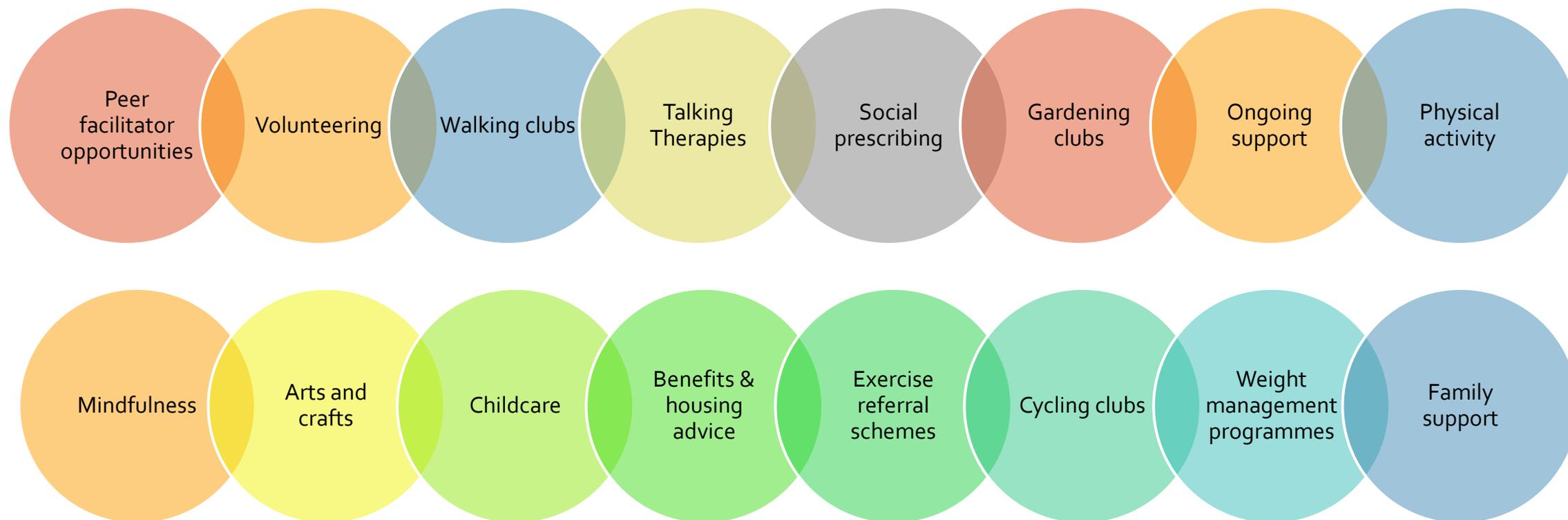
Pharmacist Session

Gentle Movement & Exercise

Peer Led Session

Post Programme

The Better Days Programme is only the beginning of the participants journey



Monitoring & Evaluating



Surveys:

- Week 1
- Final week
- Follow-up survey

Anonymous participant information

2 case studies per programme

Queens University Belfast external evaluation support

Evaluation Measures:

- **EQ 5D** Developed in Europe and is widely used to evaluate generic quality of life.
- **COMM** The Current Opioid Misuse Measure (COMM)TM is a brief patient self-assessment to monitor chronic pain patients on opioid therapy. It is designed to determine if participants on long-term opioid treatment are benefitting less than they should from it because of side effects and the medication losing its beneficial effects over time.
- **HSCB medicines questionnaire** This has been developed by our funders. They have been impressed by the programmes' success and wish to continue seeing it prove its worth. As they are pharmacists, they are especially interested in improving the use of medication to manage pain. They need to show that the programmes help participants to understand and make best use of pain medication to continue funding them.

2018/19 Key Findings

- We co-produced and delivered a 12-week programme intended for 220 participants in 11 HLCs
- 94.5% of 286 participants completed oversubscribed programmes
- All had an improved two item pain self-efficacy score (PSEQ2) by week twelve of 2- 6 (of 6) points, indicating large improvements in their confidence to work and live a normal life with chronic pain.
- Over 60% of those completing reported large mental health improvements on the PHQ4+2, a screening tool for anxiety and depression; others remained unchanged and only 10% reported small deteriorations.



Regional Healthy Living Centre Alliance Pain Support Programme won the PrescQIPP 2020 award category *“Developing or working across Integrated Care Services”*

At the award ceremony a peer vote also awarded us the overall Silver Award



Conclusion



We attribute 'Better Days' success to:

- its dynamic adaptable community development basis
- facilitators experienced in working with diverse people exposed to adversity
- participants' option to engage in other HLC activities during and after the programme
- the collaborative culture amongst stakeholders, who share vision, work and leadership roles, and the diligent evaluations.

We intend to improve our understanding of these and other factors' impact through academic research

HLCs have delivered health improvement programmes for years, and their reach in the north of Ireland is growing.

The community development principles underpinning 'Better Days' render it agile and effective in improving health and wellbeing for those with painful conditions like arthritis, fibromyalgia and physical injuries. This approach could be applied to other long term condition support programmes.



For further information visit hlcalliance.org

or

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