

Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre Limited

Trustees' report (including directors' report)

For the year ended 31st March 2025

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

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 80 policies which are reviewed annually.

Vision

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

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Mission

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

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 2024-25, the Project delivered **17 sessions of EY provision to a total of 53 children weekly in term time** in each academic year, with a further **26** children attending **Summer Scheme** in July and August 2024 along with an occasional creche to support programme delivery. This was a total of **616 early years sessions**.

In addition to these sessions, the Project delivered Stay & Play sessions monthly to 2-3YO Programmes and 2 Parents' Workshops in Playgroup. Each playgroup parent also had an opportunity to participate in a full playgroup day throughout the year. 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 **270 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 child is more sociable and getting along better with his brother. There's been improvement in behaviour and socially with other children his age..*
- *The team are fantastic. You can see they genuinely care about your child..*
- *I found the service 100% and love how they have treated my child like they would treat their own.*
- *My daughters speech and range of words are improving daily. Her play is more imaginative, and she learns the names of people now where she didn't before..*

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
- 2 Peer Support Groups
- 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
- Parent & Child School based activities

Over the past year, the Family Support Team delivered a total of **2,049 home visits** and **759 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 **1,500 parenting packs** this year supporting poverty, child development, health and wellbeing. Our number of families has reduced since the previous years due to a drop in birth rate and we began the process of reducing our Family Support team accordingly.

Alongside the befriending role, there was a strong **signposting and partnership element** within the Family Support. In 2024/25, **the Project signposted families a total of 1,000 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 **1,000 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, Baby Swim along with bespoke sessions.

We delivered 2 weekly **Peer Support including (a drop in Breakfast Clubs and a Women's Group with creche facilities).** We also continued to deliver **Parent & Child Activity Sessions** with the adjoining primary school, with our family link worker delivering 13 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
- Vineyard Compassion
- Causeway Neurodiversity

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

We facilitated Outcome Star Evaluations with 66 families, all showing progression in areas such as physical & emotional health, safety, social networking, routines & boundaries, child development and home finances. At the end of the year, we commissioned an external evaluation on our school-aged Family Support. It concludes:-

The project's contribution to family wellbeing, particularly during critical developmental transitions, is both substantial and strategic. Robust qualitative evidence from focus group analysis highlights a marked difference between the experiences of participating and non-participating families. Beneficiaries reported increased parental confidence, reduced social isolation, enhanced child development, and significant relief from financial and emotional strain. In contrast, families not engaged with the programme described heightened vulnerability, fewer resources, weaker peer networks, and limited support in navigating early years and education systems. This contrast provides compelling evidence of the project's psychological, developmental, and socio-economic impact. It underscores the programme's vital role in closing gaps in formal provision, fostering resilient, self-sustaining peer support systems, and improving children's school readiness and parental wellbeing in a context of significant deprivation. These insights affirm the Project's strategic importance in safeguarding vulnerable families at key life stages.

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 2024/25, the Project employed 28 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 challenges in staff, with our Family Support Manager, our Cleaning & Maintenance Officer, and a member of our 2YOP team off on long term sick and one of our Family Support Workers made redundant. Thanks must go to the team who continued to provide high quality care in their absences and change in working arrangements.

As well as saying goodbye to Andrea Dickson this year, Greta Thompson and Siobhan Crawley also left us, all after long periods of service. We were delighted to welcome Natasha Campbell in Siobhan's place and to look forward to Jill Proctor taking up the post of Family Support Manager from April 25.

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 their homes.

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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 25, 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 carried out and have plans to develop an outdoor sensory play area next year.

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; 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 a member of the Northern Childcare Partnership.
- 3 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

2024/25 saw us contribute to a working group to extend educational attainments and aspirations beyond the school day and estate and, based on the recommendations of our external evaluation, we will be applying for DE funding to extend and develop our P&C project, supporting parents of school aged children, into other areas of Coleraine.

Within Early Years, there is significant change in SEND legislation, guidance and protocols and new curricular guidance, these will be our focus for the new financial year along with preliminary consultations involved in the standardisation of the preschool day.

In the meantime, the Project looks forward to another year of nurturing children, strengthening families and growing community, providing high quality early years provision within the Harpurs Hill area and family support across the wider area of Coleraine, Portrush, and Portstewart.

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Financial review

The organisation returned a deficit for the year of £3,835 (2024 - £6,674 deficit). At 31st March 2025 the total funds of the charity amounted to £299,692 (2024 - £303,527) comprising unrestricted income funds of £NIL (2024 - £NIL), unrestricted designated funds of £260,517 (2024 - £262,416) and restricted funds of £39,175 (2024 - £41,111).

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:

David Radcliffe	- Resigned 23/10/24
Martina Boyle	
Elaine Hegarty	
Lauren Martin	- Resigned 30/06/24
Niamh Archibald	
Laurie Brennan	- Resigned 24/10/24
Suzanne Grant	- Resigned 24/10/24
David Richard Pavey	
Tanya Elder	
Jacqueline Hannah Conon	- Resigned 19/04/24
Barbara Coates	- Appointed 23/10/24
Joe Hutchinson	- Appointed 24/10/24
Nikita Kyle	- Appointed 22/01/25
Shelley Ann Turtle	- Appointed 17/01/25

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 MKP Accountants Ltd be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

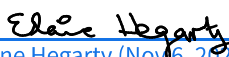
Disclosure of information to auditor

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 November 6th 2025 and signed on their behalf by:-


Elaine Hegarty (Nov 6, 2025 09:04:32 GMT)

Elaine Hegarty
Trustee


Tanya Elder (Nov 6, 2025 12:23:22 GMT)

Tanya Elder
Trustee