



British Heart  
Foundation

NORTHERN  
IRELAND

HEART  
DISEASE

HOPE

FIGHT  
FOR EVERY  
HEARTBEAT

[bhf.org.uk](http://bhf.org.uk)

Rewriting the future for the  
people of Northern Ireland

Annual Review 2016

# Message from our Chief Executive

**It has been another incredible year for the British Heart Foundation – our vision of a future where people do not die prematurely from heart disease has been taken forward with determination, energy and skill by our staff and volunteers.**

Thanks to our supporters we are currently investing an incredible £3.1m in life saving medical research in Northern Ireland, delivering significant breakthroughs that will help change the lives of millions of people across the UK and globally.

Each year 3,700 people in Northern Ireland lose their lives to heart and circulatory disease. But we are fighting to reduce that number and put an end to the unnecessary suffering of so many families in Northern Ireland.

We see research as being at the heart of achieving this goal, and we continue to adapt our approach to keep the BHF at the forefront of research into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of heart disease and stroke across the world.

We have seen some truly remarkable results from our researchers at Queen's University, and the progress they've made this year will transform lives across Northern Ireland and around the world.

The ground-breaking discoveries they make are only made possible by the enormous generosity of our supporters across Northern Ireland, raising millions of pounds, donating thousands of items to our shops, and volunteering tens of thousands of hours for the BHF.

Their time and energy fuels the fight for every heartbeat and I am confident that with the partnership between our tireless supporters and dedicated researchers we can win the fight, and transform millions more lives in Northern Ireland, the UK and beyond.

We won't stop until we've won the fight against heart disease.



Simon Gillespie, Chief Executive

# Message from Head of Northern Ireland

**Over the past 12 months, BHF Northern Ireland has been working hard in the heart of your community to achieve our vision, where people do not die prematurely or suffer from heart disease. We've been making research matter.**

We are currently investing £3.1m into research at Queen's University and are committed to funding more life saving science in Belfast. We've also been highlighting the importance of research at events such as the NI Science Festival and raising the profile of our local scientists and their world-class research.

We've led the fight to have new investment in community resuscitation. In March the Health Minister agreed to fund the much-needed infrastructure required to increase life saving CPR training and install public access defibrillators across Northern Ireland.

We've also championed free prescriptions for people living with heart and circulatory disease. Working in partnership with the MS Society and representing over 50 charities, we led the Keep Us Well campaign and secured a Ministerial commitment to maintain free prescriptions for people with long-term conditions.

None of this could have been achieved without the generosity of our remarkable supporters, and the drive of our volunteers and staff. The funds raised have allowed us to invest £0.8m over the past year in Northern Ireland to help support the estimated 225,000 people living with cardiovascular disease. There's still so much work to be done, but with a nation of supporters we know we can win the fight.



Jayne Murray, Head of  
BHF Northern Ireland

# Our research strategy

In Northern Ireland, 3,700 people a year die of heart and circulatory disease and 225,000 people live with the devastating effects of these conditions. We fight. For an end to heart disease, for an end to the devastation. We fight for every heartbeat, everywhere. Until we win.



## Our fight in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is fighting for every heartbeat. Here are just some of the incredible numbers that played a part in this year's battle.

# £1.2m

Generated in sales from BHF shops across Northern Ireland last year

# £3.1m

Currently being invested in research at Queen's University investigating all aspects of heart and circulatory disease

# 308

Fundraising and retail volunteers giving their time in support of the BHF

# 8

Retail shops across Northern Ireland, fuelling the fight for every heartbeat

# 199

BHF-supported health care professionals caring for patients

# 104,000

Heart health resources sent to addresses in Northern Ireland last year

# Highlights from the year

Across the country our supporters, our fundraisers and our researchers are putting everything they've got into the fight against heart disease. Here's a snapshot of our year.



## September 2015

Our annual Bag It. Beat It. stock collection was a great success. Here's Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council staff with 235 bag donations.



## November 2015

With the MS Society we launch a joint campaign against the return of prescription charges for people with long-term conditions.



## December 2015

We joined 'Tell a Loved one' – a campaign asking people across Northern Ireland to discuss their views on organ donation with their families.



## February 2016

We joined the More Than a Shop campaign, highlighting that a proposed hike in charity shop rates in Northern Ireland could mean that we have less to spend on the people who need it most.





**August 2015**  
Jayne Murray is appointed Head of BHF Northern Ireland.

**September 2015**  
Our new East Belfast Fundraising Group is officially launched with a sponsored walk and social event.



**October 2015**  
Our first clearance shop in Northern Ireland was officially opened by Lord Mayor of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Darryn Causby.



**February 2016**  
Our Spinathon for Wear It. Beat It. in Bow Street Mall is broadcast live on UI05's The Frank Mitchell Show.



**February 2016**  
We brought our research to life at the Northern Ireland Science Festival.



**March 2016**  
The All-Ireland Hurling Finalist Neil McManus appears on BBC TV news supporting our CPR work only months after his dad was saved through CPR.

# Introducing our researchers

We are currently investing £3.1m into research at Queen's University and are committed to funding more life saving science in Northern Ireland. We have a dedicated team of scientists passionate about winning the fight against heart disease and raising the profile of our work.



**Northern Ireland is the site of vital cardiovascular scientific research.**

Dr David Grieve, Senior Researcher,  
Queen's University





## Engaging the public

In February we took part in the Northern Ireland Science Festival at the Centre for Experimental Medicine at Queen's University. BHF NI scientists were on hand to explain everything, from giant crawl-through models of arteries to microscopic slides with heart cells, showing how they are fighting heart disease and inspiring a new generation of scientists.

## Understanding heart failure and repair

At Queen's University, Dr David Grieve and his team are investigating how the heart responds to stresses that ultimately lead to heart failure. This information is helping to identify potential new treatments and possibly a cure. They are specifically interested in studying the role of certain hormones in preventing damage to heart and blood vessels and in stem cells, as an exciting way to regenerate the damaged heart and blood vessels.

## Stem Cells

Dr Andriana Margariti, Dr Karla O'Neill, Arya Moez and Rachel Caines are each working with stem cells hoping to make discoveries that could lead to new treatments for heart failure and other diseases. They are particularly interested in investigating the exciting potential of stem cells to regenerate the damaged heart and blood vessels which could save lives by informing the development of better treatments and cures for heart conditions.

## Gum disease and the risk of coronary heart disease

Professor Gerry Linden and his team at the Centre for Public Health at the Royal Hospital in Belfast have been researching the same 2,000 men for over 15 years looking for causes of heart disease. Their aim is to find out if gum disease is linked with an increased risk of coronary heart disease. Because gum disease can now be treated and prevented, it may reveal a new, simple way of reducing heart disease risk and saving lives.

## Heart disease and the eye

Dr Denise McDonald and her team are investigating what controls the growth of new blood vessels in the retina of the eye. Damage to these vessels can lead to permanent loss of vision. The researchers need to understand how new vessels can be encouraged to grow as this will help develop a treatment that restores damaged tissue – whether in the retina or elsewhere in the circulation. This regenerative approach, if successful will also have a potential application for heart patients.

# £3.1m

**The amount we're currently investing in cardiovascular research at Queen's University**

**I had a heart attack on Christmas Day. As an energetic business owner I suddenly found it hard to get about. I was fitted with an ICD which changed my life. I support the BHF because their research is mending broken hearts, like mine.**

Jimmy, 62



# Prevention, survival and support

**Ending unnecessary suffering and early death through cardiovascular disease is central to our mission. In Northern Ireland we've spent £0.8m in the last year helping to reduce the country's risk factors and supporting patients in 2015-16.**

## Community Resuscitation Strategy

The Department of Health have agreed to create a life saving legacy for Northern Ireland by committing £250,000 each year to help fund the implementation of the community resuscitation strategy. We're proud to have played an important part in making this happen – which will skill future generations in CPR so they have the confidence to act when someone has a cardiac arrest.

## Heart failure pathway

Evidence from the BHF has helped influence best practice across Northern Ireland into how to diagnose and treat people with heart failure. This had attracted funding of £330,000 a year from Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care Board. The money will pay for cardiac rehabilitation for heart failure patients and provide administration support to free up nurses to carry out their essential tasks in all trusts.

## Hearty Lives

Obesity is one of the biggest risk factors for heart disease, which means reducing it is a big part of the fight for every heartbeat. Through our Hearty Lives Carrickfergus project we've invested over £230,000 in Carrickfergus, Whitehead and Greenisland communities over the last three years. Since the start the project has helped over 6,000 local people in the area. The project helped women to achieve and maintain a healthy weight before, during and after pregnancy, and provided support for families with young children to prevent obesity and reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease.

## Supporting minority communities

Since 2013, over 6,440 people from the Irish Traveller and Black and Ethnic Minority communities have benefitted directly from our heart health interventions in Craigavon. The £100,000 project increased access to cardiovascular services for people at a greater risk of developing heart disease.

**£0.8m**  
**The amount spent in the last  
year on improving heart  
health and supporting heart  
patients in Northern Ireland**

# Community of heart heroes

**When the reality of heart disease touches a person's life, they want to fight back. Thousands of people all across Northern Ireland raised funds this year to fuel vital research and make heart disease a thing of the past. Here's a snapshot of what some of our wonderful supporters did for the battle against heart disease.**

## Fundraising heroes

This year's Wear It. Beat It. fundraising day on 5 February was a fantastic success in Northern Ireland, raising vital funds for our life saving research. From school children eating red-themed lunches to doctors and nurses wearing red on the wards, we turned Northern Ireland into a celebration of all things BHF.

The staff of Bow Street Mall literally went the extra mile with an all-day Spinathon in the middle of the shopping mall. The event also raised awareness of heart disease across the country as UTV's Frank Mitchell took to the bike during a live broadcast of his U105 Radio Show.

Our partnerships in communities across Northern Ireland have continued to raise funds needed to save lives. The Royal Pipe Band Association chose us as their Charity of the Year for the 2016 Pipe Band Championships season, and a new fundraising group was set up in East Belfast to fight for every heartbeat in their area.



# Changing lives through retail

**Our eight BHF shops play a massive role in the fight for every heartbeat in Northern Ireland. This year they generated £1.2m in sales to help fund the fight against heart disease.**

## Getting the best stock

Increasing high-quality stock in order to generate more funds has been a big part of our work this year and we have called for donations in several ways. We've worked with local media and politicians to raise awareness and we attended the craft show at the Belfast Titanic Exhibition Centre, where 4,000 people visited our stand over three days. The drive has resulted in the donation of a range of high value items, from designer wellies to first edition books. In addition, our Bag It. Beat It. campaign was a huge success and brought in over 5,500 bags of stock.

We have over 240 retail volunteers giving their time every week to make our shops work hard in their mission to raise vital funds. This year we were proud to see two of our volunteers – Maureen Jenkins and Sarah Louise Dunn – both win awards for their contribution in the fight for every heartbeat.

# £1.2m

**The amount generated in sales by eight local shops across Northern Ireland**



## First clearance shop

“In October we opened our first clearance shop in Northern Ireland. This shop in Portadown sells excess stock at reduced rates and has proved hugely popular with the public.”

Maureen McElhatton,  
Retail Area Manager

# Our fight in your area

This map shows just some of the activity that's been going on in Northern Ireland over the past year.



## Research

We are currently investing £3.1m in pioneering heart research at Queen's University Belfast.



## Support

We support 199 healthcare practitioners across Northern Ireland through the BHF Alliance. This free membership programme offers professional development and support for those who work with people affected by, or at the risk of developing, heart and circulatory disease.



## Survival

Training the public in CPR increases the chances of someone surviving an out of hospital cardiac arrest. As part of our mission to create a Nation of Lifesavers, more than 7,400 people are estimated to have been trained in schools and communities across Northern Ireland using our Call Push Rescue kit.



## Prevention

We are leading on prevention projects that will reduce the chances of people in Northern Ireland developing heart and circulatory disease.



## Grow income

We have eight BHF shops Northern Ireland helping to fund life saving research.





**British Heart  
Foundation**

**NORTHERN  
IRELAND**

For over 50 years we've pioneered research that's transformed the lives of people living with heart and circulatory conditions. Our work has been central to the discoveries of vital treatments that are changing the fight against heart disease.

But so many people still need our help.

From babies born with life-threatening heart problems to the many mums, dads and grandparents who survive a heart attack and endure the daily battles of heart failure.

Join our fight for every heartbeat in Northern Ireland. Every pound raised, minute of your time and donation to our shops will help make a difference to people's lives.

**FIGHT  
FOR EVERY  
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