

Belfast South Community Resource

Annual Report 2023-2024



Foreword

2023 has been marked by inflation leading to higher mortgages resulting in an intensified cost of living crises. Sandy Row has and continues to face major economic, social, physical and cultural challenges. Job losses, lower incomes, rising prices and lack of job opportunities for young people are all continuing to have an impact on local people, posing a strain on individuals, families and communities. BSCR remains committed to finding ways to support the community in this time of deeping economic crises, by both short term measures such as the fuel voucher social supermarket schemes but also by expanding our educational programs to aid our young people gain the qualifications they need to succeed in this increasing complex and technical world.

In the past year we have developed and delivered exceptional programmes across the fields of education, physical and economic regeneration, employment and training, community confidence and safety. Working in partnership with a range of local people, business leaders, elected representatives, community organisations, statutory and public agencies we have delivered programmes and projects which have resulted in positive change in our community. Some of these projects are set out it the report which follows and I urge all to read it and to come in to meet with the team any time if they feel we could be doing more.

It is difficult in a short introduction to capture all the detail of our work in the past year, so I invite you to visit our website www.bscr.co.uk as well as our Facebook page (which has over 5000 subscribers), where you will meet our staff and read about our work and view the many photos, short films etc., we have developed which will hopefully give you an insight into our achievements and partnership working. Quite simply, we would accomplish little without the professionalism of our small but highly dedicated staff team and Board members. I wholeheartedly acknowledge the commitment made by them over the past year. All of this work would be impossible without the support of our funders and donors who continue to invest in making Sandy Row a better place, in particular DFC and BCC who provide core funding to the group. It is this core funding provided via the neighbourhood Renewal Program and BCC's revenue program which has made everything else you read about in this report possible.

The ethos of BSCR is all about the community and the great people who make it what it is. I hope we can continue to make a positive impact on this community in the difficult days ahead..

Garnet Busby
General Manager

staff	Project	Description
Jamie-Lee	Connect all Parents South	Jamie manages the Connect all Parents program. She Manages and co-ordinates the parents groups at both Blythe Street Primary and the Arellian Nursery.
Chloe wilson	Education and youth coordinator	Chloe has been with us for 7 years, she is a qualified teacher and manages the education and youth programs. This includes our after schools support and GCSE programs.
Aimee Miller	STEP/Moving up/transitions	Aimee started in the BSCR REACH as a NEETs student and is a product of our desire to train and employ local people. Aimee manages the transitions program.
Nikita	STEP/Moving up/transitions	At present on maternity leave.
Nicki Sproule	GCSE Study support Moving up	Nicki, has been with us for 7 years, she is a local mother and also works part time in the Charter Youth Club. She manages a number of programs, around training and support, employment and education.
Jonny Simms	LADS project Digital Connect South	Jonny has been with us for 7 years he is a qualified school teacher and manages our digital programs, Including the new 127 digital hub.
Carla Dickson	Community safety	Carla works part-time with BSCR on the community safety initiative. She also manages our Voucher programs
Jim	Exam Centre IT training Technical support.	Jim has been with us for over 22 years and now manages the On-line testing centre, which BSCR runs as a social enterprise. We have the contracts to deliver on-line testing for 5 of the biggest on-line testing bodies in the world, including the new UKVI tests for the Home office
Savanah Jackson	Reception, administration and test centre tech	Savanah has been with us for 5 years, she is also a product of our reach program for NEETs. She manages reception and is developing as an exam tech for the online exam centre.
Dessie Graham	Care taker Test Centre support	Dessie has been with us for 8 years, he started in a government supported employment scheme and made himself so invaluable that he was kept on when the scheme finished.
Luke	Digital Assistant	Digital assistant is a new post which we set up to expand on the work Jonny has been doing in the digital fabrication centre.
Danielle	Community	This was also a part time post set up to coordinate

Burrows	Safety	community events, celebrations and issues around the bonfire etc.
Nikki Johnston	Operations manager	Nikki has also been with us for over 20 years and was promoted this year to operations manager. Nikki started as a IT student, got a job as receptionist and is now in charge of the day to day running of BSCR and its programs
Garnet	General manager	I started as a volunteer over 25 years ago when we did not have an office any funding or paid staff. We now have the resource Centre, which we own, 14 paid staff and my role is now one of overall strategic management.

Connect all Parents South

Connect all Parents South is a program working across Arellian Nursery School, Blythefield Primary School and engages with the Markets Parents to help parents help their children get the most out of their education. Connecting local and newcomer families to encourage relationships between and within communities. Led by Belfast South Community Resources (BSCR).

Jamie-Lee's Report:

It has been a pleasure working as the parent support worker for BSCR funded by Urban Villages. It has been clear to me, the schools and the families that I work with that the programme has had the flexibility and focus of being completely parent/family centred. The last 4 years has seen the programme delivery adapt and change around covid restrictions. During restrictions parents had my details to contact me for support/advice as well as the local schools made regular referrals for families that were struggling with, home education, financial struggles or mental health. An assessment would be made with each family to see what other agencies we could refer to for more support. Families who were struggling with the at home learning were given digital support from myself to ensure that children were able to complete the school work at home. During restrictions a lot of parents felt isolated and alone so many phone calls/garden gate visits were made with all the parents reporting that a listening ear was something they really needed and received by having a parent support worker.

Moving forward from restrictions a lot of parents vocalised needing to do more things for themselves, hence why regular parent groups, activities and training was put in place. Our parent groups are a safe space where parents can come and talk to other parents who will understand their struggles. We have created a supportive non-judgemental environment that any parent from that school can attend. We have been working with other agencies to deliver programmes to develop parenting skills, mental health support, a range of skill developing programmes, developing parents' education, back to work programmes and more.

Family mindfulness sessions have also had a positive impact. I was aware that the schools deliver some mindfulness to the children in school, but saw an opportunity to delivery mindfulness as a whole family approach. I wanted to give parents and children a tool box for them to use when emotions were heightened or the house felt particularly

stressful. The parents and children reported using the new learnt tools to improve their communications, regulate emotions and reduce the amount of 'melt downs' in the home. In conclusion having a range of programmes and methods has meant meeting as much of the complex need parents and children are facing in our community. Providing both educational support as well as recreational activities has provided both formal and informal environments. Fun and educational programmes has encouraged new families to join in the supportive network we have provided.

"I first met Jamie-Lee when I came along to a parent's group with my daughter and her daughter, my granddaughter. We came along as we both didn't work and really wanted to meet new people. Jamie-Lee is one of the easiest people you can talk to, there is no judgment she listens and understands. Me and my family have had a tough few years and I always felt that Jamie-Lee was easy to open up to. There have been periods over the years when I needed to speak with her regularly and don't know who else I could have turned to. Jamie-Lee was able to help get me a washing machine when mine broke, that meant a lot as mentally I was struggling so when the washing machine broke down it really stressed me out. When we do something creative in parents' group I feel really proud of myself like I spent some time doing something for me and I have a nice piece of art or craft that I enjoyed doing and show other people. The educational courses are brilliant as well, Jamie-Lee has GEMs come in who have put me through courses which I need as I have recently taken a role as treasurer to a community group. Me and some of the other parents have taken these new roles that we have never done before so need a lot of help and support. Jamie-Lee has taken her time to educate and help us on how to run the day to day activities/programmes and also shared her knowledge of filling in funding applications, something I have never done before so for her to help with that has been amazing. Jamie-Lee helping us is also helping out community and the children. I have struggled with myself confidence for years but a lot of the programmes we have done have built my confidence, I've made new friends from different backgrounds and feel like I can do more things now that I never would have even tried or thought I was good enough to do." Angela Miller

Numbers Supported

290 parents and children

STEP/Moving up/transitions program

The Moving Up programme is part of the Belfast South Early intervention Project and is managed by Aimee. It aims to enhance self-esteem, emotional resilience, wellbeing and confidence amongst children and their parents with the transitions process at key stages in their learning at primary and post primary schools. The Moving Up programme has been designed to help make transition as smooth as possible, providing support covering issues such as how young people can be impacted by transition and the challenges they may face.

The Transitions Moving On Programmes (Big Step and 7UP) is delivered by Aimee and Nikita. These programmes target 3 - 5 year old children supporting a more seamless and anxiety-free transition from Nursery to Primary School (Nursery and P1 Big Step programmes), and the 7-Up programmes are delivered to P7 children (aged ten and eleven years old) supporting the transition from Primary to Post Primary School. The programmes promote emotional wellbeing and resilience; and increase

children's self-esteem and confidence, which in turn results in improved academic attainment. Children report increased confidence and reduced anxiety about the transition from P7 to Y8; and, earlier in the School year, reduced stress about taking examinations and tests.

The Moving Up Programme has been designed to help make transition as smooth as possible, providing support covering social and emotional learning such as how young people can be impacted by transition and the challenges they may face. It aims to equip children with the tools to address challenges, ensuring school readiness; and offering motivational techniques and ways to cope with change to ensure they reach positive milestones. Activities within the Moving-Up Programme include a focus on empowering children to be confident in making their own decisions, gratitude, self-belief and efficacy. The Programmes are also designed to raise the aspirations of children and parents. The Y8 workshops are a follow-up session for children to discuss their transition experiences.

Evaluation of the STEP programme to date has evidenced that the children are less anxious and more prepared for the move to post-primary school; and parents have reported increased emotional wellbeing for their children. Evaluation questionnaires completed by teachers highlight improved emotional wellbeing and reduced anxiety at key transition stages; which directly impacts on children's academic attainment, attitudes towards School, and aspirations.

All the Transitions Programmes delivered put children at the centre, but also support parents; building on home:school:community linkages. BSCR is a community-based organisation, which engages with parents throughout the Transition Programmes, both through the provision of resources, face-to-face workshops and drop-ins, and online supports. These community-based interventions with parents have had a positive impact on parents' understanding of how to support their children's learning, promoting positive attitudes to education and building parents' confidence in this respect. Families may also be referred by Schools or BSCR to other STEP supports.

Numbers Supported

528 Children

350 parents

8 schools



Stepup Program

Delivered by BSCR and lead by Nicki Sproule, stepup has replaced coment and is a

mentoring programme that aims to work with young people between the age of 16 - 24 who are not in employment or education. It is a one to one mentoring service that supports young people to make positive steps forward in all aspects of their life but in particular into finding further training, education or work experience.

Unfortunately the funding for this program is a lot less than comment and only 5 young people can be supported per year.

Numbers Supported

5

Study Support and GCSE programs

BSCR Study Support Club, is a free project set up in South Belfast (Sandy Row) that works in conjunction with Queen's University Belfast and Children in Need. We provide young people from the local area, who are of secondary school age (11-18) the opportunity to work 1 on 1 with current Queens University Students on their academic work in a relaxed and welcoming environment. Pupils are matched with a QUB student, who has experience in a subject the pupils feel they need supported in.

The area of Belfast in which we are working is in the top 10% of the most deprived and in the top 4% in Northern Ireland of educational underachievement. Our main aim is to positively contribute to the educational lives of school children from the area.

The club starts in October and ends in June. It runs for three hours per day after school on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday throughout the academic calendar. During this period there was five hundred and sixty eight individual tutoring sessions.

Young people from fifteen different schools across South Belfast attended Study support for a range of subjects. Some young people came for support with everyday homework's, while others wanted support in specific subjects and exam technique to help with their GCSEs or A-levels.

The GCSE program is also managed by Nicki Sproul and funded by BCC and consists of targeted classes in both community setting and schools. The program is aimed at pupils who need extra support prior to their GCSE Maths and English exams. The pupils are split into small groups and are taught by fully qualified teachers who are assisted by a classroom assistant/Mentor. The students can avail of one to one support three times a week in our offices in Sandy Row, a special Easter school at Queen's University and in some cases after school classes in their own school settings with tutors supplied by BSCR.

Belfast South Community Resources (BSCR), Eastside Partnership, Forward South Partnership, Greater Shankill Partnership and West Belfast Partnership Board (WBPB), have formed a strong, committed and experienced consortium to deliver the new GCSE Maths and English Revision Support Programme across the city of Belfast. Our consortium is keen to have the opportunity to effectively contribute to delivering

transformational change in our neighborhood's. The Belfast City Council GCSE Maths and English Revision Support Programme not only fits with the current objectives of the Belfast Agenda, in particular the Working and Learning Board, but is also in direct alignment with the vision, mission, aims and objectives of BSCR and our consortium partners.

Putting education at the heart of regeneration and transformational change has been a long term objective of BSCR and consortium partners, all of whom have unrivalled experience in delivering results-orientated and outcome-driven educational programmes that make an evidenced positive impact on the lives of people in the Belfast area, including the achievement of increased numeracy and literacy levels for young people at GCSE level. In essence, our proposal creates the best opportunity for this project to succeed.

Numbers involved.

- GCSE – 150
- Study support – 81



Home work Club

The Homework Club is a program that offers educational assistance to children in the local community after school. It is supported by students from Queens University and accommodates up to 40 children at a time. Among these 40 students, 8 require specialized support for the SEAG transfer test. The club is always at full capacity and is not available during July and August. Consequently, we held an additional transfer test club at BSCR offices over the summer months. Professional tutors provided one-on-one support to 7 children on a weekly basis. These sessions focused on the new SEAG test specifications and prepared the students for the upcoming exams.

The homework club has been running for thirty years and provides invaluable support to local children many of which lack confidence in their abilities. Children of past students are now attending the homework club which is evidence the presence of this club within the community has made progress towards breaking the cycle of under attainment and is aspirational for entire families. Over the course of these years approximately 210 local children have sat their transfer test exam through the support from the homework club. One of the biggest successes of this homework club is that a young person who attended. gained the second highest score in their transfer test across Northern Ireland.

In 2016, eight children from the homework club completed their transfer test and went to a grammar school, six of these children are now at University, one is currently still in further education and the other is a technician in the RAF; all of which have continued on to positive outcomes.

Impact stories:

Child A from a foster family attended homework club and progressed really well, the wanted to go to a particular grammar school in the area. Billy had advised this child's family that this school usually had a very high cut off point and advised another grammar school that he felt they would be more likely to get a place if they used them as their 1st or 2nd choices. The family chose to put the school child A wanted as their 1st choice and the child's results did not make their the threshold for this school or their other choices. After receiving their results this child was not given a place a grammar school and came to Billy for advice, they discussed their options and Billy advised for the family to contact the school he had previously mentioned. Billy contacted this school and spoke with the principal who was able to advise the family. After a few weeks this child was given a place at the grammar school.

Child B had very bad behaviour at school, he attended homework club and after a number of weeks working on developing his confidence his behaviour began to improve. He has now been described by many as a 'model pupil'

Numbers Supported

40

[Digital Connect South – Video link - !\[\]\(71ceb62b681518c82e95d615e7265d66_img.jpg\)BSCR Digital Hub.mp4](#)

Digital Connect South is managed by Jonny and funded for the most part by Urban Villages.

The BSCR Digital Hub funded through the Urban Village Initiative has been delivering practical and innovative projects and programmes that are participant centred and aimed to inspire, help raise aspirations, increase confidence and develop new skills, while also fostering good relations with people from areas of high disadvantage and educational underachievement. This project takes place in both the formal and informal educational settings, starting with young people Nursery age up to pensioners.

Over the past four years the need and demand for this project has continued to grow, we now work with 14 different Nursery, Primary and Secondary schools each year. This allows us to offer young people the opportunity to try various digital & STEM based activities through our projects including; Give it a Go, Wellbeing through Digital, Eco-engineers, STEM 4 Wee Uns and more. Typically the young people we work with wouldn't normally get the chance to participate in these types of activities due to their background. Our aim is to encourage and nurture a love of STEM/ I.C.T. that may help them realise that it could be a career path for them in the future.

We deliver a range of these projects on a good relations aspect and believe in an inclusive approach and have organised events for young people to come together and try different activities, while making new friends.

The Digital Hub has grown throughout the years and we were able to employ two young people from the local community. The young people had previously completed an accredited course with ourselves but lacked work experience, confidence and qualifications. One of the young men has since left for different employment but the development of these two young men has been a highlight for myself. The confidence

and development of new skills they show and being able to complete tasks on time and to a high standard shows how they have grown, matured and become an asset to the Digital Hub staff.

The Digital Hub was shortlisted for the Belfast Telegraph I.C.T. best not for profit award in 2022 and 2023 and won the Urban Villages Rebuilding Aisling Award in 2021.

Another highlight is the legacy that is left behind from delivering these projects, participants who have taken part still fondly remember and recount what they did as part of these projects and the people they met.

Feedback from our projects

'It was very astonishing doing and learning things with you'

'Yes (I learnt) how to play on pc, mindfulness and robot controlling'

'it was very interesting watching the 3D printer and learning about the machines.'

'Thank you BSCR I can't wait to come here next year.'

'It was really nice to see the children working together'

'Yes because I was with my classmates and having fun with other classes'

Numbers Supported

1000



Physical and Economic Regeneration.

Physical and Economic Regeneration is managed by Nikki and Garnet (on top of their other roles within BSCR) and is funded by DFC. BSCR continues to work with other social partners on the regeneration of our local area. Gilpins and Hope Street are still priorities, but as you all know we have been let down time and time again by the other partners involved in these projects and we don't know if and when it will happen. Social Housing remains a basic need for communities like Sandy Row if they are to grow and survive as communities on the edge of the city centre and we will continue to fight for this need to be recognized and met.

BSCR continues to take the lead on this and several other regenerational capital projects within Sandy Row. We are also working on plans for a cultural café on the old Enas site 92-94 Sandy Row and the derelict car wash side at the corner of Blythe Street and Sandy Row. We are pleased that after 6 years working on the cultural café project the site (formally known as Eans) has been bought and a join project board set up. Planning has been passed for the Arts and Digital hub and we expect to be onsite later this year.

We still believe that that new transport hub has the potential to be a game changer for SR, and as such we are continuing to work with all the relevant bodies to ensure that we as a community receive maximum benefit. The construction of the hub is now well underway with a completion date somewhere in 2024. Our task is to ensure that the public realm changes to Sandy Row are carried out along the entire road from the new station to the Lisburn Rd and to the highest standard.

Economic Sustainability

BSCR have been supported by a number of funders for its core work and project development this year. We would like to acknowledge and thank our funders; they are all listed in our audited accounts, but I think a special mention should go to DFC, BCC and UVs for their continued support.

However, I will end with a note of caution, all our funding streams are up this year and while we are fairly confident that some will be renewed we expect to lose one of our main funders Urban Villages. This will pose a severe challenge to BSCR and its management team as both the Digital and parents programs are funded under this program and both are core programs for us.

We will always require grant funding and it is right that central government should continue to resource some of the work we do but it is the ultimate goal of BSCR to establish a position where core activities are self-funded through our own activities.

This report illustrates the many services, activities and projects offered by BSCR as I said in the beginning they represent only a small proportion of what we do and I recommend that you follow our activities on the web site, twitter and Facebook.





- MovingUp programme delivered in 7 schools
- Our GCSE support has been running in local Post-Primary schools
- Study Support at BSCR with our QUB volunteers
- Transfer Test Support Club
- Hosted a baking and decorating workshop for Arellian parents for their Children in Need bake sale
- Boosting Brains Parent programme



MERRY CHRISTMAS

FROM

BSCR

2023

Check out what we've been up to in the lead up to Christmas...

- Our annual Christmas light switch on, with the Sandy Row Falcons leading our parade and Santa's grotto with over 140 families
- Delivered 90 Christmas dinners to pensioners in the community
- Designed T-shirts for Blythefield Christmas Play
- Donated selection boxes to Sandy Row Sure Start, Sandy Row FC and Kelvin Youth FC
- We held a Baby Rave with Mini Explorers NI
- Weekly focus group and parents group meetings





- 6 schools took part in a bowling tournament and designed their team kits
- 2 local schools visited our centre to take part in 'Give It A Go' days where they got a taste of all the fantastic activities our digital hub offers, including T-shirt design and 3D pens!
- Young people designed wellbeing illustrations to be showcased in the community
- Supported Arellian in creating Christmas cards to raise funds for the Nursery

Public Benefit Details – Summary of outputs.

<i>Activity – Economic Renewal</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Number of jobs sustained by BSCR	14
Number of people helped into employment	16
Number of people receiving careers advice	19
Number of new/existing businesses receiving advice / support	5
Number of people attaining a formal qualification from participation in adult education	10
Number of 16-24 year old receiving mentoring support - Stepup	5
Number of people receiving non job specific training	19
Number of people receiving job specific training	41
Number of people attaining a formal qualification from participation in adult education	30
<i>Children, Young people and Parents Supported</i>	
Number of people engaged in parenting skills/development programmes – Parents program	290
Number of pupils benefitting directly from the project study support and homework clubs	100
Number of children and young people having access to specialist support to enhance their emotional health and well being – Spet project. Schools and parents also supported.	528 Children 350 parents 8 schools
Number of students receiving GCSE and study support	231
Number of children taking part in summer scheme activities	110
Number of primary school pupils participating in educational project.	1480
Number of post-primary school pupils participating in educational project.	263
Number of pupils benefitting directly from the project (youth services)	180
Number of pupils benefitting directly from the project (Extended schools)	165
<i>Community Confidence</i>	
Number of People Receiving Advice on Crime Prevention	3041

Number of Young People Benefiting From Youth Inclusion/ Diversionary Projects	147
Number of victims of crime supported	36
Number of Crime Prevention Initiatives Implemented	7
We are represented on the Forum, the neighborhood renewal partnership, FSP, the community safety team, sure start.	5
Physical Renewal	
Area of land improved for open space	5
Area of land improved and made ready for developments	3
Number of buildings improved	5
Number of community facilities improved	5
Number of trees planted	6
Area of land improved and made ready for shared space	2
Number of people/volunteers involved in physical development/and or environment projects	70
Parents facilities at Blythefield School improved -	completed
Childrens play area at city way completed	completed
Outdoor facilities at Uralian Nursary improved	completed
Graffiti removed from a number of sites around SR	On-going
King William Mural	Refurbished
BSCR are sitting on streeting groups for the development of a number of sites including – Gilpins, Hope Street, and the Transport hub.	On-going
Enas training cultural café	Planning submitted
Christmas lights	On-going -
Arts and Digital Hub	Purchased and planning granted
Cost Of Living crisis	
190 x £100 fuel vouchers given out to those in most need	completed
166 food vouchers giver out	completed

