

## **Small Wonders Childcare**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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) (effective 1 January 2019).

#### **Mission Statement**

Small Wonders childcare supports the rights of the child and are committed to practice, which protects children from harm as outlined in articles 19 and 34 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and in compliance with the Children (NI) Order 1995. Small Wonders accept that the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration before all else. It is our intention to create a child safe environment where children are valued in every respect.

#### **Aims**

- (1) To provide quality care and comfort in a safe friendly environment.
- (2) To offer an early learning programme through the intervention of planned play activities that allow children to grow and enable them to reach their full potential.
- (3) To protect and encourage children and focus on positive behaviour.
- (4) To help develop children's confidence and a programme where children can value themselves and others through play.
- (5) To provide opportunities for creative and imaginative play where children explore their own identity and help build their self-esteem.

## **Small Wonders Childcare**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Objectives**

- (1) To ensure all persons providing direct care for children are vetted by a police check through Access NI.
- (2) To ensure staff caring for children are experienced, qualified, caring and professional.
- (3) To provide effective management for staff, trainees and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- (4) To promote equal opportunities through our policies and to reflect this philosophy through practice and delivery of care in our early years setting.
- (5) To develop a partnership with parents by involving parents in children's care and sharing information and concerns.
- (6) To develop children's awareness of respect for diversity through play and books.
- (7) To develop a healthy eating programme and support children's health and well being.
- (8) To promote a strict no smoking (including vaping) policy and endeavour to create a healthy smoke free environment for children.

The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

## **Small Wonders Childcare**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

##### **Achievements To Date**

- 1 All staff now minimum NVQ Level 3 qualified

14 staff level 3 qualified. 2 apprentices working towards level 3. 1 bank staff working towards level 2.

- 2 Staff now qualified to Level 5

3 staff now qualified

- 3 Our cook is NVQ Level 2 qualified

Currently no cook employed. Manager prepares snacks and serves lunches. Outside caterer "Eat Well" brings hot meals to the setting. All staff hold level 2 food hygiene certificate.

- 4 Relief staff within our bank of staff

Currently 2 apprentices and 1 bank staff

- 5 Small Wonders is now in its 17th year of operation

- 6 All staff achieved NVQ Level 2 Award in Food Safety & Catering

- 7 Our 5\* status from Environmental Health has been maintained

- 8 A wrap-around service has been established to provide services for children aged 0-11 years

- 9 All Small Wonders services/ facilities are running to full capacity with waiting lists.

Numbers are steady and waiting list open for 2026

- 10 We continue to provide a welcoming environment for all with a cross-community/ multi cultural ethos running throughout all of our services and facilities

- 11 Minimum Childcare Standards are implemented and adhered to on a daily basis.

- 12 Small Wonders continue to work towards self-sustainability

We continue to work in partnership with sponsored day care/ social services providing day care for children in need. New shutters, CCTV, security alarms, paintwork and new outdoor play area all completed this year.

#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

##### **Financial position**

The company had net outgoing resources for the year of £6,784 (2024: net incoming resources of £9,849), which reflected the increase in trading activities during the year. Unrestricted funds decreased by £6,956, while restricted funds increased by £172.

## **Small Wonders Childcare**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

#### **FUTURE PLANS**

Small Wonders will continue to grow as a social economy business with a strong staff team and Management Committee. The business operates out of 4 Craven Street as the building in Morpeth Street was handed back to the landlord after the completion of the new Shakill Shared Women's Centre on Lanark Way. The services previously delivered within this space are now housed in this new shared space adjacent to the peace wall on Lanark Way.

We will continue to promote and advertise our services in order to meet the needs of both the business and the parents who use this facility for the quality care of their children. We will promote the unique cross-community aspect of our facility as a shared space and welcoming space for all.

The childcare provided and the facilities are set at a very high standard and are regularly inspected and regulated by Social Services and by Environment Health. All policies and procedures are reviewed annually and all new policies are approved by the Management Committee and implemented by Small Wonders Manager.

#### **Risk Management**

The Management Committee has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established and is updated at least annually. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces.

These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the business. The policies in place are -

Absence of the Manager

Accidents - Prevention, Reporting, Recording and Notification

Additional Needs

Adverse weather conditions/winter policy

Allegations against Staff

Annual leave policy

Behaviour Policy/Anti-Bullying Policy

Child Protection Flow Chart

Child Protection Policy

CCTV

Children's Admissions

Code of Conduct

Conflict of interest

Control of Infection

Complaints

Confidentiality

Consent

Data Protection/Record Management

Diet and Nutrition Policy

Drop off and collection

E-safety, networking, and mobile phone

Employment and Recruitment

Equality

Exclusion of sick/infectious children

Exclusion Hand Foot and Mouth

Fire Evacuation

First Aid/Medication

## **Small Wonders Childcare**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

If a staff/child becomes unwell due to covid19, tests positive

Healthy Eating

Health and Safety

Hygiene and cross infection/covid19

ICT and internet safety

Intimate /Personal Care

Lost child policy

Maintenance and Replacement of Play Equipment

Managing Emergencies

Management of Medicines

Management of Records/Client Access to Records

Management of Risks Associated with the Care of Individual Service Users

Meal and snack time policy

Mobile Phones

Participation

Photography and Videography

Play

Procedure if a parent/carer comes to collect a child whilst under the influence of drugs/alcohol

Reporting nonattendance of SDC children

Security of the Setting

Smoking

Social Networking

#### **Staffing:**

Behaviour and conduct

Clothing uniform

Meetings, Records, rotas

Discipline/code of conduct

Grievance

Induction

Supervision and Appraisal

Training and Development

Transport - (collection from schools and nurseries) - Provision and Use

Travel consent - Outing/journey

Whistle Blowing.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Governing document**

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

### **Recruitment and appointment of new trustees**

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. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association the members of the Management Committee are elected to serve for a period of three years after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting.

None of the Trustees have any beneficial interest in the company.

## **Small Wonders Childcare**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **Organisational structure**

SWC has a Management Committee of up to 5 members who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. At present the Committee has 5 members from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the charity.

Chairperson	Nikki McCullough
Secretary	Lesley-Anne Kinnon
Director	Margaret Smith
Director	Joan Mercer
Director	Cora Harrison

A scheme of delegation is in place and day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rest with Small Wonders Manager, four Room Leaders and full staff team. Small Wonders Manager is Line Managed by Shankill women's Centre Senior Management. Small Wonders Manager is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met.

##### **Induction and training of new trustees**

New trustees will usually be familiar with the work of the Daycare having been associated with it in some form. Induction takes place by one to one meetings with the Chairperson and the CEO to ascertain more information about the management of the Centre and their role within it.

They are also furnished with and given an explanation on various documentation: Memorandum and Articles,

Organisational plans and Annual Reports, latest minutes and any up to date development plans. Ongoing training is offered to management committee on an ongoing and ad hoc basis. This is usually provided under the membership of NICVA.

##### **Reserves Policy**

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's expenditure. The Trustees considers that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

## **Small Wonders Childcare**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **Related parties**

##### **Early Years - The Organisation for Young Children**

Early Years is the largest organisation in Northern Ireland for young children. We are a non-profit making organisation and have been working since 1965 to promote high quality childcare for children aged 0-12 and their families.

Currently Early Years provides information and training for parents, childcare providers, employers and local authorities. We hope this website will help you to find out more about early childcare and education.

##### **Social Services**

The Belfast Trust is committed to providing services to support children, young people and their families. We aim to work with and support families so that children can live in a safe, nurturing environment. The Trust offers a range of services to families where children may not thrive and reach their full potential without some help - this includes children in need of protection. We are also responsible for children who, for a variety of reasons, cannot remain with their own families and who are "looked after" by the Trust.

The registration process requires the Trust to complete vetting checks on people who are applying to look after children or people who will be living on, or regular visitors to, the premises where children are to be looked after. Access NI is the legally mandated organisation, which the Trust uses to process the vetting checks on prospective childminders, prospective and registered owners of private day care and the committee chairpersons of group day care, which are not privately owned.

##### **Employers for Childcare**

Are a campaigning charity which developed from a community project set up in 1998, encouraging employers to implement family friendly policies in the workplace. The founding Chief Executive Officer quickly identified the barrier that the lack of affordable, quality childcare presents to working parents. Our ethos is to address childcare, not as a social issue, but as a labour market and economic issue.

#### **EVENTS SINCE THE END OF THE YEAR**

Information relating to events since the end of the year is given in the notes to the financial statements.

#### **TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT**

The trustees (who are also the directors of Small Wonders Childcare for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

## **Small Wonders Childcare**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

#### **TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT - continued**

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 charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

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

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

#### **AUDITORS**

The auditors, Lynn Drake & Co Ltd, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 29 September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Ms M Smith - Trustee