

2023 began with uncertainty and pessimism around funding. The Star Neighbourhood Centre faced short term funding arrangements and huge cuts in available funding

The sector, still recovering from the covid pandemic now faced with the cost of living crisis. This coupled with the political vacuum at Stormont, which had left us without a functioning Assembly, has created an unprecedented funding environment. The reality was we were required to do much more, with much less.

Against this ominous backdrop The Star Neighbourhood continued to deliver much needed services and support for the community. The SNC board applaud the tireless work of our staff and volunteers in providing an impressive number of projects, programmes, activities and events throughout the past year.

This year approximately 130 people directly benefit from our services, and the indirect beneficiaries is double this. Community participation is at the heart of our organisation. All our activities whether it be improving access to quality childcare, making our communities safer, youth development, building cohesive communities or building capacity; it is all about making life a little better for residents.

Our family support services includes an Early Years childcare Service, an out of school's project, children's holiday schemes and parents' development and support programmes.

Our youth service delivered a range of Personal, Social &, Emotional development programmes for young people aged from 10-20 years old as well as several Good Relations and intervention programmes

The long established older persons group continue to meet at least once a week. This group provides a place where older people can meet, socialise and come together to participate in programmes and events. The group offers older people the opportunity to get involved in wider community activities, helping to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Our volunteer programme provided access to opportunities and supports people to learn and develop.

We contributed to improving the health and well-being of residents by providing a range of Health promotion programs. We continue to act as a local resource center for the community. Offering services such as photocopying/scanning, use of PC/Laptops. Wi-Fi/internet access, telephone use and lending equipment.

We believe local community based and generic projects such as ours, offers first level intervention and quality services which have an immediate, visible and discernible effect on people who have personally endured and experienced the devastating effects living in an area of disadvantage

The Star Neighbourhood Centre continues to work in partnership with community groups' organisations and agencies in order to develop skills, strengthening organisational structure and processes, addressing equality issues and promoting engagement and participation.

This report contains the organisational key strategic aims and the activities and services delivered during the year to achieve desired outcomes.

Star Neighbourhood Board are delighted with the organisations performance and focus on positive outcomes to improve the lives of residents.

A special thank you must be extended once again to our members who actively support the star and our work. To our funders, in particular our main funders Department for Communities Neighbourhood Renewal. The Department of Education Pathway fund, and Belfast city council, without their support we would not exist.

To all the organisations and individuals who have supported the Star Neighbourhood Centre through the good times and the not so good times we thank you.

Liam Wiggins
Chairperson

Star Neighbourhood Centre Purposes and Activities

The Star Neighbourhood Centre is an organic and generic community organisation, based on the Duncairn Gardens interface in the New Lodge area of North Belfast. We are a quality driven organisation where the focus is on our user requirements and where quality is demonstrated in our day-to-day operations. We aim to respond to locally identified need through close engagement with the community, beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries. The services the Star offers are tailored to meet local need, e.g., opening hours and range of activities and programmes. The Star works on a holistic basis within the neighbourhood, catering for pre-school age children to providing a services for older people. Given its 'position' within the community, the Star Neighbourhood Centre has the flexibility to be able to react to particular situations and respond to changing local needs as and when they arise.

Star Neighbourhood Centre provides a number of programmes, facilities and services to the Greater New Lodge community. These include:-

- Early Years Project
- Out of Schools project
- Family Support
- Youth projects
- Older Persons support
- Support for groups
- Volunteer development Projects
- Community inclusion events

As well as the provision of services, the Star acts as a development catalyst for the area advocating and campaigning on behalf of the community to attract resources and drawing the attention of resource providers and policy makers to the needs of the Greater New Lodge area.

Review Of the year:

- 46 Children benefited from the childcare services
- 48 people participated in Good relations projects
- 10 volunteers engaged in community development activities
- 68 children took part in holiday schemes
- 21 people took part in programmes to support and develop parents
- 30 Received food voucher support
- 50 Older people took part in a good relation social events
- 15 individual young people received range of OCN qualifications
- 30 children & young people took part in mental health promotion/awareness programmes
- 26 people participated in programmes to promote a healthy lifestyle
- 40 young people benefitting from youth inclusion/diversionary projects

Governance and Structure

The Star Neighbourhood Centre is a Company limited by guarantee [NI46763] and also a registered charity [NIC104759]. This structure has been found suitable, meets all legal obligations and protects the Centre and Directors in the event of financial failure.

Currently 9 local people are on the board of directors. The roles, functions and responsibilities of the committee are as follows:-

- Deciding the overall strategy of the Centre;
- Acting as Company Directors, leasehold and employers, and taking full responsibility for all legal aspects involved in these areas of work;
- Setting structures and procedures in place for the Committee to be maintained and replaced;
- Representing the Committee on external platforms and to the general public; and
- Being collectively responsible for the management of the Centre.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

The Star Neighbourhood Centre has adopted the following as its Mission, Vision and Value Statements:

Mission

To improve the quality of life of residents by providing essential services to the Greater New Lodge area

Vision

Working to develop a cohesive and thriving community

Values

In working together towards our mission, we are committed to a number of values which underpin all that we do and the way that we do it.

- **Community led** – the participation of local people is central to our work;
- **Respect** – everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect;
- **Equality and Social Justice** – we seek to challenge poverty, injustice, and discrimination in all its forms;
- **Quality** – we value creativity and innovation; we strive to deliver quality and best practice in everything we do;
- **Accessibility** – we work to remove barriers and increase accessibility to our services; and
- **Integrity** – we work together at all times, ensuring sensitivity and openness.

Registered Company number

NIO 46763 (Northern Ireland)

Registered Charity number

NIC104759

Trustees

Trustees

Liam Wiggins	Chairperson
Gerard O'Reilly	Treasurer
Kate Clarke	Secretary
Marisa McMahon	
Cecilia Heron	
Sally Smith	
Joe Doherty	
Tommy Quigley	
Liam Corr	

Future Plans

Four strategic goals will determine the services programmes and projects we deliver. Our outcome based approach in our work will provide a basis by which we can judge our success in our delivery. Each aim is supported by a series of outcomes which specifies the changes we want to see, the difference we want to make.

It sets out our goals and how we will achieve them. These Strategic Aims will be achieved through operational objectives. Overall our strategy is underpinned by our Vision Mission and Values which drives all that we do.

The core areas of our work are defined as:

Community Development

Childcare

Youth

Organisational Development

Therefore the strategic aims of the Star Neighbourhood Centre reflect these areas as follows:

Strategic Aim 1

To meet the identified needs of our community through leadership, participation and empowerment in order that the community continues to positively develop

Strategic Aim 2

To provide high quality and accessible childcare services for local families

Strategic Aim 3

To provide opportunities for young people to engage in personal and social development activities and to leave a legacy for the community

Strategic Aim 4

To be a 'fit for purpose' organisation that strives to continually develop and deliver high quality service provision

Capital improvements

The refurbishment of the playground is completed. We are grateful for the substantial funding from Belfast City Council Local Investment Fund and Big Lottery awards for All, for making it all possible

Capital Grant from Department Of Communities funded a boiler replacement and the internal painting of the building

Planned Projects/Programmes

T: BUC programmes for young people

Community inclusion event for older people

New Early years project