

# CHILDCARE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT

*April 2020- March 2021*



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Greenway Women's Group

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## Childcare Manager Statement

This report will demonstrate the work that the childcare department has presented within the years 2020/2021, providing Sessional Day Care to children aged between 0-3 and their families. I have been in a managerial position since January 2015.

This year has been a rollercoaster of up and downs, Covid in itself brought so much challenge along with many obstacles. From the start we decided to remain open and throughout the beginning of the pandemic we worked with keyworker families and those deemed vulnerable, whilst it was difficult for all it was also a time of learning and development as we adapted to new ways of working digitally and reflected on our practice and provision, looking at what we could change that would benefit staff and children alike.

Further to this we had the news that 3 of our staff members were starting or extending their families, this brought a lot of positivity to the team, nice news after a hard year. Whilst we are still very much experiencing Covid and the various variants we are pleased to say the resilience of the staff, parents and children shone through and we focused on positive outcomes and keeping each other safe and we will continue to do this no matter what may come.

We also had the positive news that the building work on the derelict would begin. The building funded via SIF project is now complete and ready for use. We are currently going through the registration process as well as applying for funding to recruit additional staff members.

I continued to network with other organisations within the sector and as part of East Belfast Early Years Network have been able to access some wonderful and relevant training. In particular I have taken part in the development of an Early Learning Community for East Belfast. We also continue to take examples of practice from The Curiosity Approach which has really helped us develop our creative thinking and we have started to embed 'In the moment planning' into our practice.

I will finish by saying we hope to continually develop our practice to provide the most effective, enabled and stimulating environment, building strong foundations for children to flourish.

*J. Leetch*

## Childcare Team 2020/2021



**Joanne Leetch**  
Childcare Manager



**Amie Kane**  
Practice Room  
Leader



**Lynsey Stewart**  
Practice Room  
Leader



**Natalie Horrocks**  
Childcare Assistant



**Suzanne Watson**  
Childcare  
Assistant



**Shannon Flynn**  
Childcare  
Assistant



**Karen Downey**  
Childcare Assistant



**Jodie Wilson**  
Childcare  
Assistant



**Trudi Kenny**  
Childcare  
Assistant

## Working through a pandemic

As the reality of Covid 19 took hold a decision was made to continue to provide a provision for those within the community who needed it and were eligible as keyworkers or deemed vulnerable. From April 2020 until June 2020, we worked at 25% of our normal capacity with roughly 6-8 children attending daily. This allowed us to reduce the number of staff onsite at any one time. We wanted to provide the children with items to use whilst at home, so we created activity bags which included craft materials, a small toy, an Easter egg and information of things to do at home and helpline details for parents/carers.



On the days when staff worked from home, they used their time to create videos which we uploaded to Facebook and the child's individual learning journal. We also provided weekly sessions of live zoom, and these were planned around a specific theme and included a story, art activity, songs or physical activity.



## Working through a pandemic- Message of Hope



At a time when everything felt difficult, we wanted to stay strong for the children we cared for, and we wanted to model how to share a message of hope. Each child in attendance and all staff members decorated some puzzle pieces, staff added messages of hope and we made a display with the meaning behind it being that when we all come together, stay connected and strong we can get through the hard days.



We added these along with a rainbow for children to spot on their daily walk. We also left paper for others to take and create at home and then add to our rainbow.

## Celebration Day



Unfortunately, due to lockdown and Covid 19 restrictions our annual celebration day which usually takes place every June had to be cancelled. We did not want the children to leave without receiving acknowledgement of their time at Greenway so instead we arranged a celebration walk by nin June 2020 which involved giving each child who was due to leave to go to nursery an opportunity to say goodbye. This was done by giving each parent and child a specific time slot to ensure only one family at a time was present. All appropriate PPE was worn by the childcare staff. We decorated a large notice board commemorating the date and children could get their photograph beside it as a memento. The board was then placed outside the setting and a small gift of a book, sweet tube and a certificate was given to each child. All items were quarantined for a period of 72 hours before giving it to the children. This event was attended by 20 children.

## September Inductions

In September 2020, a mixture of Sponsored Day Care (SDC), Women's Centre Childcare Fund (WCCF) and Pathway spaces became available. With an extensive waiting list already in place we welcomed new families into our childcare department on a first come first served basis. In total 11 new boys and 12 new girls enrolled.

In terms of WCCF we offer 125 x 2hr sessions. Eligibility for these places are as follows:

- In receipt of Income Support/Unemployed and registered for JSA **and**
- Engaged in part-time (less than 16 hours per week) paid voluntary/community development work.
- Engaged in vocational or educational development or training.
- Engaged in personal development training **or**
- *Within the last 12 months, progressed into employment following a period of unemployment.*

We then offer Pathway places to parents who are low- income however would not fall under WCCF criteria.

We provide Belfast Trust with sponsored day care (SDC) places in line with our service level agreement and are contracted to hold 10 x4-hour sessions per week. During the SDC contract meeting Mary Murphy who represents BHSCT once again spoke highly of the provision and services we provide particularly from feedback from the families accessing the service.

We are usually at this point fully subscribed and we so for both SDC and Pathway places, unfortunately due to social distancing restrictions we could only enroll a certain amount of women to each class, this then directly impacted the amount of WCCF spaces we could fill.



## Halloween

During October we entered a 'circuit breaker' lockdown we made the decision to stay open for those who choose to send their children. We wanted to give the children a level of normality and decided to host our traditional 'fancy dress' week. Children could come into the setting on any day they attended dressed up in a costume. We had some fabulous outfits! We ensured snacks for the goodie bags were all in sealed packets and quarantined for 72hrs. The children were then taken around the centre to follow the clues to where the treats were. This was then sent home so parents can decide if their child is allowed the treats.

We also had plenty of fun Halloween themed activities including pumpkin sensory play, themed cooking activities and books placed around the areas of the room.



## Santa's Grotto

Santa's Grotto this year was affected by Covid restrictions and as we were limited to the amount of people we could have onsite we made the decision to provide a Santa video virtually. We asked parents to send in details of what their child wanted for Christmas to add a personal touch to the video.

We were very thankful to George Sharpe who once again took on the persona of Santa and created a wonderful video for the children. We then sent this video through the Tapestry Learning Journal to all of the children. Santa also gave a passing visit to the rooms and waved at the children from the door way and each child was provided with a selection box and Christmas sticker book.

We also ensured that plenty of christmas themed activities were happening including making reindeer food and snowman playdough.



## In the Moment Planning

From November 2020 we changed how we plan and assess to 'In the moment planning', previously we would use monthly themes and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum areas of learning to plan in advance but for a long time we have felt that this wasn't effective and was quite difficult for us to carry out due to the type of sessional provision we provide. By using this new method, we feel the setting is more child-led and will give us an opportunity to work in better partnership with parents/carers.

We have changed the environment to make it more enabling, we have mainly set up workstations which have a variety of items for the child to choose to use during their play, and this will give the autonomy / free-choice over their play as they are following their interests. We will still setup some structured invitations to play however these will be limited. . We know it will be trial and error at first, this is a big change in the way we work as practitioners but we know it will be worth it as it puts your child to the forefront.

### The parent's/carer's role in our new system

Each week a key person will have a 'focus child'. We value the knowledge and understanding of parents and will ask them to add to Tapestry 10 photos/videos of the child playing/engaged in an activity at home. They will also be asked the following questions:

- 1. Is there anything significant happening in your child's life at the moment e.g. visits, holidays, new pets, family celebrations?**
- 2. Is there anything you would like to tell us about your child e.g. new likes or dislikes?**
- 3. Is there anything you would like to ask us about your child's progress and development?**

We plan to work in this way because ... "Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week. It is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest – the 'teachable moment' – that the skilful adult makes a difference. By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be always alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (assessment), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's well-being and learning

(planning for the next moment).” (Taken from National Standards document Learning, Playing and Interacting P.22 – 23)

We also work this way because high-level involvement occurs in child-initiated activity.

Whilst we are in Northern Ireland we will use some of the language in our observations as described in Ofsted definition of teaching (2015).

‘Teaching should not be taken to imply a ‘top down’ or formal way of working. It is a broad term which covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: **communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges.** It takes account of the equipment they provide and the attention to the physical environment as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do as well as take account of their interests and dispositions to learning (characteristics of effective learning), and use this information to plan children’s next steps in learning and monitor their progress.’

## January Lockdown

As we moved into January, we initially expected a short-term lockdown however this continued to be extended right into April 2021. Classes onsite were cancelled however training moved to an online platform. Parents were allowed to send their children to onsite day care however again due to the seriousness of the Covid messaging many families choose to keep their children at home.

We planned 8 sessions of virtual stay home and play sessions. These had a particular theme and we also made-up boxes detailing the itinerary of the session and provided resources required for the sessions. We asked parents if they would prefer live sessions or pre-recorded. Many parents were either homeschooling or working from home and therefore choose pre-recorded sessions.

These were uploaded twice per week onto Tapestry and an activity video was made for the days in between. Once these sessions finished, we went back to sharing a daily activity video.



## Childcare Facebook

Greenway Women's Centre already had a Facebook page and initially during the pandemic the childcare department shared information and activity videos via this. We then decided it would be more beneficial to our families to develop a separate Facebook page. Through this we have been able to share information relative to early years and parenting as well as signpost and accept direct messaging. We also used this platform to share some live story telling sessions.

We plan to continue to utilise this method of information sharing and to also develop a social media strategy ensuring that we are providing an effective platform to build on both community and parental partnership.

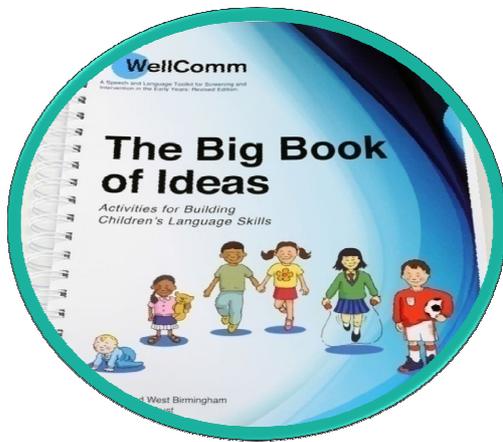


## Completion of building work

This year has also been one of good news as we had the positive news that the building work on the derelict would begin. The building funded via SIF project was carried out by Totalis and is now complete and ready for use. We are currently going through the registration process as well as applying for funding to recruit additional staff members with the hope of having the building ready for January 2022.



## Evidence Based Outcomes



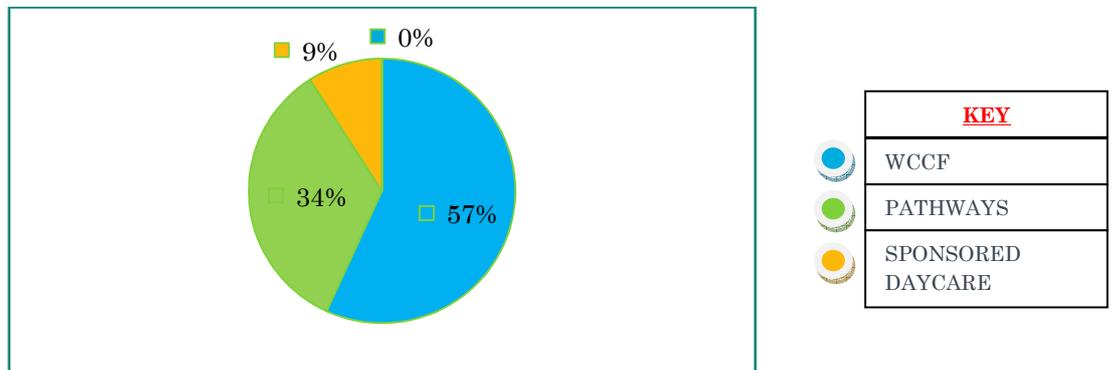
We continued to use the Wellcomm screen and the Tapestry baseline assessment to ensure that effective planning continues to take place. The benefits of these quality indicators include having a starting point for key workers to plan from, ongoing assessment of need and most importantly early intervention and referral if required. We have put together a new form of quarterly planning which links both assessment methods so they can be cross referenced if related.

Looking back on previous assessments has been insightful and helped with future planning as well as intervention. The assessments identify the areas that the child may be meeting milestones, staff can then go on to plan extended levels of difficulty within an activity in order to add additional challenges. The assessment is also important in planning who may need additional one to one support.

Whilst these baseline assessments are important in order to show that there is a need for the our service in terms of early intervention and support, it is important that staff do not overlook play as they key method of learning for children and creating a safe, warm and stimulating environment remain paramount to the provision we provide in order to provide the best opportunities for the children to simply play.

## Statistical information

The places accessed will be displayed in a pie chart format. The pie chart indicates the overall spaces used in total between the two childcare rooms.



Currently we provide **220** 2hr sessions per week between the two rooms, this is made up of the following:

- 12 x 2hr sessions per day in the Baby Room.
- 32 x 2hr sessions per day in the Toddler Room.

As the pie chart demonstrates the majority of the spaces are made up of funding we receive from the Women's Centre Childcare Fund (WCCF) these spaces are free of charge for parents providing they can meet the criteria. We must provide 125x 2 hr sessions per week in order to meet our objective.

We receive Sponsored Day Care funding via a service level agreement with the Belfast Trust makes up 20x 2hr sessions per week. These spaces are allocated to parents directly from the Sponsored Day Care Team. The Trust has required every single space to be used up which indicates a continued need for this service. This is particularly crucial to the work we carry out with families as it identifies the need for early intervention and support for vulnerable children and families.

The funding via The Pathway Fund takes up the next biggest quantity of space within our setting, totaling 24 child spaces per week. These sessions are provided to families who do not meet the criteria for a WCCF place however still fall within the low income bracket.

## Breakdown of families who access childcare

Greenway Women's Centre Day Care provision operates in Cregagh Estate in East Belfast. The area is ranked 241 of 890 (27%) on the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 (NINIS, 2019) Whilst this does not fall within the top 25% as previously mentioned we are not restricted by postcode and offer our services to anyone who wishes to access, the area in itself is surrounded by pockets of deprivation.

We have a total of 31 children registered at the end of March 2021 a drop in figures since last year mainly due to the impact social distancing is having on class sizes for parents accessing WCCF; the table below indicates the age range and gender of the children.

Boys				Girls			
0-1yrs	1-2yrs	2-3yrs	3-4yrs	0-1yrs	1-2yrs	2-3yrs	3-4yrs
1	4	4	6	1	5	6	5
TOTAL			15	TOTAL			17

**66% of the children registered live within the BT6 area, this postcode area also covers 'Woodstock 2' which is ranked 128 MDM- 14.3 % so falls within top 25%**

**12% of the children live within the BT5 area some of which fall within 'The Mount' which is ranked 64 MDM- 7% so falls within top 25%**

**11% live within BT8 + BT10 areas**

**11% live within BT23 + BT27 areas which are considered rural areas (NINIS, 2019)**

At the end of March 2021 we have:

2 children currently going through the process of an ASD diagnosis.

7 children that attend a Speech and Language Therapist or are waiting for an appointment.

## Quality Indicators

Feedback from parents/carers and the children themselves is very important to our service and helps shape how we move our practice forward in the most effective ways. We have had numerous amounts this year which we are always grateful for.

*“\*\*\*\*\* loves going to greenway looks forward to it everyday the staff are brilliant with her.”*

*“\*\*\*\*\* has progressed well within the room and is becoming more confident.”*

**In Regards to baseline assessment- “very comprehensive thanks for feedback”**

*“\*\*\*’s doing amazing thank you so much”*

As part of our remit to the various different funders we must take part in monitoring and inspections of the childcare service. Our annual inspection took place in December 2020. The report will be available to all parents/carers upon request.

We also participated in monitoring visits online with the following funders of the service. Reports must be produced on a monthly and quarterly basis for the funders which to date we have had no difficulty in completing this to their satisfaction.

- Belfast Health & Social Care Trust – via Service Level Agreement (Sponsored Day Care Team)
- Department for Communities (DfC) – via WCCF
- Health & Social Care Board – via Service Level Agreement administrated via Women’s Support Network.
- Early Years-The Organisation- The Pathway Fund

The Manager, Childcare Manager, Chairperson and Training Officer also represent/ have formed relationships or are members of the following:

- Outer South and East Family support Hub
- Inner East Family Support Hub
- Housing Executive Scrutiny Board
- Surestart Management Committee
- Eastside Early Years Network
- Eastside Partnership
- Belfast Childcare Partnership

- In Kind Direct
- Disney Store Belfast
- EBCDA Health Forum
- Inner East Surestart
- Early Years- The Organisation
- NICVA
- Cregagh Interagency Forum
- Play Resource

## Childcare Staff Training & Development

From April 2020 To March 2021 staff have undertaken the following:

### Childcare Manager:

Managing big feelings and mindfulness in the early years
Wanderlust- A nature study programme
Impact of domestic violence on children and young people
Level 1 Counselling
Health and Safety, risk assessment and manual handling
Covid training
Mentoring
Exceptional leadership
Social Economy model workshop
Fire safety
Fire extinguisher
Food Safety
DO training
Took part in consultation for the Eastside Good Relations Charter and also the Eastside Learning Community

### Practice Leaders

Child Protection x 1
1 <sup>st</sup> Aid x 1
Fire safety x 2
Fire extinguisher x 2
Food Safety x 2
Attachment in the early years x 2
Children's perspectives on play x 1
Covid x 2
Play, learning and the brain x 2
Child and young people's participation x 1
Children living in different settings x 1
Supporting children's mental health and wellbeing x 1
Solihull practitioners training x 2
Mentoring x 1
Trauma sensitive approach x 1
ACES x 1
Childhood in the digital age x 1
Diabetes Awareness x 1

Hanen Teacher Talk x 1
Children and Young people's mental health and participation x 1

### Childcare Assistants

Child Protection x 4
1 <sup>st</sup> Aid x 1
Fire safety x 4
Fire extinguisher x 4
Food Safety x 4
Attachment in the early years x 1
Children's perspectives on play x 2
Covid x 5
Play, learning and the brain x 5
Supporting children's mental health and wellbeing x 2
Trauma sensitive approach x 1
ACES x 1
Diabetes Awareness x 2
Introducing observational approaches x 1
Infants understanding of their social world x 2
Parents as partners x2

## Moving Forward

As we remain in a time of uncertainty it is difficult to look forward as the world has almost come to a standstill. I do believe that a celebration of some sort will be high on the to-do list when we finally told that gatherings are safe! For now we will take each day as it comes and continue to provide onsite and online support to children and their families. We hope to develop a virtual programme of activities to ensure that we don't lose that connection we have worked so hard to build.

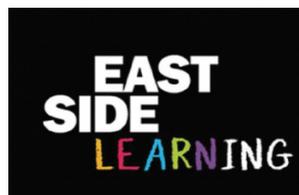
As an organisation have many aspects to look forward to as we finally have word that building work will commence on the adjacent derelict. With this will come new opportunities for employment as well as additional spaces which are much sought after within the community. Not only that but the new build will be purpose built which will be very beneficial to practice and in complying with Minimum Standards.

My passion for ensuring children are provided with the best opportunities has grown more throughout this and I will continue to encourage the staff to grow and have confidence in their abilities, to challenge and bring forward new ideas and ways of thinking but most importantly to provide an environment for the children which is safe, fun and that will support the nurturing of children enabling them to do what they do best...play!



## Funders and Contributors

- Department for Communities (DfC) Via Women's Centre Childcare Fund (WCCF)
- Belfast Health & Social Care Trust – via Service Level Agreement for Sponsored Day Care
- Belfast Childcare Partnership- IT and Outdoor Equipment Grant
- The Pathway Fund- Early Years The Organisation
- Covid Recovery Fund/Sustainability- Early Years The Organisation
- Eastside Partnership – Solihull Facilitation funding



## Greenway Women's Centre Services

The centre also offers a number of other services which benefit women and their families.

- Family Support Service
- Training & Education Programme
- Volunteering Opportunities
- Student Placement Opportunities
- Employment Opportunities
- Advice, signposting, referral and support
- Childcare
- Counselling Service

Further information can be obtained by visiting our website

[www.greenwaywomenscentre.org](http://www.greenwaywomenscentre.org)

Find us on Facebook, pick up a leaflet onsite or talk to one of the staff.

- Lindsay Cooper - Centre Manager
- Mae McQuillan- Director
- Liz Oslon- Chairperson/Registered Person
- Helen Smyth - Training & Education
- Joanne Leetch - Childcare Manager