

Colin Neighbourhood Sure Start Project

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

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 2023. 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).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Principle Activities and Future Development

The Company encompasses the following activities:

To enhance the development and education of children below statutory age and to relieve poverty, sickness and distress among those in necessitous circumstances in Colin Neighbourhood.

Colin Sure Start is a government led programme working with parents and children under the age of four in the Colin area. Our main focus is to value and support all children aged 0-4 and their families by providing free services, activities and programmes that focus on early education, health, family support and play development.

Our vision is to reach out to families with children aged 0-4 years...laying foundations, creating opportunities and working in partnership to give every child the best possible start in life.

The aims of Sure Start are to complement the work of existing local services and provide young families with advice on where to go and who to speak to, if they have more specialised needs or problems.

The ongoing support that Sure Start provides can help to make sure that children flourish both at home and when they go to school.

Sure Start aims to improve the ability to learn, health and social development of the children that use its services.

The Sure Start programme is supported by a number of key principles:

To coordinate, streamline and add value to existing services for young children and their families in local communities

To involve parents

To avoid stigma

To ensure lasting support

To be sensitive to local families' needs

To promote the participation of all local families

Sure Start work is focused on six high outcomes to ensure children are:

Being healthy

Enjoying learning and achieving

Living in safety and with stability

Living in a society which respects their rights

Experiencing economic and environmental wellbeing

Contributing positively to community and society

Colin Sure Start broadly delivers two types of service in the local community; Early Years Services and Family Services. Within each of these areas we offer a diverse range of programmes, activities and support that families can avail of.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Public benefit

Public benefits are: -

(a) The promotion for the public benefit of urban regeneration in the Colin area and the surrounding catchment areas in Belfast and the city of Lisburn (the "area of benefit"), an area of social and economic deprivation, by all or any of the following means:

1. The development and education of children below statutory age
2. Better understanding of the physical, emotional and mental health needs of children and adults in the community with better health and well-being will having an impact from pregnancy to early development
3. The relief of poverty in such ways as may be thought fit
4. The provision of recreational facilities for families or those who by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, poverty or social and economic circumstances, have need of such facilities;

The direct benefits which flow from this purpose are improvements in the social/economic circumstances of parents/children living in the area of benefit including greater access to training and education programmes/guidance, and stronger participation of all age groups. This promotes neighbourhood renewal, resilience and healthier communities. These, benefits are demonstrated through member's feedback, quarterly/annual activity reports and outcomes-based evaluation. This purpose does not lead to harm.

The beneficiaries of this purpose are all parents and children.

(a) private benefit to trustees may arise if the knowledge they gain as a trustee to good governance and urban regeneration is transferable to another setting. These benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to the beneficiaries.

(b) To provide encouragement and practical support services to existing and new parents's groups in the area of benefit so as to increase their efficiency and effectiveness in achieving their charitable aims;

The direct benefit which flows from this purpose is that knowledge and skills are transferred to support parents's groups in the area of benefit, increasing levels of skills and capacity to achieve their charitable aims. Evidence to demonstrate this benefit will be the sustainability of parents's and children's activity within the area of benefit. This purpose does not lead to harm.

The beneficiaries of this purpose are all parents and children.

There is no private benefit arising from this purpose.

(c) To develop the capacity and skills of parents in the area of benefit in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs and to participate more fully in society. The direct benefit which flows from this purpose is that through developing a self-help model, families are supported to build their capacity and skills to identify their needs and to develop services to meet their distinct needs. The evidence to demonstrate this benefit is provided from members' feedback, increased representation on community forums/networks, quarterly/annual monitoring and activity reports. This purpose does not lead to harm. The beneficiaries of this purpose are all families and children.

There is no private benefit arising from this purpose.

(d) To promote social inclusion, equality of opportunity and good relations across all diversity strands, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and disability and to encourage diversity. The direct benefit which flows from this purpose is that the project will contribute to the development of a more inclusive, equitable and diverse society through delivery of good relations programmes. This will increase local understanding and acceptance of diversity.

These benefits are demonstrated through greater inclusively and diversity within the membership/community. This purpose does not lead to harm. The beneficiaries of this purpose are all parents and children. There is no private benefit arising from this purpose.

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STRATEGIC REPORT

Financial position

The company had net Outgoing resources for the year of £976 (2022: net incoming resources of £6,917), which reflected the completion of a number of projects during the year. Unrestricted funds increased during the year by £1,358 whilst restricted funds decreased by £2,334.

As we began the 2022 year in April, Covid-19 measures and restrictions were very much still in place, and while face-to-face delivery had returned for the project in our childrens groups and parent support programmes, this was still with significant mitigations in place, including social distancing. This continued to have an impact on the group sizes that the project was able to cater for across many of our postnatal programmes, and there was significant additional work required in implementing safe procedures, risk assessments, additional hygiene measures and planning. But the project, with the experience of the previous period had developed good systems to continue to deliver services in a safe way and these were implemented by a committed staff team who were determined to continue to provide quality early years experiences for parents and families.

We had also experienced increasing demand as services returned to face-to-face delivery following the Covid-19 lockdowns, with high volumes of referrals from external agencies and parents and families themselves coming forward seeking support and services. This was really positive, and demonstrated the value of our work and also perhaps many activities that were taken for granted until they were stopped during lockdowns and their impact was truly felt. But it also meant that a backlog of families who had missed out on these vital social groups and experiences suddenly were all seeking to engage at the same time, and this created challenges for the project, in trying to support all these families and manage this increased demand. In many cases, the project ran additional groups, often delivering back-to-back programmes to facilitate twice the number of attendees. Once again, this is a huge testament to the dedication and commitment of the staff team at Colin Sure Start, stepping up and finding solutions to meet the family's needs. These additional programmes were reflected in our outcomes and outputs report, with many of our business plan targets for delivered programmes being exceeded by significant numbers.

Another challenge that the project had to manage during this accounting year was the rising costs of delivery - energy costs for both gas, oil and electric all increased significantly during the year, and many goods and services that the project require for delivery increased in price due to increased costs of production and transportation. Many of the venues that the project hires or leases to deliver our services in the community passed on these increasing energy costs in the form of higher hourly rates, which also contributed to higher running costs for the project. The project managed this by undertaking a number of efficiency savings: looking at where we could deliver more activities in the same venues, or making better use of venues that the project is able to use for free. We were also helped by the completion of a major and long-planned renovation and upgrade of one of our settings in Lagmore, which added an additional facilitation venue in this area for own exclusive use which gave us significant scope and less reliance on community hire venues,

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for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

One big positive and a major development during the year, as mentioned above, was the redevelopment and complete refit of one of our venues in Lagmore on the grounds of Christ the Redeemer Chapel. Those involved in the project will know this has been something that we have been trying to get resolved for many years; as the classroom that we were renting for the delivery of our Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Olds was slowly falling into disrepair and the building itself aging and becoming affected by damp and subsidence. We were able to work with the Down and Connor Diocese, who agreed to fund a major and complete refit of the mobile classroom unit, provided that Sure Start were willing to take on the whole building on a 6-year lease. The Board sought advice and the project manager worked closely with representatives of the Diocese on plans and an agreed timescale, with the work all being completed and a grand re-opening of the refurbished building taking place in September 2022. This is really an excellent development for the project, and has allowed not only the resumption of the Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year olds to continue to be delivered on the one side of the building, but another classroom on the other side of the building now supports a range of parent and baby support programmes on a daily basis, with some evening programmes for Antenatal parents also delivered from this venue. This was a real success and the culmination of years of hard work, perseverance and planning, and great commitment and support from the local parish and Diocese to the work that Sure Start is doing.

Staffing continued to be affected by Covid-19 sickness absence and cover for programmes remained challenging, but the project recruited for additional bank staff in Early Years during the year and have increased the staff that have been through checks and vetted on the Bank register now to 3 currently which can help out with cover on short-term basis.

The project also celebrated achieving stage 3 of the prestigious UNICEF BFI accreditation in February, an accolade that acknowledges good practice in supporting breastfeeding and responsive bottle feeding as an organisation. This involved external auditors visiting the project, interviewing staff and parents and review the support structures for breastfeeding that the project has in place. The feedback from assessors was very positive, remarking on the value and good support that parents are receiving to encourage health development but also messages about the close bond and relationship building being so important for new parents and babies.

Principle funding sources

Principle funders are:

- Eastern Childcare Partnership
- SEHSCT - Fruit + Vegetables Programme
- Public Health Agency
- Colin Neighbourhood Partnership

Reserves policy

The Charity is funded by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board through the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust.

On Occasion the charity also receives restricted income from other funders. The Charity has to monitor its compliance with the policy of funding on a regular basis. Principle funding sources are the Department of Education.

Future plans

The project will continue our work on developing our outdoor play provision, with a number of new programmes already being piloted and rolled out offering parents and children outdoor play opportunities and information about the benefits that these can have on children's health. The project will continue to develop our services for children with additional needs both as home support and small group-based provision based on the needs of the community.

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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.

Governance of the Charity

During the period under review the directors met monthly. Trustees/directors are appointed by nominations made in writing by any existing director. At the General Meeting nominated directors are appointed by election.

Related parties

Colin Neighbourhood Sure Start Project has no directly related parties but does have partner organisations.

Colin Sure Start works closely with a number of partner organisations throughout the Colin area. These partnerships help us achieve a cohesive approach to Early Years education and health promotion in Colin and give local residents the best service that we can.

We currently fund a number of organisations and also work closely in partnership with other relevant bodies.

Barnardos Travellers Early Years' Service - Colin Sure Start currently funds Barnardos to help support local travellers in the Colin area with children from 0-4.

Ionad Na Fuiseoige - Ionad Na Fuiseoige is a local Irish immersion family centre and crèche. Colin Sure Start currently assist the centre to provide one of our Sure Start Developmental Programme for Two Year Olds programmes and a crèche. We also use the centre to deliver a weekly parent and toddlers group and other programmes and activities.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust - Colin Sure Start works in close partnership with the SEHSCT to deliver our Speech and Language support programmes.

St Luke's Family Centre - Cara House - Cara House offers support to families in the community through their parents drop in and programme of activities which are supported by our daily crèche facility for children aged 0-4 years. Their range of programmes aim to improve personal development, provide information on family and personal health, learn new skills and support members of the community to move away from the benefits cycle and back into employment if that is their aim. Colin Sure Start currently provides financial assistance to the centre to run their crèche. We also run several programmes and activities in the facility.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Risk management

The principles of good governance are embedded within all aspects of Colin Neighbourhood Sure Start Project Limited operations with management and staff being keenly aware of the Board's responsibility of ensuring that the organisation protects itself from financial exposure and reputational damage. A close working relationship is maintained between the Board and management to ensure that operationally staff are aware of the standards required of them by the Board and the Board are always in a position to provide guidance and support to management in the discharge of their duties. This two way relationship is the key feature of Colin Neighbourhood Sure Start Project Limited governance arrangements and is a key strength in the company.

A conscientious approach to ensuring that contractual project requirements are achieved has been maintained at all times both in the accounting period being reported on and since Colin Neighbourhood Sure Start Project Limited establishment. Very tight financial controls on expenditure and all financial commitments are maintained at all times and project staff have been trained and have become experienced in budgetary controls. In both these areas ie Project delivery and financial controls management all staff have established close working relationships with funding organisations to ensure all mandatory standards are consistently achieved. Board representatives also actively engage with funding bodies,

The Board, management and staff are fully aware that the nature of the work in which Colin Neighbourhood Sure Start Project Limited is involved can bring with it a high level of scrutiny to ensure that all activities are fully compliant with funding requirements and, therefore, beyond reproach. The Board of Colin Neighbourhood Sure Start Project Limited is, therefore, greatly reassured of the company's compliance with the highest of standards of governance on the basis that all monitoring and evaluation of project delivery demonstrates achievement of all funders' objectives and that funders' audits and vouching of financial expenditure and the statutory audit confirm compliance with both probity and regularity in the use of monies received.

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.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Colin Neighbourhood Sure Start Project 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".

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;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES - continued

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.

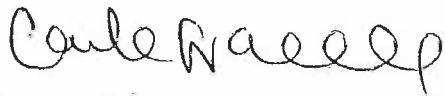
In so far as the trustees are aware:

- 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.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 4 September 2023 and signed on the board's behalf by:



Miss Carla Leah Fraser - Trustee

