

# MAKING OUR MARK IN NORTHERN IRELAND

## Our impact 2021–22

Northern Ireland deserves fast, high-quality treatment for eating disorders. So at the start of 2021, we welcomed Nicola Armstrong – our National Officer for Northern Ireland. And she set to work taking on local issues and opportunities alike.



# HER FIRST STEP?

Responding to the Mental Health Strategy consultation. The draft from the Department of Health set out a new vision for the next ten years of mental health treatment in Northern Ireland.

We talked to the experts in our policy and campaigns team, and we talked to the experts outside Beat: a hundred people who've experienced eating disorders firsthand. Thanks to them, our response amplified the voices of those who'll most benefit from a strong Mental Health Strategy.



Nicola Armstrong, NATIONAL OFFICER FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Thanks in part to our campaign,  
the final strategy is broadly in  
line with our asks. Including...

01.

Immediate referrals for anyone  
presenting with an eating disorder,  
no matter how severe

02.

More community-based treatment:  
intensive outpatient services,  
community Mental Health hubs,  
and schools-based CAMHS services

03.

Access to safe and effective medical  
care for people with eating disorders  
when admitted to general hospitals

04.

Better connections between specialist  
eating disorder teams and general  
mental health inpatient wards

05.

Reviewing workforce needs  
and skilling up frontline workers

06.

Expanding other therapies  
and interventions

# Funding the future

The Mental Health Strategy is ambitious – and it needs proper funding.

So we asked supporters to call on their MLA, and demand commitment from the Executive to get the Mental Health Strategy off the ground.

It was our first ever Northern Ireland campaign, and the Beat community stepped up.

**91** campaigners sent 450 letters calling for the Executive to allocate funding for the first three years of the Mental Health Strategy

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They reached

**85 / 90** members of the Legislative Assembly, in 17 out of 18 constituencies

# AND MEMBERS ARE LISTENING

So far, we've had

**19**

**direct responses** from MLAs committing their support, including the former Ministers for Finance and Health, and former First Minister Arlene Foster.

The Department of Health Carers' Fund also pledged a generous

**£61,834**

**via the Community Foundation.**

Over two years, this will enable

**690**

**people** to attend our carer workshops and gain valuable skills to support their loved one.

# MAKING CONNECTIONS

Last year, we met with

**18**

**MLAs** across all major political parties, including the First Minister, Justice Minister and Finance Minister.

MLAs tabled

**16**

**questions** about eating disorders. We also presented to the All-Party Group on suicide prevention.

**"IT'S BEEN A GREAT FIRST YEAR. THE RECENT ELECTIONS MEAN WE HAVE MORE MLAS TO CREATE NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH. BUT WE'RE PROUD OF THIS EARLY WORK TO HELP PUT EATING DISORDERS ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA. DURING THE NEW MANDATE, WE'LL PUSH TO KEEP THEM THERE."**

– Nicola Armstrong, NATIONAL OFFICER FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**Did you know?**

**Northern Ireland now has its own Helpline!**  
0808 801 0434 | [NIHelp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:NIHelp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk)