

Tackling loneliness together



Research from Mind found over two thirds of young people (68%) have said their mental health got worse during lockdown, with boredom and loneliness as key contributors to poor mental health. Mental Health Foundation research found four out of ten young people have felt lonely due to the Covid 19 restrictions.

“Being totally isolated is really hard and making me realise how much I actually need people and how much I miss touch. I really need a hug. I feel so lonely. It makes me feel like giving up. I am fighting so hard not to.”

Survey participant, young person

To tackle this ‘Positive Emotional Wellbeing Boxes’ filled with seven days of fun activities and resources, are helping make a difference to some of the most vulnerable young people across the Northern Trust.

The boxes made by locally based company Fresh Minds Education. They are an innovative social enterprise who develop emotional wellbeing resources, products and evidence-based training programmes and workshops. As specialists in Creative and Therapeutic Education they bring innovative, evidenced based and trauma informed mental health and resilience interventions directly to parents, teachers and children. For further information please contact Aine Wallace on aine@freshmindseducation.com



Bernie McGarry and Lynsey McVitty (NHSCT/CYPSP) with Aine Wallace from Fresh Minds Education

The initiative is being funded by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Mid and East Antrim Loneliness Network and are part of a campaign to tackle loneliness and help young people to connect during this time. Mind research found connecting with family and friends online is the most popular way to cope amongst young people.

Hugh Nelson from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, added:

“Loneliness can affect anyone from teenagers and young adults, new parents, carers and recently bereaved, to students, older people and those with disabilities. During Covid-19 the lockdown restrictions have exacerbated this issue for everyone, not least our young people. Through these packs we are reaching out to our community during this difficult time to reassure them they are not alone and we are in this together.”

Gerry McVeigh, Co-Chair of CYPSP LPG Antrim/Ballymena and Assistant manager of Start 360 Youth Engagement Service

“Many of the young people supported by Start360 services are working hard to manage life events. Covid 19 has been another significant event in their lives.

It has been challenging for young people to remain connected during Covid 19 - with family, friends, learning, work and support. Being connected is a key factor in protecting against loneliness and isolation.

The Positive Mental Health Boxes are a fantastic way for Start360 to further support the young people we have been working with through Covid 19. A great resource which again highlights the opportunities that can be made real through collaborate working.”

Marjorie Hawkins, Chairperson of the Mid and East Antrim Loneliness Network, said:

“Loneliness is a major issue in society and has been particularly prevalent during the Covid-19 lockdown. It is vital that as a community we work together to address this issue, reaching into communities to help those who may be suffering from isolation and loneliness.

“This is a practical attempt to reach out to the most vulnerable in our community through a collaborative approach. We can achieve so much more when we come together to make sure no one feels forgotten during the Covid 19 pandemic and beyond.”



Mairead Kane (NHSCT/CYPSP) delivering the Positive Emotional Wellbeing Boxes to Mary Tennyson GOLD Surestart



Kate Mc Dermott (NHSCT/CYPSP) delivering boxes to Leanne Abernethy from Bushmills Coronavirus Support Group and AnneMarie Doherty (NHSCT Health & Wellbeing Causeway Lead)