

Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre Limited

Trustees' report (including directors' report)

For the year ended 31st March 2024

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2019).

In fulfilling the public benefit requirement, the charity trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's statutory public benefit guidance.

Objectives and activities

Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre is a Community Development Project based in a mixed religion estate of approximately 640 dwellings on the outskirts of Coleraine. It sits within the former Cross Glebe Ward which is ranked as within the top 16% social deprivation on the Multiple Deprivation Markers. The original impetus for the Project came from two head teachers of local primary schools and health professionals in the Coleraine area. The Project was established in 1993 to address low levels of preparedness for school.

While it retains a focus on health and educational development of children, the project now puts greater emphasis on parents being involved in identifying their own needs, the needs of their children, and deciding how best to meet those needs.

The vision and mission statement of the Project is to nurture strong, resilient children and families for today, tomorrow and the future; and to support, strengthen and nurture children and families to reach their full potential.

Objectives

- To nurture young children from birth through the provision of high-quality care and learning environments and to ensure they reach their full potential.
- To recognise and support parents in their role as primary educators of their children through home support, parenting programmes and offering high quality care and learning environments.
- To empower parents to seek appropriate advice and guidance to support their family's developmental needs.
- To signpost parents to opportunities for personal and professional development.
- To provide parents with access to information to make informed life choices.
- To develop an increased sense of ownership and belonging for families within their own community.
- To work in partnership with all relevant childcare and family support agencies.

The main areas of activity of the project are:

Community Development including Early Years and Family Support

All the work of the Project starts from the needs of the community as identified by the community.

Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre is open to all sections of the community and an appropriate equal opportunities policy is in place alongside a comprehensive policy suite to ensure good practice and governance. There is a suite of 78 policies which are reviewed annually.

Vision

"To nurture strong, resilient children and families for today, tomorrow and the future"

Mission

"We endeavour to support, strengthen and nurture children and families to achieve their full potential"

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Early Years Provision

- A Preschool Playgroup
- 1-2 Year Old Creche (4 days weekly)
- A Preschool Summer Scheme
- 2 Surestart Development Programmes for 2-3 year olds
- 2 Creches weekly to support Peer Support Groups & Programmes
- Stay & Play Sessions
- Parent Workshops
- Home Visits
- Parent Interviews

In 2023-24, the Project delivered **17 sessions of EY provision to a total of 57 children weekly in term time** in each academic year, with a further **30** children attending **Summer Scheme** in July and August 2023. This was a total of **616 early years sessions**.

In addition to these sessions, Early Years marked events and celebrations through the year with Halloween and Christmas events, outings to parks, the beach, soft play areas and Santa's Grotto. The Project delivered Stay & Play sessions monthly to 2-3 YO Programmes and 2 Parents' Workshops in Playgroup. Each playgroup parent also had an opportunity to participate in a full playgroup day. All programmes used private messaging apps to keep parents updated with what went on in sessions – sharing key photos and messages. All families had home visits, some for inductions and others throughout the year; staff in all sessions met face to face with parents to update on progress.

The Early Years Department received **273 written evaluations** over the course of the year, and parental feedback was 100% positive. Parents commented consistently about the progress their children had made especially in the areas of communication, confidence and socialisation. General parental comments included:

- *My daughter has benefitted greatly from the group, social and physically.*
- *My son has really come out of himself and started to interact with others.*
- *My son's speech and language has come on massively since starting the programme. He has created friendships and looking forward to going and seeing his friends. His progress has come on so well, very happy and proud of his achievements!*
- *My son has become a very intelligent independent little boy. He has especially enjoyed the social aspect but has come a long way in the learning side too.*
- *Everything has been amazing. You girls should be so proud of the work that you do with the kids..*

Our Early Years Provision works towards our high-level outcomes of:

- Children achieve developmental progress.
- Children will have healthier lifestyles.
- Children have appropriate relationships with each other, family and staff.
- Parents play with their children.

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Family Support Service

- Home Visits by Family Support Workers
- Phone calls
- A Women's Peer Support Group
- A variety of Parenting Programmes including:
 - Incredible Years: School Readiness
 - Cook It
 - Solihull Parenting Programme
 - Baby Swim
 - Nurturing
 - Bespoke Parenting Programmes
- Signposting to other services for additional support
- Delivery of Packs & Gifts
- Settling In Book
- Starting School Resources

Over the past year, the Family Support Team delivered a total of **2,020 home visits** and **651 significant phone support sessions** to **550 families** with **children** aged 0-7 with the focus being on **child development and parenting**.

The team gave out a total of **1,421 parenting packs** this year supporting poverty, child development, health and wellbeing. Our number of families has reduced since the previous year due to a drop in birth rate and we began the process of reducing our Family Support hours accordingly.

Alongside the befriending role, there was a strong **signposting and partnership element** within the Family Support. In 2023/24, **the Project signposted families a total of 1,643 times** to external agencies including: **Health Services, Social Services, housing support, financial support, poverty charities, home safety, adult training/education; mental health and supporting children with additional needs**. The Project works closely with Surestart, schools and local partners and **972 times** staff supported families to access their services for **education, childcare, community support, counselling, domestic violence, Speech & Language, Midwifery**.

As well as one-to-one support, the Family Support Team delivered a total of **68 sessions** of evidence-based parenting programmes in partnership with Coleraine Surestart including Cook It, Solihull, Incredible Years School Readiness, Baby Swim along with bespoke sessions.

In addition to our long-standing weekly Women's Group (which met 26 times), we introduced further **Peer Support including 2 Breakfast Clubs and peer support for parents with children with additional needs**. The last included meeting as a group, accompanying parents to an already established group, delivering activities for parents and children to do together and bringing in speakers to provide relevant information. We also introduced **Parent & Child Activity Afternoons** with the adjoining primary school, with our family link worker delivering 9 sessions to P1 & 2 and LS1 parents and children.

Through our peer support and signposting we have supported families to link with a wide variety of organisations including:

- Action Mental Health
- Aware NI

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- Vineyard Compassion
- Causeway Neurodiversity
- Autism NI
- Women's Aid
- Causeway Coast & Glens Council
- Cross-Glebe Community Association

We facilitated Outcome Star Evaluations with 48 families, all showing progression in areas such as physical & emotional health, safety, social networking, routines & boundaries, child development and home finances. Parents also reflect on the impact this support has had on them.

- Engaging in support has helped me learn how to try and deal with emotions of both me and my child.
- I have learned the different age and stage of my child's development and where she is at.
- I have learned to reflect on myself – take more time to assess my behaviour towards a situation.
- I have stopped shopping whilst hungry and it actually worked. I never prepped veg before so I know I am able to do that; this class helped so much.
- I felt heard and respected.

The work of the Family Visiting Team contributes to the parent outcomes of:

- Parents engage with services and local community.
- Parents play with their children.
- Increased parent confidence, knowledge and skills around parenting.
- Increased understanding around health and well-being leading to a healthier lifestyle

Staff

In 2023/24, the Project employed 27 staff, both full and part time - 10 of these are in the Family Support Team; 14 within the Early Years Team including with 'bank staff'; 3 Support Staff (finance, admin and cleaning) plus a Project Manager. We had some changes in staff, two staff off on long term sick and challenges retaining our Sessional Creche Bank. Thanks must go to the team who continued to provide high quality care in their absence, to the department managers who oversaw this and to all those who stepped out of their comfort zones to deliver their area of expertise.

We said goodbye to Melissa McCaughern, who left to spend more time with her family, and to both Judith Moorhead and Tracey Hill who moved to pastures new. Laura Logan stepped up from our sessional creche to become our Playgroup & Creche Leader and we are able to cover the other posts internally until the new financial year.

Premises

The purpose-built premises at Cuilrath Corner was a result of a partnership between the Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre and NEELB and funded by the Childhood Fund; it was officially opened by HRH the Princess Royal in May 1999. The Centre is set within the heart of Harpurs Hill Estate and enables the Project to provide holistic integrated early years care and education for local families within their own community. The Nursery Unit of the adjoining Primary School is housed within this building with the Community Association House directly across the street. The Family Support Team also have staff in 2 other centres across Coleraine to support families living there, close to home.

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The premises have twice been extended as the Project has grown. The Project has extensive outdoor facilities for children's learning, and these are developed each year. Our original lease is up in July 2025, and we are in negotiations to have this extended for a further 25 years. We continue to upgrade the building and maintain it to a high level both inside and out, with essential maintenance for the outdoor area being planned for summer 2024.

Partnership

The Project works in partnerships within the local community in the following ways:

- It was established through a partnership between health professionals, 2 nearby primary schools and the local community.
- It shares a fence with the local Primary School and the building was built in partnership with them and houses their Nursery Unit; their principal is Chair of the Project's committee and the links are further strengthened through the Lottery Funded Family Support Service.
- The Project is one of 5 partners delivering services within or in partnership with Coleraine Surestart Partnership.
- It is the Lead body for Coleraine Surestart, and the Project Manager is the chair, the 0-4 Family Support Service and Surestart Developmental Programme for 2-3-Year-Olds are both funded by Surestart who also funded an extension to the premises to support these services.
- The Project is a member of the local Family Support Hub, with staff attending monthly meetings and taking referrals where appropriate.
- Our Project Manager costs are funded by the Northern Health & Social Care Trust.
- It delivers services for the local Education Authority and the Department of Education.
- Our Project Manager is Vice Chair of the Northern Childcare Partnership.
- 4 members of staff and committee are on the committee of the local Cross - Glebe Community Association and deliver partnership work with them.
- The Project works closely with Social Services supporting families who are referred as being 'at risk'.
- The Project has excellent links with Health Professionals - the early years services have an assigned Health Visitor, the Surestart's Speech & Language Therapist provides advice and support as needed.
- Staff work closely with several poverty charities – the Project is authorised to distribute Food Bank Vouchers and allocate the Council's Keep Warm packs.
- The Project supports several families in partnership with Mid Ulster & Causeway Women's Aid, providing tailored care.

Plans for the future

At the start of 2023/24, our main funding was at risk – DE Early Intervention gave notice that Pathway may cease at the end of June 2023 and Surestart could be greatly reduced. These 2 funding streams make up approximately 80% of our income.

Thankfully, this was temporarily reprieved on June 1st, not however before we had begun redundancy process with some staff. This decision was to be reviewed once there was a sitting government in Stormont to make strategic decisions. Towards the end of the year, we were relieved to be given confirmation that things were more secure but still await final decisions around budgets at high level into 2024/25.

As part of the government's new funding focus on Early Intervention, there are proposed changes to the structure/length of preschool days and support for working parents. 2024/25 will be a year of review and preparation to be able to take on such changes. In the meantime, the Project looks forward to another year of nurturing children, strengthening families and growing

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community, providing high quality early years provision within Harpurs Hill area and family support across the wider area of Coleraine, Portrush and Portstewart.

Financial review

The organisation returned a deficit for the year of £6,674 (2023 - £6,969 surplus). At 31st March 2024 the total funds of the charity amounted to £303,527 (2023 - £310,201) comprising unrestricted income funds of £NIL (2023 - £NIL), unrestricted designated funds of £262,416 (2023 - £284,971) and restricted funds of £41,111 (2023 - £25,230).

Reserves policy

Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre (hereafter named the Project) is keenly aware of the need to secure its viability beyond the immediate future. In order to be able to provide services over the longer term, the Project must be able to absorb setbacks and to take advantage of change and opportunity. The Project will provide for this by putting aside, when they can afford it, some of its current income as a reserve against future uncertainties.

Definition of Reserves

For the purpose of this policy the term "reserves" is applied to that part of the Project's income that is freely available for its general purposes. Reserves are the resources the Project has or can make available to spend for any or all of its purposes once it has met its commitments and covered its other planned expenditure.

The definition excludes unspent money from restricted grants i.e., where a funder has specified what the money must be spent on and the Project does not have the power to spend the money on anything else.

Why hold Reserves?

The Project depends on funding from a variety of sources and this can create an element of uncertainty and also the possibility of unforeseen expenses or liabilities that may emerge. Against this background the Project considers it good practice to seek to build some financial reserves, which will allow us to meet future commitments or unforeseen expenses without a negative impact on our ability to deliver services in the manner planned.

Level of Reserves

- The Project is seeking to ensure that there is sufficient provision for salary costs and running costs, should a funding stream be withdrawn. The Project also seeks to ensure that there is sufficient provision towards potential redundancy payments. The Project should aim to have no less than 3 months and no more than 6 months reserves to deal with loss of funding and/or redundancy.
- The Finance Sub Group will review the reserve balance regularly and make decisions around transfer of unrestricted funds to the reserve.
- The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and amended to reflect the financial climate.
- Unrestricted funds may be earmarked for a particular Project from time to time and may be designated as a separate fund. For example funds could be designated for a specific area that the Project is seeking to build resources for, such as refurbishing the building. The designation of funds will be recorded in the minutes of a Management Committee meeting, as should any subsequent re-designation.

Structure, governance and management

Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre is a company limited by guarantee. The company was incorporated on 4th May 2000. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the company and is governed by its Articles of Association. The liability of its members is limited in that every member of the company undertakes to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 in the event of the company being wound up.

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The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Brenda McAteer	
David Radcliffe (chair)	
Martina Boyle	
Elaine Hegarty	
Maurice Bradley	- Resigned 25/10/23
Lynne Jane Ballentine	- Resigned 06/02/24
Lauren Martin	- Resigned 30/06/24
Niamh Archibald	- Appointed 25/10/23
Laurie Brennan	- Appointed 25/10/23
Suzanne Grant	- Appointed 25/10/23
David Richard Pavey	- Appointed 25/10/23
Tanya Stirling	- Appointed 25/10/23
Jacqueline Hannah Conor	- Appointed 25/10/23
	- Resigned 19/04/24

The directors of the Company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as members of the Management Committee. The Articles do not set out a term of office and therefore at the Annual General Meeting the members of the Management Committee step down but are eligible for nomination again along with any new members also nominated at that time. During the year, if a gap is identified in the Management Committee, a director may be co-opted onto the Board at the Board's discretion.

There is an induction pack for all new committee members and they meet with the Project Manager to discuss the role and commitment and then after election on the Committee for further induction and information.

Key Management Personnel

Sharon Lyons	Project manager
Greta Thompson	Family support manager
Karen Pollock	Childcare manager

The Management Committee meet every six weeks with the Finance & Personnel Sub Group meeting two days prior. Management Accounts are presented and gone through in detail within the sub group with an overview presented at the whole committee meeting. The Project Manager is also tasked with presenting a report on the work undertaken since the previous meeting as well as bringing regular updates on how the Project is performing against the business plan.

Principal Funding Sources

The Project is dependent on securing funding in order to deliver its services. The main funder of the Project is Coleraine Surestart Partnership. Other funders include the Department of Education through a variety of funding schemes including Preschool Expansion funding and Pathway. We also receive funds thorough the Northern Trust, People and Communities (The National Lottery) and Garfield Weston. A small amount is generated through fees and small fundraisers which is used to meet any shortfalls in funding or unexpected expenditure which hasn't been foreseen in the annual budget forecast.

Risk management

The trustees have reviewed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to manage those risks.

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Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre Limited for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that EM Accountants be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

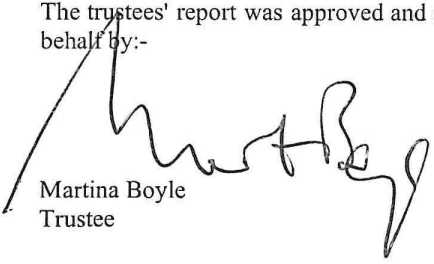
Disclosure of information to auditor


Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions in Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 applicable to the companies subject to the small companies regime.

The trustees' report was approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on October 23rd 2024 and signed on their behalf by:-


Martina Boyle
Trustee


David Radcliffe (Chair)
Trustee