



The Níamh Louise Foundation  
*hand someone a feather today*

## **Rural Intervention and Support**

### Appointment of Suicide Prevention Officer

The Niamh Louise Foundation was delighted to receive funding from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in order to provide a suicide prevention officer within the rural areas of Mid Ulster.

Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Michelle O'Neill has said that the provision of a dedicated suicide prevention officer in rural areas will help those most in need and raise awareness of mental health issues.

The Minister met with the Niamh Louise Foundation to award them with a grant of £10,000 from her Department's Rural Challenge Programme 2012 to help deliver their "Breaking the Silence" project.

The Rural Challenge Programme 2012 is one element of DARD's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework. The Programme is designed to support local communities with the delivery of a specific project through the provision of a small grant from DARD.

Minister O'Neill, who has highlighted the issues of rural social isolation and suicide prevention many times in the past, expressed her support for the Niamh Louise Foundation's latest project venture.

She said: **"We are all too aware of the frightening statistics regarding suicide and self harm in our rural areas. By raising awareness of mental health issues and providing a dedicated suicide prevention officer I have no doubt that Niamh Louise Foundation's project will mean that for those who may suffer in silence, they will now have the opportunity to break that silence and find the help and support they need."**



## Services of the Niamh Louise Foundation

Complementary Therapy  
Mentoring (U18)  
Befriending (18+)  
Bereavement Support  
Youth Group

## Training

Suicide and Self Harm Awareness Workshops (available on request)  
ASIST- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training  
MHFA- Mental Health First Aid Training



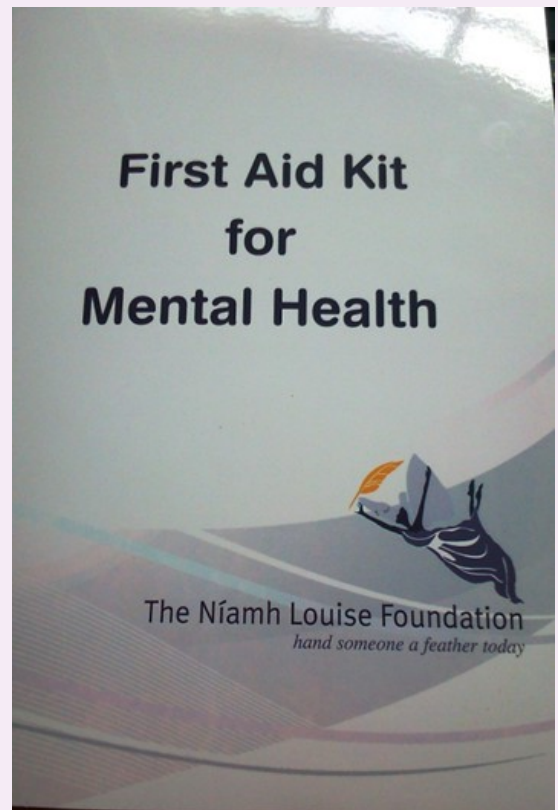
## First Aid Kits for Mental Health

The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training programme was originally developed in 2001 by Betty Kitchener and Tony Jorm at the Centre for Mental Health Research in the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

In 2005, the Mental Health First Aid Northern Ireland Manual was produced by the Public Health Agency and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

The First Aid Kit for Mental Health has been developed by the Niamh Louise Foundation, to meet individual needs, especially within rural Northern Ireland.

The kits are in the form of an easy to use A5 laminated folder with clear and descriptive cards summarising key aspects of mental wellbeing, mental illness, and suicide awareness. These kits can be easily stored in every home, workplace, club, and organisation and be used when needed to spot signs and symptoms in someone who may be suffering with mental ill health .



## 'Tackling Mental Health & Suicide Prevention through Sport' conference

The Niamh Louise Foundation, along with Pips Belfast, were delighted to be awarded funding from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure for the provision of suicide awareness training and information to clubs and organisations in the sports and cultural sector.

The Niamh Louise Foundation is often making the link between our mental and physical health.



We have been asked the question many times, *'how can someone at the top of their sporting game, so fit and healthy, think of suicide?'* The person may be fit and healthy on the physical front but we must also take account of their mental/emotional health.

So much emphasis is put on our physical well-being. Everyone knows to exercise, eat 5 a day, and avoid fatty foods, in order to avoid certain ill health such as a heart attack, diabetes, or a stroke. When we think of mental health our minds automatically conjure up negative thoughts, often thinking of

mental health disorders, but just as every person has physical health, whether it good or bad, everyone also has mental health which, again, can be good or not so good.

Both physical and mental health are equally important to function normally. We can no longer look at each individually, but rather as a balance that makes us all human.

On Wednesday 29th January 2014, the Niamh Louise Foundation, in association with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, held the 'Tackling Mental Health & Suicide Prevention through Sport' conference in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown.

Coaches, players and committee members from GAA, soccer, rugby and boxing, among others, came together to support the Foundation in their promotion of positive mental health to all sporting organisations. On the night there were talks from Sinead McCartan, Head of Sport in DCAL, Catherine McBennett, Niamh Louise Foundation, Steven McElhatton, Killymoon Rangers FC, Chris Webster, Ulster Rugby, Ciaran Gourley, Tyrone GAA, and Geoff Wilson, Irish FA. Delegates then had the opportunity to take part in an evidence gathering session, the results of which the Niamh Louise Foundation will use to shape their work within sports clubs across Northern Ireland with the aim of increasing awareness of positive mental health and suicide prevention within our sporting communities.



## Niamh Louise Foundation attend Families Voices Forum Event

Catherine McBennett, Grainne O'Neill and Denise Nicholl from the Niamh Louise Foundation were delighted to have attended the Families Voices Forum successful training weekend in the Glenavon House Hotel Cookstown in March 2014 and represented rural communities.

The Forum, who are supported by the PHA, are a regionally led group which aim to build the profile of those bereaved by suicide and give them the opportunity to get their voices heard by policy makers. They champion the right of those bereaved by suicide to ensure access to professional levels of care and support.

The 2 day event, which was attended by over 30 individuals from throughout Northern Ireland, gave participants the opportunity to reflect upon the future direction of the Forum and to use their personal journey and experiences to influence this.

Catherine McBennett, operational director of the Niamh Louise Foundation and Forum member commented, "In August 2006, I joined Families Voices Forum with the hope and aspirations to create change at government level so that the voices of families bereaved by suicide could be heard within a collective forum. From its beginnings, a lot of Saturdays were given up on a voluntary capacity by family members bereaved by suicide from all over Northern Ireland to collectively agree on five key aims for Families Voices to present to the government. I was delighted to have participated at the training weekend on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2014, facilitated by the Clear Project, Eimear Teague, and Shauna Houston, which proved to be a very positive and structured event where everyone's voice was heard and members of the Families Voices Forum left the event feeling energized, focused, positive, and determined to create change.

If you would like more information on the work of Families Voices Forum contact Eimear at

[familiesvoicesforum@gmail.com](mailto:familiesvoicesforum@gmail.com)

Pictured below are participants with key note speaker Christy Kenneally



## The Niamh Louise Foundation Educates the Community

Recently the Foundation has been asked to deliver its tailor made awareness workshop, which gives individuals basic knowledge and awareness of mental health, self harm and suicide, to a number of different groups in our communities.

The workshop has been delivered to staff and users of Women's Aid in Cookstown and to the Pomeroy Institute of Irish Leadership as part of their Pharmacy Projects as well as to members of Dungannon's 50+ Club, Rutledge Recruitment in Cookstown, Families Moving On in Omagh, Active Listeners, Cookstown, and Richhill Youth Group.

The Foundation has also been educating the youth of our communities with over 150 students across South West College Dungannon and the Newry and Armagh campuses of Southern Regional College receiving the awareness presentation, as well as over 100 lower and upper sixth pupils in St Patrick's Academy Dungannon and over 100 Year 10 pupils in Sacred Heart College Omagh.



## Local Politicians visit the Niamh Louise Foundation

Since the beginning of 2013, the Niamh Louise Foundation has been working with local government in our fight against suicide in rural areas. We have had visits to our centre from a number of local MLAs and politicians such as Francie Molloy Sinn Fein, Sandra Overend, Tom Elliott, and Nigel Lutton UUP, Jim Wells DUP, and Patsy McGlone SDLP. These visits have given those in government the chance to meet those involved with the charity and also to see first hand the work that the Foundation carries out on a daily basis in rural areas in suicide prevention, intervention and post-vention.



The Foundation was also delighted to host the Northern Ireland Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety at our centre on 11th September 2013.

The Committee spent a number of hours speaking to staff, volunteers, committee members, and clients of the Foundation, as well as to members of other local community groups. They also had the opportunity to have a tour of the Foundation premises before holding their own committee meeting on site.

This was a great day for the rural community in terms of suicide awareness and prevention.

# The Niamh Louise Foundation

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The Níamh Louise Foundation  
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Come and join us every Wednesday morning at 11am for a cup of tea and a chat.



## Useful Contacts

**Lifeline: 0808 808 8000**

**Samaritans: 0845 7909 090**

**Rural Support 24/7 Helpline: 0845 6067 607**