

Southern Area Foster Care Group (SAFCG) AGM 24/9/25

Directors' Report

We began with 11 trustees from our last AGM (25/09/24). We also had 4 co-opted associate members; 2 social workers, Melanie Coffee SHSCT Newry team and Bronagh McCloskey SHSCT Armagh/Dungannon team, also Annie Clarke Wellbeing Officer SHSCT and Adrian Patterson BHP Accountants Newry, financial advisor. As this year comes to a close, we extend a huge thank you to all trustees, associated members, managers and all our foster carers and families who give up their time. Without them this group would not exist.

Development of our group remains our priority and a lot of effort goes on behind the scenes organising events and securing grants and funding to allow us to progress as a group.

Summary of events since last AGM

- Annual coffee morning in Moy 7/9/24. This raised £338.15 for our funds.
- Afternoon tea and bric-a-brac sale in Moy 20/9/25. This raised £445. The PSNI kindly attended and the children were allowed to look in and around their vehicle. There was also Ice cream, a balloon artist and a lady making bracelets for the children. These events bring foster families together and as they are open to the public they raise awareness and are a possible incentive to recruitment.
- The SHSCT in conjunction with SAFCG held a Carers' Appreciation Day on 20/9/24 in the beautiful surroundings of Murlan House where we had an array of speakers and demonstrations. The food served was superb, there was also a raffle and each carer received a goody bag to take home. Feedback from carers was phenomenal so well enjoyed.
- Some of our trustees also helped out at Halloween and Christmas events run by SHSCT. The Halloween event was held at Woodview Pumpkin Farm and the Christmas celebration was held in Brownlow House in Lurgan. Both were lovely seasonal events.
- A half term event was held at The Rink in Portadown on 12/2/25. 63 children attended and enjoyed the skating. Free drinks were provided and several trustees brought home made traybakes, which were enjoyed by all.
- The St Patrick's Day Parade in Newry (17/3/25) was well attended. Families walked in the parade with Melanie Coffee, Elaine Martin and Lisa Patton from SHSCT in attendance. We had a massive banner at the front with the headline "Could you foster?" Everyone was smiling and wearing the traditional emerald green. These events help raise awareness in the public domain of the need for more foster carers. We had refreshments afterwards at Finnegan & Sons coffee shop and the Trust thanked everyone for taking part.
- Our annual "Picnic in the Park" was held on 7/6/25 and was well attended. This event proves invaluable as it gives siblings in different foster homes the opportunity to get together in an informal setting. It also helps carers to support each other. Special thanks to Mary McGrane and her family who go

above and beyond in supplying the sweet cart, chairs etc and of course the edible bakes! We cannot forget to mention the special guests Teddy Bear and his friend Dougie the dog, who surprised the kids and entertained them with a singsong when the rain started and we had to take shelter.

- The Mill NI summer event was held on 18/8/25 in 2 sessions. The children played Nerf games and Splat Attack. Food was available afterwards for the children and tea/coffee for the carers. Great fun for the kids and a chance to catch up for the carers.
- Walking groups continue in both Armagh and Newry; Armagh first Friday in month and Newry second Friday. The monthly meeting enables carers to meet informally to support each other and helps improve mental and emotional health. Groups do not meet during summer holidays in July/August.
- The Armagh/Dungannon support group meets monthly (Sep-June). These meetings are open to all foster carers, kinship carers and adoptive parents. They are a great support network for all carers and thanks are due to trustees Mary McGrane and Kelly McAteer who formed and promoted these groups. Unfortunately, the Newry group has ceased due to very poor attendance.

Fundraising

- Coffee morning (Sep 24) and afternoon tea (Sep 25) raised a combined total of £783.15
- Black Santa donation £1500
- St Patrick's Day attendance £200
- Cash for Kids grant £4110

Trustee Changes

Mrs Louise McMahon has stepped down as Treasurer and Ms Lorraine Hughes has been elected as the new group treasurer.

Mrs Kelly McAteer has stepped down as secretary and Mrs Connie McCusker has been elected as the new group secretary.

Both Mrs McMahon and Mrs McAteer have also stepped down as trustees and we thank them both for all their service to the SAFCG over the years.

Assets and Liabilities

The SAFCG had no assets or liabilities as at 31st March 2025.

Signed:

Chairperson

Signed:

Treasurer