

Improving the Heart of Glebeside

Ten local residents from Glebeside have enrolled in an innovative lifestyle improvement programme aimed at improving health and wellbeing through a healthy diet, exercise and weight loss.

The initiative is part of the Glebeside Health Programme which is currently providing a wide range of health related activities to groups in the Glebeside area of Ballymoney, using funding secured from the Northern Health and Social Services Board.

The 16-week programme is being facilitated by Registered Dietitian Cheryl Flannigan, supported by Glebeside Community Association and the Northern Neighbourhoods Health Action Zone (NNHAZ).

On enrolment to the programme each participant was individually assessed and received a personal treatment plan setting out clear goals. During the assessment local Practice Nurse Eithna Crawford recorded baseline information including blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

The approach in this programme ensures that participants not only address their weight but also look at food and exercise to ensure long-term lifestyle changes and health benefits.

Future sessions will include information on food labelling, cooking and shopping habits, impact of smoking and alcohol, and healthy eating for some common medical conditions associated with being overweight.

The programme is based on generating motivation and developing long-term behaviour change techniques to ensure participants get maximum support and education to enable them to fulfill their goals and achieve a better understanding of the relationship between food, physical activity and weight.

Cheryl Flannigan, Registered Dietitian, said:

‘Being overweight or obese is now a significant health problem within our communities. Recent research conducted within Northern Ireland has revealed that a staggering 500,000 people can now be referred

to as overweight with a further 236,000 identified as being obese. The health consequences of being overweight are well recognized and I believe that programmes like this can make a difference and help to reduce the incidence of diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke.'

Local resident and course participant Roma Marten, said:

'Having the opportunity to attend a programme like this in my own community has been great. I have access to a dietitian who can advise me on a one to one basis and tailor a programme specifically for me. I am a mother of a young child and it is also giving me the opportunity to have some time for myself to consider steps I can take to improve my family's health.'

Jayne McConaghie, NNHAZ Support Officer said:

'One of the strategic aims of NNHAZ is to 'support and build upon ongoing work'. The original idea for this project came from the community during a consultation period which built on previous health focused events held in the Glebeside neighbourhood over the past

few years. It is an exciting project that has derived from the community itself and our main role has been to bring key people together to make the idea a reality. Glebeside has been an identified Health Action Zone area since 2003 and has embraced the initiative by developing effective partnerships to ensure that the Glebeside neighbourhood is a safer, healthier and better place to live.'

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Health Action Zone

1. NNHAZ is a community led partnership initiative that aims to improve the health and social well being of people and communities living within the Northern Health and Social Services Board area. NNHAZ currently operates in 14 neighbourhoods within the Northern Health and Social Services Board area.

The 14 NNHAZ areas include:

- Antiville (Larne Borough Council area)

- Armoy (Moyle District Council area)
- Ballee (Ballymena Borough Council area)
- Ballycastle (Moyle District Council area)
- Ballysally (Coleraine Borough Council area)
- Bawnmore (Newtownabbey Borough Council area)
- Craigyhill (Larne Borough Council area)
- Glebeside (Ballymoney Borough Council area)
- Glenfield (Carrickfergus Borough Council area)
- Longlands (Newtownabbey Borough Council area)
- New Mossley (Newtownabbey Borough Council area)
- Parkview & Riverside (Magherafelt District Council area)
- Rathen, Greenvale & Sullenboy (Cookstown Borough Council area)
- Rathenraw (Antrim Borough Council area)