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DHSSPS Permanent Secretary, Dr Andrew McCormick and Secretary General at the Department of Health, Dr Ambrose McLoughlin, jointly launched the CAWT 2011 annual report at an event in Armagh to mark the 20 year anniversary of the establishment of the CAWT cross border health partnership. Commenting, CAWT’s Director General, Tom Daly said: “CAWT is celebrating 20 years this year and our programme of work is reaching more people than ever. Our activities are focused on enabling patients and clients, many of whom live in more rural border areas, to have better access to quality health and social care services.”

To date almost 21,000 people from across Northern Ireland and the border counties of the HSE have benefitted from cross border health and social care services through CAWT’s current programme of work called ‘Putting Patients, Clients and Families First.’ Funded by the European Union’s INTERREG IVA programme which runs to March 2014, the cross border services underway are being delivered by the CAWT partner organisations: the Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts and the HSE. At the event, the opportunities for both jurisdictions to work together to optimise resources was highlighted by both Cathal Magee, CEO of the HSE and John Compton, Chief Executive, Health and Social Care Board. Mr Magee stated: “We face many challenges in the Republic with reduced funding and a major reform agenda underway. This requires us to learn from other jurisdictions and to create and develop networks, such as the CAWT partnership. The CAWT approach represents a sensible and practical way to use scare resources for the benefit of patients and clients.”

A project supported by the European Union’s INTERREG IVA Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body and delivered by Co-operation and Working Together.
Outcomes for Children (OfC) project

Over 700 people, including children and young people, have benefited to date, from a range of programmes rolled out in South Armagh, Fermanagh, Cavan and South West Donegal. The programmes were developed by the four multi-agency local planning groups. These groups are developing and rolling out new programmes (from May to Sept 2012) to improve outcomes for children and young people.

A key element of the outcomes planning process has been the engagement of children and young people. For example, in South Armagh, young people were involved in organising a youth conference and also developed a youth newsletter to share positive health messages and to communicate with more young people. In Cavan, young people have been engaged through a range of sport, drama and art activities. In Fermanagh, research is currently on-going to map current provision to promote a more co-ordinated approach to youth work provision across the county. As part of this research, focus group sessions have been held with a range of young people. In South West Donegal, a youth reference group has been established, which is supported by Foróige and the SW Donegal Youth Project. Group members have undergone training to build their skills and capacity and have delivered a range of health and wellbeing programmes for young people. The OfC Project Board is currently working to ensure sustainability of the local planning groups and the project website from September 2012 when the project finishes.

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Diabetes project

The CAWT Diabetes project is making steady progress across both programmes. Structured Patient Education is helping children with diabetes and their families to manage their condition more effectively through the CHOICE programme. The 4-week CHOICE programme is now underway in all Trust areas of Northern Ireland and the HSE border counties. The aim of the programme is to give children, young people and their families or carers, the skills and knowledge they need to manage their diabetes and to reduce the impact of the condition on daily activities and lifestyle.

In addition, diabetes Pre-Pregnancy Care clinics, which aim to help women with diabetes to achieve the best possible outcome for both mother and baby, are now underway across the EU INTERREG IVA eligible area. Both the Structured Patient Education programme (CHOICE) and Pre-Pregnancy Care clinics are managed by Diabetes Specialist Nurses and Diabetes Specialist Dietitians.

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Citizenship Opportunities Service

Day Opportunities Service: The Day Opportunities Service is well established across the CAWT region, with almost 270 referrals to the service at the end of April and over 160 people currently benefitting from the service. The Community Access Workers and Community Link Workers have been working closely with the people referred to the service, and also with an array of organisations, to facilitate access to locally-based activities. These activities include a wide variety of social and leisure opportunities, vocational training, education, work placements, paid employment and volunteering.

Community Awareness Programme (CAP): Five creative and innovative cross border pilot projects are currently up and running as part of the Community Awareness Programme: an advocacy and support service; a personal development training programme; a web-based information service for training, employment and education; a disability awareness training programme for primary school children and a forum theatre disability awareness programme for young people aged 14-25. A further three cross border projects are in the process of being procured.

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European Union INTERREG IVA Project Update

Speakers at an OfC networking event (l to r): Rev. John Purdy, Dunkineely Community rep; Una Collier, CAWT OFC project; Albert Smyth, South Armagh Youth Forum; Evanna Schorderet, Tir Boghaine Teo, Una Walsh, Women and Family Health Initiative; Eimear Ryan Cavan County Council, Rose McCaffrey, HSE DNE; Mannix Magee, ARC Health Living Centre and Dr. Emer Coveney, Cavan County Council.

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CAWT Obesity project - ‘UP4IT!’

325 families are currently engaged in the ‘UP4IT!’ programmes across the CAWT area. In total 161 families completed the main 8 or 12 week programme with 164 families involved in follow-up sessions. The families have enjoyed participating, with many of them making longer term positive changes to their lifestyles. The information gathered, skills learned and support provided through a wide range of activities has been welcomed by the families. The feedback received from participants provides some insight into these fun, family based sessions:

“The organisers managed to monitor weight and other factors without putting the kids off - they made it a good laugh and we could see progress which was good for motivation and helping the children to feel good about themselves.”

“It was also great to talk about your children and get the sense that everyone encounters the same situations……I now feel that I have a better idea of what is good or what is bad in a wide variety of foods in terms of nutrition for my family.”

“This programme has opened up a new door, introducing many new foods into me and my family's lifestyle, and provided lots of practical and easy tips to help make changes at home.”

More ‘UP4IT!’ programmes are planned for the coming months. The programmes are for families with children under 5 years (up to 8 week programme) and children 8-11 years (12 week programme).

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Cross border workforce mobility

Coaching and Mentoring: 71 staff from across the CAWT region have successfully completed phase 2 of the ‘Connect Programme’ with phase 3 commencing in Sept 2012. Twenty participants from the programme will undertake further training to achieve an International Coach Federation ‘Associated Certified Coach’ credential and become the first group of coach mentors. Social Work: Following on from the successful Leadership Development Programme, Heads of Service from both jurisdictions recently undertook the Leading Complex Practice Development Programme. This will support the implementation of the Leadership Development Programme across the EU INTERREG IVA eligible area. Moving and Handling: The cross border standardised e-learning Manual Handling Training Programme is currently being implemented and feedback has been extremely positive.

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Cross border Acute project

The CAWT Acute project is progressing well across all specialisms, which include ENT, Urology, Vascular and Ophthalmology. Overall, the project is ahead of target with over 9,500 patients in total treated by the end of March 2012. There have been a number of important developments in the CAWT Acute project in recent months. Significantly in Ophthalmology the first patients from the WHSCT (Western Trust) area availed of outpatient and day surgery in Sligo General Hospital. Also the Ophthalmologist based in Sligo General Hospital has facilitated an outpatients clinic in Fermanagh’s Erne Hospital in the Western Trust. This service has been supported by the Northern Ireland health and social care commissioners and will benefit patients from the Fermanagh area in particular.

Vascular outpatients clinics have also commenced in Letterkenny General Hospital with the visiting Vascular Surgeon from the Western Trust undertaking this work. Additionally, day surgery for vascular conditions will commence in June 2012 in Letterkenny General Hospital, again facilitated by the Vascular Consultant from the Western Trust.

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Pictured are the participants in the CAWT ‘UP4IT!’ Omagh obesity prevention programme which ran from January to Easter 2012 and was delivered by the Old Library Trust.

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Connect programme participants Eileen Quinn, HSE West; Karen O’Brien, WHSCT and Martin Quinn, PHA.

Pictured at a recent study day (l to r): Tariq Cheema, Consultant Surgeon, Cavan and Monaghan Hospitals; Zola Mzimba, Consultant Vascular Surgeon, Altnagelvin Hospital; Linda Saunderson, CAWT Acute Programme Manager; Alastair Lewis, Consultant Vascular Surgeon, Craigavon Hospital and Mark Grannell, Consultant Surgeon, Erne Hospital.
Volunteering - Food for Thought!

Pictured at the cross border ‘Hungry for Volunteers’ seminar, organised by the Western and Southern Trusts, Volunteer Now and CAWT (l to r): Elaine Way, Chief Executive, Western Trust; Bernie McCrory, Chief Officer, CAWT; Anne Love, Volunteer Manager, Western Trust; Maeve Donaghy, Volunteer Now, Enniskillen and Kathryn Way, Volunteer, Western Trust. The seminar highlighted the importance of good nutrition to the recovery and well-being of patients and clients and the role of volunteering.

New Sexual Health (GUM) services in the border region

Pictured at the CAWT conference to mark the opening of new EU funded sexual health / GUM clinics in all four CAWT border areas (left to right): Neil Irvine, Consultant in Health Protection, Public Health Agency; Bernie McCrory, Chief Officer, CAWT; Marian Martin, Project Manager, CAWT GUM project; Dr. Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer, DHSSPS; Northern Ireland and Prof. Sam McConkey, Head of International Health and Tropical Medicine, HSE Dublin North East.

Event: CAWT Mobility project - graduation event for the Connect (Coaching and Mentoring) programme
Venue: City Hotel, Armagh
Date: 14 June 2012
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Workshop/showcase CAWT Obesity project ‘UP4IT!’ - Showcase events for the management and prevention programmes
Venue: border region
Date(s): 18 September 2012 in Monaghan
25 September 2012 in Derry/Londonderry
Contact details: Claire McGinley
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