



THEME:

Health & Social Care

FUNDING:

€1,859,682.92

MATCH FUNDING:

Department of Health
(Northern Ireland and
Ireland)

LEAD PARTNER:

Royal National Institute of
Blind People Northern
Ireland (RNIB)

PROJECT PARTNERS

Royal National Institute of
Blind People (RNIB)
Scotland, Fighting
Blindness Ireland

Start Date: 01/01/2017

End Date: 31/12/2022



<https://www.mib.org.uk/your-area-northern-ireland/>

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

Project Case Study: Need to Talk

Need to Talk will provide a cross-border counselling service and confidence building programme for people affected by sight loss throughout Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland, and Western Scotland (Ayrshire & Arran and Highlands & Islands).

It will address the social isolation and emotional distress which is often experienced by people with sight loss, and which is exacerbated in rural isolated areas where people are reliant on very limited public transport services to access support.

In total, over 1,900 individuals, of all ages, and who are socially isolated, will benefit. 152 of the total 1,928 project beneficiaries will contribute to the CP output indicator for e-Health interventions.

"My husband, friends and family take me everywhere, but I wanted to go to this course on my own. Throughout my time on the course I learned to do more things for myself, rather than totally relying on others."

Various speakers talked to us about transport, home security, benefits counselling, opportunities in sport and local groups. The whole course gave me a new confidence and I've even set myself a few goals for this year.

The Need to Talk Living with Sight Loss course is essential. I would challenge anyone to go on that course and say they didn't get something from it."

Gill Jackson, project beneficiary



Gill Jackson from Moira, Northern Ireland has a condition called keratoconus. She was a primary school teacher for 25 years before she lost the remaining sight in her left eye overnight.



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Key outputs :

Develop new cross-border area community support services to support disabled people who are socially isolated (including the use of web based information outlining community assets): 2

Beneficiaries supported by new cross-border area initiatives for disabled people of all ages who are socially isolated: 1,928

Patients availing of e-Health interventions to support independent living in caring communities: 152

Specialist training and development programmes for cross-border area health and social care providers (Staff Trained): 48

“I was at breaking point, I really thought I was going to have a breakdown. I heard about the Need to Talk counselling service and I had eight weeks of counselling with a wonderful lady.

Need to Talk saved my life. There’s no doubt about it. If I hadn’t received counselling, I believe I would’ve taken those tablets. I want to ensure other blind and partially sighted people know about Need to Talk.”

Heather Owens, project beneficiary



Heather Owens from Belfast has been blind since birth and credits the Need to Talk Counselling Service with saving her life.