

GREENWAY WOMEN'S CENTRE

Community Consultation and Survey
Report 2023



HISTORY

Greenway Women's Centre has existed since 1985, and since then has provided women and their families with positive opportunities for development by breaking down barriers which prevent women's full participation in society. At Greenway Women's Centre, we offer a range of childcare services, training and development programmes, volunteering opportunities, and support services that are easily accessible to women.

Our centre is a safe and secure environment in which women can grow through social interaction, education, and personal development. It is also a place where women can come to gain skills and knowledge to make them more confident and enhance life choices for themselves and their families, giving them not only a stronger voice but also a proactive role within their community.



Picture 1.1 - Cregagh Estate with Belfast City Centre in the Background

OUR SERVICE PROVISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

Greenway Women's Centre offers a range of services to support local women and their families:

- High quality childcare services.
- Education and training programmes.
- Essential skills support.
- Health and wellbeing courses.
- Family support services.
- Volunteering opportunities.
- Drop-in café.

Greenway Women's Group exists to provide positive opportunities for women to achieve their potential, through recognising and respecting them as individuals. We achieve this by breaking down barriers which prevent women's full participation in society; specifically targeting social need within Cregagh and surrounding areas.



**Picture 1.2 Greenway Women's Centre
Logo**

SURVEY NEED

Over the last few years our community has been impacted by several different forces, notably the COVID-19 pandemic and the current cost-of-living crisis. It has been a double-edged sword for our centre, as not only has the community been effected by these challenges; Greenway Women's Centre has also experienced the pressure. The absence of a sitting Executive in Stormont has made budgets uncertain for many crucial funds for our centre, placing a strain on our services financially during a time when demand is continually increasing.

Consequently, we carried out a comprehensive community survey between May-June 2023 to gain an insight into how much our services play a role in supporting parents and carers most-in-need within our vicinity. As well as this, the outcomes of the survey have allowed us to understand the services which are most in-demand within Greenway Women's Centre, and the ones we could perhaps work to improve.





Cregagh SOA 2011 Census Data

Below are some key statistics about the Cregagh SOA taken from the 2011 census:

Circle 1 - % of people with a long-term health problem or disability.

Circle 2 - % of households without access to car or van.

Circle 3 - % of people with low or now level 1 qualifications.

Circle 4 - % of people who are economically inactive.

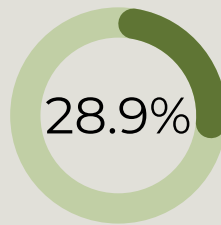
Circle 5 - % of people unemployed.

AREA PROFILE

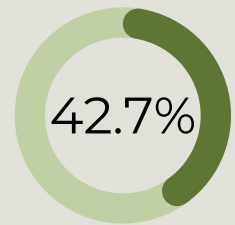
Greenway Women's Centre has existed at our Cregagh location since 1985 and we are in the Cregagh Super Output Area (SOA), which is within the Belfast City Council district.

Information gathered from the 2011 census outlined that the population of the Cregagh SOA was 2,090, yet we also attract service users from the wider Belfast City Council area. According to research carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), the population of Belfast stood at 288,306 in 2020. 48.8% (140,692) were male and 51.2% (147,614) were female.

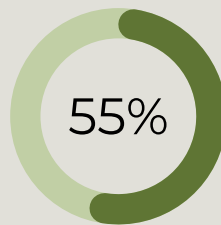
There are several statistics which should be taken into consideration from both the Cregagh SOA and the wider Belfast area, as this is where we attract many of our service users, but also from NICCY Promoting the Rights of Children and Young People, which are explained on the next page.



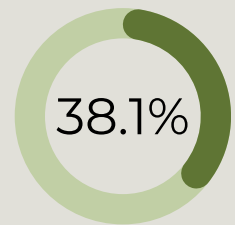
Circle 1



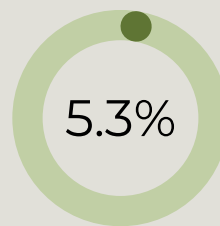
Circle 2



Circle 3



Circle 4



Circle 5

BELFAST CITY WIDE CENSUS DATA 2011

23.8% of people had a long-term health problem or disability which limited their day-to-day activities

40.1% of households did not have access to a car or van

41.1% of people had no or low (level 1) qualifications

43.3% of people were long-term unemployed

36.4% of people were economically inactive

Frighteningly, current statistics from NICCY Promoting the Rights of Children and Young People, there are 444,000 children in Northern Ireland, of which 103,400 live in poverty. 1 in 4 of these children in Northern Ireland are living in a family which struggles to provide a warm, adequate home, nutritious food, appropriate clothing, and to pay for childcare costs. According to End Child Poverty Now, more than a quarter (27.45%) of children in our Cregagh SOA are living in poverty after housing costs. Looking closely again at the Cregagh SOA, it is within the top 8% of places in Northern Ireland for education skills and training deprivation. This indicates that many local women we support do not have the qualifications to find higher earning employment, which places significant stress on them when feeling the pressure of providing for their families.

COMMUNITY NEED

Both the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis is continuing to have an adverse impact on our local community, which emphasises the importance of Greenway Women's Centre as a service provider for local women and their families to ensure each mother and carer is given the support needed to feel resilient against life's challenges.

Funding is crucial for our operations within Cregagh, for local women and for those across Belfast. The results from this survey will be used to guide development at our site, but also to argue our case for support financially during hard times, which we have learned can be occasional in the current climate. This is vital for Greenway continuing to provide 'local, accessible services to women and their families in Cregagh and beyond'.

ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY SURVEY

Our survey consisted of 8 questions and in total we had 113 responses. Question number 1 asked if survey respondents had ever accessed services provided by Greenway Women's Centre. Almost all (96%) said yes, with a small 4% saying no. This adds great weight to the information captured from the survey as nearly all respondents are direct service users.

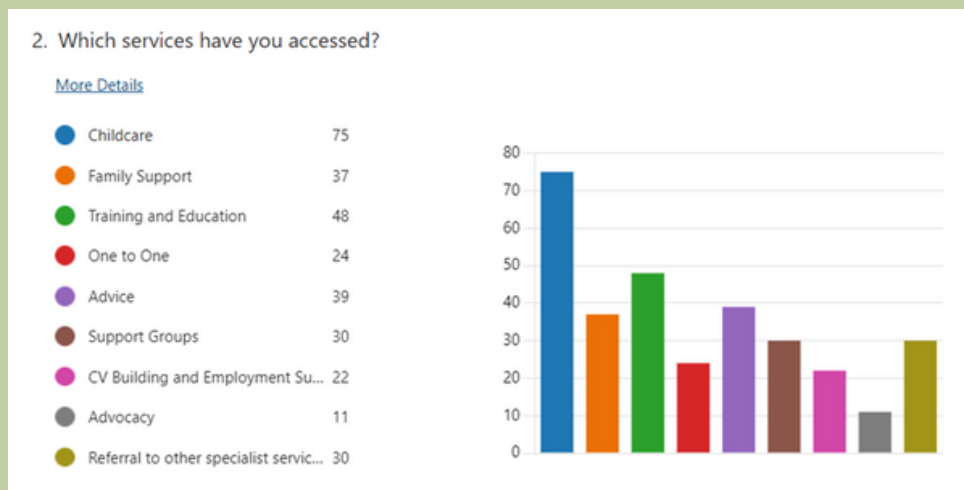
1. Have you ever accessed any services within Greenway Women's Centre?

[More Details](#)

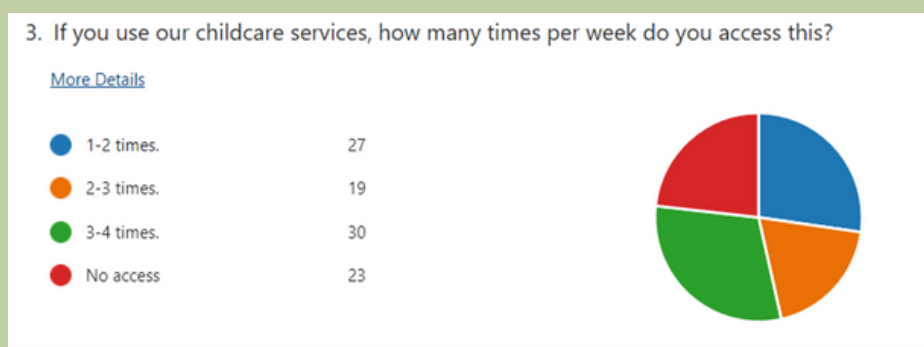
Yes	109
No	4



Of those who answered yes to Question 1, Question 2 asked which services respondents had accessed. Childcare services were most accessed at 68.8% (75 out of 109), followed by our training and education services at 44% (48 out of 109). These findings correspond with local deprivation statistics within our vicinity because as mentioned earlier, Cregagh is within the top 8% of places in Northern Ireland for education skills and training deprivation, explaining the fact that training and education is our second-most in demand service.



In question number 3 we wanted to discover how often survey respondents accessed our childcare services. 30% used Greenway 3-4 times per week, 19% used the services 2-3 times per week, and 27% used our childcare provision 1-2 times per week. The remaining 23% chose 'no access' indicating that whilst they use our centre, they avail of other provisions like our training and education and advice support.



Question number 4 was a multiple-choice option which sought to gather how our childcare services support local mothers in their day-to-day life. Out of 101 responses to this question, the most common answers (more than half) were that our services allow respondents to focus on their employment, and to help with their wellbeing. This emphasises the importance of our centre in allowing local women to succeed by reducing anxieties over seeking childcare so that they can focus on their professional progression. Other answers included that local mothers have more time for self-care and can focus on important tasks related to family life



Question 5 wanted to determine how many survey respondents lived in our local vicinity of Cregagh to reveal the importance of Greenway Women's Centre within our immediate community. 58% stated they lived in Cregagh, followed by 26% coming from Castlereagh (Cregagh's neighbouring community). This outlined the important role our centre plays in providing various services to local women who live within a 2-4-mile radius from our site. Additionally, we were pleased to find that 16% of respondents come from the Greater Belfast Area and beyond, showcasing the far-reaching impact our services have.



WHAT DO LOCAL MOTHERS HAVE TO SAY?

The last two questions in our survey focused on two things: what are the main concerns of mothers in the current cost-of-living crisis, and if our services were to be cut back or removed, how would this impact them? (All comments were kept anonymous.)

Being a single parent to children with additional needs, Greenway has gave me the opportunity to have support as well as helping me with gaining new skills and through losing my job and struggling to be re-employed due to the severity of PTSD from domestic violence. They have gave my son the chance to interact with peers and have space from me to stop him having such bad separation anxiety. The work the staff do is amazing and we would be lost without them.

Couldn't afford to put my child into another daycare as the costs was extremely high which meant my mental health was deteriorating and affecting my child as I was unable to stay in employment, but Greenway has been providing me with support and cheap childcare, allowing me to return to work and support me through the process.





It would be extremely difficult to find anything close to what Greenway offer me and my family. Not only financially, but suitability. If Greenway were unable to help with childcare then one of us would be forced to quit work in order to look after our child as financially it would not be feasible to go anywhere else due to the extortionate costs. My Son also feels very comfortable and relaxed with the women within the centre who have helped him immensely to settle in but also to grow as a young child. They have been amazing for him.

If I was unable to access the support via the centre I very much doubt I could work, and would have to go onto Universal Credit. My mental health would also suffer as I do use some of the support services in the centre as well as the childcare. I would definitely end up contacting my GP for more help, therefore putting more strain on the NHS. We were told during Covid to protect our NHS and if funding was withdrawn for our local community services this would have a very negative impact and put extra pressure on statutory services.

My wellbeing is not at the best and I don't like being on prescription drugs so the centre really helps out with my mental health, and if I don't have the centre to go to I can see myself falling apart



CALL TO ACTION

The rationale behind this report was to gain a greater level of understanding on the needs of our local community following the pandemic, and now during the cost-of-living crisis. We are incredibly fortunate to have our centre which can provide local women with a chance to avail of low-cost childcare, training and education, and other support services.

As a centre, our focus is to continue our operations, but this will require the following actions:

- 1.Continually sourcing required and necessary funding for our most vital services.
- 2.Keeping up to date on community need.
- 3.Regularly analysing the ever-changing cost-of-living crisis and how it is impacting our service users so that we can tailor support as appropriate.

It is our intention to use the findings in this survey to source funding opportunities and seek investment in our facility to ensure that women in our community and their families can avail of our range of services which have their best interests at the core.

