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Opening Hours: 9:15 a.m. — 12.15 p.m.

Registered by Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Registration Number: S000532
Registered Charity No: NIC102114

Annual Report
for
Financial Year
ending
30 June 2025

Noah's Ark Playgroup

Office Bearers and Committee Members 2024/2025

Chairperson: Mrs Kerry Geddis

Secretary: Mrs Zane Dowey

Treasurer: Mrs Jocelyn Girvan

Committee Members: Mrs Laura Harbinson; Miss Victoria Crozier; Mrs Kathryn Gamble; Mrs Gail Walker; Mrs Katie Uprichard; Mrs Sarah Sergeant; Mrs Rachel Cameron; Mrs Natalie Lyttle; Miss Melanie Wilson.

Playgroup Leader's Report
for
Noah's Ark Playgroup's Annual Report 2024/2025

Having been associated with Noah's Ark since 1995, when my own children first attended and having served as Playgroup Leader since 2003, I have seen a lot of changes over the years and a lot of children and their families have passed through our doors in that time. It is always a privilege for me to meet new families and to have had the opportunity to work with so many wonderful children in this special place.

On behalf of all the staff at Noah's Ark, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome each and every one of you to our playgroup family. Our members of staff work tirelessly to provide a safe, clean and positive environment for everyone. That continued hard work ensures that every child and their family has a welcoming and happy place to come each morning. A place, where we want everyone to feel at home and to enjoy the Noah's Ark experience.

As staff, we can provide the learning experience and the loving, safe environment, but our playgroup would not exist without the support of our families. So, thank you to all of you, who, by sending your child to Noah's Ark, supports our playgroup – a playgroup which was established in September 1992, so we are now operating in our 34th year, which is such an achievement in itself.

Thank you also to the support of our Management Committee. We need a committee for two reasons – first of all, because we are a registered charity and secondly, we are a community playgroup and we must be committee run in order to receive funding from the Trust, which amounts to £6 for every day that we are operational - a total of about £1000 per year.

As you will know, that amount of money does not go far, so as well as our fees, we need to fundraise throughout the year to keep the playgroup open and we do that fundraising, with the help of our Committee. We have another financially challenging year ahead, when costs are continually rising. We always aim to keep our fees as low as we possibly can, but like other non-profit making organisations, we still need to pay our bills. Regular fundraising ensures that we can keep our fees at a minimum.

I would like to thank our committee, for all their help and support over the past year and thank you to everyone, who has agreed to stay on to help us for another year. It can be difficult to get volunteers on board and we are so grateful to all of you. A special thank you to our long standing office bearers and those committee members, who have been a constant and steady support to the playgroup over many years.

I would like to warmly welcome all new committee members for the incoming year. We wish you all well in your new positions and thank you for coming on board. We hope you find the experience rewarding.

I also want to thank my dear friends and colleagues – Hilary Craig, Ray Coleman and Hannah Gardiner. We have a great team of staff here at Noah's Ark and I thank them for their help and support each day. I know the care and attention that each staff member gives to each and every child in their care every day at this playgroup and how much hard work and dedication we all put into ensuring the success of this playgroup as a whole. A lot of work is out of hours and voluntary and it takes special people to want to do that year after year. Noah's Ark Playgroup is our second home. As members of staff, it is our greatest wish, that when you and your child come to our playgroup each day, that you also feel 'at home' with us. We hope that you do.

Elaine Hutton - Playgroup Leader

Secretary's Report for Noah's Ark Playgroup

Annual Report 2024/2025

The playgroup year started off with staff returning for 2 days of training & set up on Wednesday 28 & Thursday 29 August. Induction visits for the new children took place on Friday 30 August.

Our September newsletter was sponsored by the Girvan family, with our grateful thanks to them.

The new term started on Monday 2 September with 18 children on our register. Our members of staff were Playgroup Leader - Elaine Hutton; Deputy Playgroup Leader - Hilary Craig; Playgroup Assistant - Ray Coleman; and Relief Assistant - Hannah Gardiner.

The N.I. Executive had announced the introduction of the Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme towards the end of the summer of 2024. The playgroup leader duly registered for the scheme and attended the necessary training, to ensure that we were able to provide the service for parents, who were eligible to sign up for the discount scheme.

During September, Hannah Gardiner updated her Food Hygiene training.

We were very grateful for the donation of sundry items and Peppa Pig toys and books from the Cameron family.

The Playgroup had made the decision earlier in the year to cancel the landline phone contract with BT as we could no longer afford the quarterly charges and so, the mobile phone number we had, became our main contact number.

Our October newsletter was sponsored by the Hawthorne family, with our grateful thanks to them.

During the month of October, parents received a Settling-In Report for their child, keeping them informed of how well their child was progressing, after their first month at the playgroup.

A student, Ellie Hinds, commenced her work placement with us on 7 October. Ellie had been a past pupil of the playgroup.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday 15 October at 8pm at the playgroup. 10 people attended and a committee of 12 people was duly elected: Chairperson: Kerry Geddis; Treasurer: Jocelyn Girvan; Secretary: Zane Dowe; Committee Members: Rachel Cameron, Sarah Sergeant, Katie Uprichard, Gail Walker, Melanie Wilson, Laura Harbinson, Victoria Crozier, Kathryn Gamble and Natalie Lyttle. After the short business part of the evening, a light supper was served.

During October we gratefully received several donations:

- 4 framed pictures were donated for us to sell, by the Tamcsu family.

- A new Little Tikes Dino Car was donated from the Mallett family
- A bag full of sundry items was donated by the Cameron family

The playgroup was closed from Monday 28 October – Friday 1 November inclusive for the half-term break.

The playgroup returned on Monday 4 November. Annual Reports for 2023/2024 had been printed and copies were left in the hallway for parents or visitors to take.

The first Monitoring Report from the Playgroup Leader was emailed to the Committee on 7 November.

It was decided that our Christmas fundraisers would involve selling Fireside Quiz sheets; organising a Marks & Spencer Christmas Hamper Raffle; holding a sponsored Christmas Jumper Week; as well as selling Playgroup Calendars to help raise money for playgroup funds. It was agreed that we would also purchase engraved pens and distribute them to parents to sell in the spring term. As in previous years, staff made a Wish List of sundry items, required for the playgroup, which parents could buy in lieu of staff Christmas presents. The committee had also considered making 'I Spy' bottles to sell, but this never materialised.

In November, we gratefully received donations of toys and puzzles from the Dowey family and a selection of books, foam mats and vehicles from the Geddis family.

Our December newsletter was sponsored by the Pink Studio Design, with grateful thanks to Victoria Crozier.

During the first week of December, the playgroup children posted their letters to Santa and there was great excitement as we put up the Christmas tree and decorated the playgroup for Christmas. A post box was also left in the hallway for children to post cards to their friends.

Parents received their child's observations, which were sent home for them to read, as well as a short progress report on their child's first term.

Every Christmas, since the playgroup opened in 1992, we have been delivering hampers of groceries to local pensioners. A total of 21 bags of groceries, donated by parents and staff, were delivered by the playgroup staff, on behalf of the children, to the local pensioners early December. A Christmas card, handmade in the playgroup by each child, was included in the hamper of food.

In return, we received donations from some of the pensioners for our playgroup funds, with thanks to Mrs Rutherford, Mr King and Mr Steen. It was with much sadness that we learnt of the passing of both Mr King and Mr Steen in the New Year.

The term finished with a Christmas Party Week, at the end of which, each child received a Christmas gift and party box. Each child also received a selection box, donated by Waringstown LOL 83. The party food was kindly provided by the staff and committee and a great time was had by all.

Our last day of term was Friday 20 December. We had 26 children on our register.

Our fundraising in December raised the following amounts of money for playgroup funds:

- Marks & Spencer Christmas Hamper Raffle - £95.10
- Christmas Fireside Quiz Sheets - £97
- Christmas Jumper Week- £37
- Calendars - £229
- Donations from pensioners - £60
- Christmas donations for new toys - £250 with grateful thanks to the Marno family, the Gamble family, the McCullough family, the Marshall family, the Lyttle family, the Laird family, the Matchett family and the Croan family.

We also received a donation of £100 from pensioners, Mr. & Mrs. Quigg, who give money to charity each year, instead of sending Christmas cards. We are so grateful that they chose our playgroup this year again.

Our sincere thanks to the committee for donating the hamper and food items for our Hamper Raffle. Thank you also to those who donated prize items for the Fireside Quiz i.e. Mrs Alex Keegan from AK Hair Design, Waringstown, for donating a hair voucher and also Mr Sean Hughes, from Foyduff Service Station in Middletown, for donating a box of sweets and a box of biscuits. Thank you to everyone who sold quiz sheets or raffle squares for us. Your help and support was greatly appreciated.

We gratefully received a selection of sundry items from parents from our Christmas Wish List. We also received other donations:

- A selection of sundry and craft items from the Uprichard family
- A selection of craft items from Janine Lyttle
- A selection of puzzles, toys, books and costumes from the Scullion family

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Our new term commenced on Monday 6 January 2025 with 31 children on our register. Our January newsletter was sponsored by Lisnasure Home Interiors and Flooring, with grateful thanks to the Lyttle & Gamble families.

We gratefully received a donation of sundry items from the Cameron family and a monetary donation from the Patterson family.

The annual grant from the Trust was received and this amounted to £1086.

A photographer from CS Moments in Ballymena came to the playgroup on Thursday 23 January to take individual professional photos of each child. A total of £190 was raised for playgroup funds.

The Playgroup was closed on Friday 24 January, when Storm Eowyn was declared a major incident by the PSNI and a red weather warning was given. Parents received a refund for the closure.

The Playgroup Leader's second Monitoring Report was emailed to the Committee on 21 January 2025.

Fundraising for this term would be playgroup photographs; selling printed pens and an Easter Hamper Raffle. It was also agreed that we would hold our usual summer term 20p/smartie tube fundraiser and we discussed having a sponsored 'Cycle/Dance with Teddy' fundraising event at the end of the year, during our Teddy Bears' Picnic Week.

Our February newsletter was sponsored by Valley Engineering Services, with our grateful thanks to Mr Stephen Girvan.

The annual update of our Fire Risk Assessment for the playgroup was carried out.

Also this month, the Annual Monitoring Report for the Charity Commission was completed and submitted.

5 Noah's Ark printed pens were distributed to each family to sell, raising a total of £440 for playgroup funds.

The playgroup was closed from 10 -14 February inclusive for the half term break.

When we returned from half-term, we were informed that our student would not be returning, as she had decided to pursue a different career choice.

Staff members, Ray and Hannah, updated their safeguarding training.

Our March newsletter was sponsored by Lisnasure Farm Ice-Cream, with grateful thanks to the Lyttle family.

In celebration of World Book Day at the start of March, a book token was distributed to each child and children were invited to bring along their favourite book and dress up if they wish.

Environmental Health carried out a routine unscheduled inspection of our kitchen, premises and management systems on 4 March and we were delighted to be awarded yet again the highest rating of 5 – Very Good.

All 4 members of playgroup staff updated their epi-pen training on 12 March.

The playgroup closed on Monday 17 March for St Patrick's Day.

Children's observations for the term were sent home again to parents mid-March.

The Jordan family donated a new children's outside play kitchen and tea set, which has further enhanced our outdoor play area. We also gratefully received a donation of books and a wide selection of office stationery from the Uprichard family and a variety of sundry items from the Cameron family.

The Trust Annual Inspection took place on Wednesday 9 April. This year's Inspection Area was "Care – Part 1". It was another very positive inspection and credit must be given to the continued dedication and hard work of the staff. A copy of the Playgroup's current Inspection Report is always available in the hallway for parents' perusal.

We raffled an Easter Hamper, which was made up of donations from the staff and committee and raised £121 for playgroup funds. Our grateful thanks are extended to everyone, staff and committee, who sourced or donated items, which included a varied selection of Easter crafts, treats, drinks, Easter eggs and sweets.

We also sold crème eggs inside hand-knit animal characters, all kindly donated by Mrs Barbara Simpson, and raised £84 for playgroup funds.

In the last week of term, the Easter Bunny paid his annual visit to the playgroup and caused great excitement by leaving the children a crème egg in the Easter baskets they had made. We thank Ray Coleman for donating the eggs for the children.

Our term finished on Friday 11 April with 36 children on our register.

After 10 days of closure over Easter, the summer term commenced on Monday 28 April 2025.

Our relief staff member, Hannah Gardiner, having completed the Manchester marathon in 4hrs 7mins over the Easter break, brought in her medal to show the children, who loved trying it on.

Committee Members were emailed their third Monitoring Report from the Playgroup Leader on 28 April.

Due to the increase in minimum wages and the soaring cost of general expenses over the past year, it was agreed that unfortunately it was necessary to increase fees by £1 per session for 2025/2026 year, but we would keep the full week option cost at £13 per session, to try and encourage more families to pick this option. The annual update of policies was also agreed.

Our May newsletter was sponsored by the Irwin family, with our grateful thanks to them. It must also be said that throughout the year, we received a wide selection of donations from the Irwin family, including a box filled with autumn/woodland themed books and resources, a variety of paint/craft materials and a donation of live caterpillars, which we nurtured and watched, while they grew and developed into 5 beautiful butterflies, which were later released into the sunshine one fine day at the start of the summer.

The playgroup was closed on Monday 5 May for the May Day bank holiday.

Questionnaires were distributed to families, along with the May newsletters, asking parents to evaluate our service. Feedback was positive and encouraging for the staff.

Open Days for 2025/2026 enrolment year were held on Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 May.

The playgroup was closed again on Monday 26 May for the Spring Bank Holiday.

At the beginning of June, we were delighted to receive the wonderful gift of new upholstered seating cushions for our library area. These were made and donated by a parent, Mr Jonny Mallett, with our grateful thanks to him.

During the last week of term, as part of our Teddy Bears' Picnic Party Week, we held a 'Sing, Cycle and Danceathon With Teddy' fundraiser, raising the magnificent total of £957 for playgroup funds. Each child received their own medal for every day that they took part. Thank you also to staff and committee members, who donated food and treats for the children.

On our last day, Gourmet Grill donated individual tubs of whipped ice-cream and a variety of sprinkles and sauces for each child and member of staff.

Parents also received their child's End of Year Work Folder and Booklet, which is a selection of each child's work undertaken during their time at Noah's Ark. A progress report and complete set of observations were also included in their booklet. Every child received a party bag and the gift of a book, as a reminder of their time at Noah's Ark.

Our playgroup year ended on Thursday 26 June with 36 children on our register.

Our remaining fundraising totals for the year were as follows:

- Newsletter Sponsorship for the year raised £425
- Loose change collected throughout the year in our charity box at NISA Petrol Station totalled £136
- Sale of new uniforms amounted to £496
- Sale of pre-loved uniforms amounted to £200
- 20p fundraiser raised £290
- Sale of handknit children's woolly hats raised £5
- Sale of stone inspired framed picture £10
- Sale of wooden bookmarks raised £13
- Donations given throughout the year amounted to £1020, with grateful thanks to the Patterson family, the Uprichard family, the Girvan family, the Duffy/Kelly family, the Jordan family and the Dowey family.

Our sincere thanks also go to all those parents, staff and committee members, who donated money, groceries, resources, cleaning products, handtowels, printing paper, as well as craft and art materials during the year.

The playgroup staff and committee are very grateful for all the donations and fundraising support received throughout the year and they thank everyone involved.

And that concludes the Secretary's Report for the year ending 30 June 2025.

Zane Dowey – Playgroup Secretary

Noah's Ark Playgroup
Charity no: NIC102114
Treasurer's Report for Financial Year
Ending 30 June 2025

Noah's Ark Playgroup is a non-profit making registered charity. All money received by Noah's Ark goes back into the running and the upkeep of the playgroup. Because we are committee run and have a written constitution, we receive, from the Trust, a small grant of only £6 for each day that we are open (which amounts to approximately £1000 each year). We receive no funding from any other official body.

However, as you can imagine, this grant alone would not sustain us, so, along with income from the fees we receive from parents, we also supplement our income during the year with fundraising.

Our fundraising total for 2024/2025 was down £300 from the previous financial year, but our increase in donations for the year, more than made up for this shortfall. Parents and local businesses have kindly supported us during the year with monthly newsletter sponsorship and donations, for which, we are always very grateful.

Our total income for the financial year ending 30 June 2025 was **£50,509.90**

This consisted of the following:

Fees received from parents - **£40,669.65**

Fees received from Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme - **£2,256**

Administration Payment for operating NICSS (Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme) - **£1,024.25**

Milk Refund - **£378.90**

Fundraising (including the sale of uniforms) - **£4,075.10**

Annual Trust Grant - **£1,086.00**

Donations - **£1,020**

Our total expenditure for year ending 30 June 2025 was **£49,531.97**

This consisted of the following:

Staff costs (4 staff members) which includes salaries, pensions and payments to Inland Revenue - **£41,199.76**

Premises (including maintenance, rent & telephone costs) - **£4,977.30**

Milk - **£440.40**

Insurance - **£655.33**

Consumables - **£492.25**

Fundraising costs, including purchase of uniforms - **£545.94**

Early Years' Membership subscription - **£96**

Equipment - **£68.54**

Other expenses (which include groceries, cleaning materials, bank charges, postage costs, Christmas & end of year gifts for children, training costs, purchase of stationery i.e. sessional register and accounts book; door alarm, pension annual admin fee; credits for text messaging service, staff name badges) - **£1,056.45**

Staff costs increase each financial year with the increase in minimum wage rates, but it must be noted that we reduced our outgoings for the year with staff working voluntarily on reduced pay during the months of September and October. Staff also generously donated sundry items throughout the year such as groceries, cleaning materials and craft items.

The profit of income over expenditure for the year was **£977.93**

Our total assets at the end of the financial year were listed as **£8,253.41**

And this consisted of:

Equipment valued at - **£131.30**

Cash in the bank - **£8,099.69**

And petty cash in hand - **£22.40**

Our playgroup accounts are checked and independently verified each year and we thank Mrs Carol McAlister for doing this for us.

A copy of our audited accounts is available for perusal.

Jocelyn Girvan - Playgroup Treasurer

Noah's Ark Playgroup NIC102114
Income and Expenditure Account
For Year Ending 30 June 2025

Income		2025		2024
Fees received from parents	£	40,669.65	£	40,841.00
NICSS Subsidy	£	2,256.00		
NICSS Admin Payment	£	1,024.25		
Milk Refund	£	378.90	£	385.80
Fundraising	£	4,075.10	£	4,376.60
Grants	£	1,086.00	£	1,074.00
Donations	£	1,020.00	£	237.00
		£50,509.90	£	46,914.40

Expenditure		2025		2024
Salaries (inc. NICS/PAYE/Pension)	£	41,199.76	£	37,537.24
Premises (rent, maintenance & phone)	£	4,977.30	£	4,985.25
Milk	£	440.40	£	480.00
Insurance	£	655.33	£	572.64
Consumables	£	492.25	£	781.51
Fundraising (incl purchase of uniforms)	£	545.94	£	485.24
Equipment bought during year	£	68.54	£	114.93
Membership Subscriptions	£	96.00	£	91.00
Other Expenses	£	1,056.45	£	601.74
(see page 4 attached for breakdown)				
		£49,531.97	£	45,649.55

Profit/Deficit of Income over Expenditure	£	977.93	£	1,264.85
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