



# TAKING THE INITIATIVE

## Taking the Initiative Network News

**Welcome** to the first edition of Network News - a newsletter for Champions in the Northern Trust area. Many of you were recruited as Alcohol Community Champions by one of the previous Taking the Initiative to Reduce the Impact of Alcohol projects namely Believe in Youth, Relationships & Alcohol Misuse, Healthy Mind, Healthy Body or 55+. With these projects due to end it was recognised that there was a need for on-going support to you as existing Champions as well as any new Champions recruited.



**Taking the Initiative Network Launch**

As a result the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and the four local community networks agreed to work in partnership to provide this support through the Taking the Initiative Network. This project was launched late last year with three Development & Training Officers now recruited to support the work you as Champions are doing to help reduce the impact of alcohol in your area. The Network is open to everyone who is concerned about alcohol misuse and wants to take some action to reduce its negative impact as well as those who have similar concerns about other health and wellbeing issues in their community. If you know of anyone else who would like to be a Champion please ask them to get in touch with us.

### PROGRESS TO DATE: Development & Training Officers

Hi from Lorna, Tracy and Geraldine, since we started with the project we have been working on developing new leaflets and posters, putting together alcohol information packs and resources and developing a

range of alcohol awareness sessions on different topics as well as for any training needs of Champions. We have also been recruiting existing and new Champions to the Network and have arranged an number of

events to which you are all invited where we hope to hear what we can do together to reduce the impact of alcohol.



Lorna covers Coleraine, Magherafelt & Cookstown areas  
Telephone No: 07739446599

**Lorna O'Neill**



Geraldine covers Ballymoney, Ballymena, Larne & Moyle areas  
Telephone No: 07718650241

**Geraldine Anslow**



Tracy covers Antrim, Newtownabbey & Carrickfergus areas.  
Telephone No: 07718650242

**Tracy Bell**

# CHAMPIONS ROLES

The Network has also been reviewing the roles which you as Champions have taken on and the support required.



**Information Points** - The majority of Champions had agreed to take on a role which involved setting up Information Points in the place where they work, volunteer or live. This included putting up posters and leaflets related to the earlier projects and the alcohol related services which they provided. As these are now out of date we will be providing the PHA poster “To Stay Healthy and Reduce Risks” and a copy of the “Guide to Alcohol Services” along with the leaflet “Focus on Alcohol – a guide to Drinking and Health”. Obviously this information fits well with other health and wellness information so if you want to consider how you might add to your Information Point please have a chat with us.

**Raising Alcohol Awareness** – To date Champions have done this by identifying needs within their own community and then attending a level 3 course which enabled them to deliver tailored training themselves. Following review it has been agreed that the level 3 course be replaced with a shorter course which will enable participants to deliver standardised alcohol awareness in their community depending on their community’s needs. These sessions include basic alcohol awareness e.g. what is a unit, how is it calculated, how long it remains in the body and the impact this may have on someone who is driving the next day. Home drinking will also be covered. A number of resources are available to support this role including unit calculator and measuring beaker. Further standardised sessions will be developed as the need arises and we would be keen that the existing level 3 trainers would be involved in this as well as actual delivery, if possible.



## Available resources



**Communicating Information Needs** – here Champions assess the alcohol awareness needs in their own community and seek to meet these primarily by arranging for an organisation to deliver a particular course. Some champions have also worked together to meet needs in other ways such as focusing on alternatives to alcohol e.g.

sport, community events or initiatives to reduce isolation. In addition to helping Champions to come together and work with others who are concerned about wider health and wellbeing issues in the community we can provide resources to help make your idea become a reality.

**Interventions** – Here Champions were provided with training on Alcohol Brief Interventions (Alcohol – Identification and Brief Advice) which give them a structure to having a conversation with someone who they had identified as misusing alcohol and the individual appeared to be open to change. It is recognised that there is a need for Champions carrying out this role to receive refresher training so we will be arranging these.



**The Development and Training Officers are looking forward to meeting with all of the existing Champions and confirming the role you wish to take on along with agreeing any support or training which you may want.**

## Champion Stories

Four of our existing champions, Frances, Paddy, Iain and Nigel reflected on their roles as part of the Sharing the Learning event on 26 October. Their talks are available on the Health Alliance website at [www.healthallianceni.com](http://www.healthallianceni.com).

Go to the **Taking the Initiative** tab and **How to get involved**. We will be using this website for our online presence over the coming year so don't hesitate to have a look.



Visit: [www.healthallianceni.com](http://www.healthallianceni.com) for more information on the Taking the Initiative Network

## Keeping you Up to Date

Part of the role of the Network will be to keep you up to date with anything which we think may be of interest to you or support you in your role. Equally if you come across anything that you think we should share with other Champions then let us know and we will either post it on the health alliance website or in the next edition of Network News. To get us started Frances Doole has forwarded the following:

### Alcohol and Youth—Focus on Girls

Although official statistics show that more than a quarter of 16 to 24-year-olds in the UK have either stopped drinking or have never tried alcohol (up some 40% since 2005) and experts suggest that young people are happier to stay at home and interact through social media rather than go out drinking, we still have some very worrying trends around girls and drinking. Almost a third of girls have been drunk at least twice by the age of 15, compared with a quarter of boys the same age. The gender gap is biggest in Britain, according to a study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). According to our findings, the fact that teenage girls under 18 get drunk more often and account for more alcohol related hospital admissions than boys could be due to the following factor: Girls are very calorie aware and if they plan to drink, they might cut back on their food calories as they know they will be having extra calories from alcohol. Read more at:



[newsletters@alcoholeducationtrust.org](mailto:newsletters@alcoholeducationtrust.org) forwarded by Community Champion, Frances Doole

## Over to You...

### Ideas for Action:

Sometimes it can be difficult to think of new things to do to help reduce alcohol misuse and seeing what others are doing can give us a prompt. So was there something which you did for Dry January or are planning to do to raise awareness in your area. Let us know and we will share it with your Champion colleagues.



### Network Information Events:

**Causeway Area:** 14th March  
7pm-8.00pm . Venue CRUN  
Offices, Coleraine

**Antrim Area:** 30th March 7pm-8.00pm.  
Venue: Barron Hall, Glengormley

**Larne, Ballymena & Glens area:**  
6th April 7pm-8pm. Venue: Ballygally Community  
Development Association, Larne

**Open to all existing, new and aspiring  
Champions. Please come along and see how  
we can help make your ideas a reality.**



### Further Information and Signposting

Here we have listed the organisations who are working together to manage the Network and can provide information and support around other health and wellbeing initiatives.

Northern Health & Social Care Trust: [Gerry.mcdonald@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:Gerry.mcdonald@northerntrust.hscni.net)

CRUN (Causeway Rural and Urban Network): [www.crun.org](http://www.crun.org)

NACN (North Antrim Community Network): [www.nacn.org](http://www.nacn.org)

SACN (South Antrim Community Network): [www.southantrimcommunitynetwork.org](http://www.southantrimcommunitynetwork.org)

CWSAN (Cookstown & Western Shores Area Network): <http://cwsan.org>

Public Health Agency: [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)

**For details of PHA funded drug and alcohol services in your area go to**  
[www.drugsandalcoholni.info](http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info)

We are also keen to provide details of any local services which we may not be aware of so please let us know if you come across any so that we can include them in our Information Point packs and share them with everyone else.



**North Antrim Community Network**  
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**Resource Request—we recently advised  
Champions that we had some Think Drink  
Alcohol AUDIT leaflets and keyrings from our  
earlier projects and were inundated with  
requests for them—there are now none left.  
Please remember if you need resources to  
help you in your role as Champion don't  
hesitate to get in touch and we will do all we  
can to help.**