

Raising the bar for Childminding

NICMA provide high quality, childcare support for the Childminding Sector across Northern Ireland

Contents Training Department Membership Services p12 p14 Acknowledgements Accounts Chair's Report p16 NICMA Staff Team Director's Report Childminding Development p18 Childminding Week ₅ Childminder of the year





Every parent who uses a registered childminder knows just how important that person becomes in their child's life. A childminder is a major influence in the child's development.

Chair's Report

And, as we know, there is no neat distinction between care and learning. These are intertwined strands of the complex process of nurturing a small person. A good childcarer provides an environment in which children feel safe and cherished, in which they can develop relationships, and which give children appropriate stimulation and development opportunities through play.

High quality childminding not only has long term benefits for the child, but is a critical factor for parents — particularly mothers, who want to take up or stay in employment or access training opportunities.

The new Childcare Strategy for Northern Ireland is long overdue, but its implementation will hopefully ensure that the issues facing the Childminding sector and the wider Early Years sector are identified and strategies put in place to address. These include workforce development for providers, rural childcare, affordability for parents, accessibility and unregistered childcare. We look forward to working with the relevant Government Departments in the coming months.

In the absence of a Childcare Strategy, NICMA has continued to support the development of home-based childminding services though its work with the sector. As the sole organisation working with registered childminders and with nearly 30 years experience, NICMA are best placed to meet the needs of self employed childcarers and do so by providing a whole raft of services — promotion and development of new childminders, working with those already registered to ensure quality and sustainability, helping with the business side of childminding and supporting parents in their quest to find a suitable childminder for their child.

I commend all of the NICMA staff and the Childminding Advisory Council for their tireless work in meeting their aims. Thank you also to my fellow Trustees on the Board for their commitment.

Vim Currie

Jim Currie Chair



this year to see the commitment to the development and implementation of a Childcare Strategy highlighted within the Programme for Government which the sector has been lobbying for over a number of years.

Director's Report

As the largest and most affordable form of childcare, NICMA believe that childminding has a critical role to play in how the strategy develops and we look forward to working closely with all stakeholders in the coming year.

The implementation of the Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care for children aged under 12 has underpinned much of NICMA's work throughout the year. The new requirement for Core Training in three elements — Safeguarding,



Health and Safety and First Aid has certainly been welcomed, although this is only the starting point for quality; as childcarers working in isolation running a small business - childminders need more skills and knowledge than just the minimum requirements. NICMA's Training Department were well placed to develop and deliver core training to both prospective and currently registered childminders and we continue to do so.

We recently said 'Goodbye' to our Assistant Director, Jenny Adair who has secured a post as Childcare Partnership Manager with the Northern Health & Social Care Trust. Jenny was with NICMA for over 5 years and will be greatly missed by all — we wish her well in her new employment. The post of Assistant Director has recently been filled by Angela Stallard who brings a wealth of experience from working in the early years and childcare sector.

As always, an organisation is only as good as its team — and we are lucky that the staff team stays constant, committed and hardworking; without their knowledge and understanding of the Childminding sector, we would not be able to support childminders in the ways that we do.

The Childminding Advisory Council ensures that the 'voice' of members is heard and addressed and the Board of Trustees continues to be accountable. My thanks to all for contributing to another successful year for NICMA.

Bridget Nodder Director

Bridget Noadler

Childminding Development

NICMA Childminding Development Officers continue to offer regional wide support across the Health and Social Care Trust areas, ensuring that childminding needs are met at a local level.

As a membership organisation, NICMA are continually striving to meet the needs and demands of our members – those who are offering a quality childminding service for families and children. 414 new members have joined us this year; currently 61% of registered childminders across Northern Ireland are NICMA members. Childminding can guite often be an isolated profession and with that in mind our Childminding Development Officers have continued to support and facilitate 25 Support Groups, Drop – In's, and Buddy Groups throughout the year. These groups offer peer support opportunities for **NICMA members** and topics discussed this year have included Carbon Monoxide Awareness, Minimum Standards, Registration and Inspection. Nutrition, and Play.



"The BT8 Buddy Group that I belong to is excellent. It is always very informative and is a great source of support for me. The Childminding Development Officer does a brilliant job and her hard work is evident through the success of the group. Thank you NICMA for your support." Childminder, North Belfast



New developments this year have included Pre – Registration **Briefing Sessions** run in partnership with the Early Years teams in the Trusts. The purpose of the Briefing Sessions is to provide prospective childminders with information on the profession of Childminding; the process in becoming a registered childminder; and childminding as a long term career. The sessions are proving to be instrumental in helping people make an informed decision as to whether to proceed with their childminding application. A total of 31 Briefing Sessions were held throughout the year with approximately **550 prospective childminders**



"I have frequent support from other Buddy Group members. A while ago I was considering giving up childminding due to the apparent lack of demand for my services. Thankfully due to the support of my Childminding Development Officer and Buddy Group childminders I now have no vacancies. The Buddy Group is a great vehicle for passing on and receiving vacancy information."

Childminder, Belfast

attending.

Childminding Week

'Childminding Week' is an annual event which aims to raise awareness of Childminding within local communities and to profile the valuable service that Childminders offer in supporting families. The theme for Childminding Week 2012 was 'Promoting Children's Speech & Language in a Home-based Setting'. In total nineteen events were held throughout the province facilitated by NICMA Childminding Peer Support Groups and SureStart Childminding Network members.



Members of **Enniskillen and Dromore Childminding Support Groups** celebrated with a "Camping Trip" to Castlearchdale.

Foyle Childminding Support Group and Little Hands and Shantallow Sure Start Childminding Networks in Londonderry celebrated with a 'Jo Jingles' Music and Rhyme Session.

The Wee Folk Drop-in Centre in Omagh, who were undeterred by bad weather, held an indoor "Camping Adventure" at the Omagh Early Years Centre.

Members of the **Aghalee & Ballinderry Childminding Support Group** and their children enjoyed a day at the Elisabeth Svendsen Trust for Children and Donkeys in Templepatrick.

Childminders from **Lisburn** got together for a morning full of fun at the Kingdom Life City Church coffee shop/play area.

In Belfast childminders and children from the **Belfast Health & Social Care Trust** celebrated Childminding Week with an hour long art and craft event facilitated by the Play Resource Centre.

In Antrim the **Antrim Childminding Support Group** enjoyed a very enjoyable Story Telling Session held in Ballycraigy Primary School.

The **Causeway Childminding Support Group** visited 'Cheeky Chimps' Indoor Play Centre in Coleraine and in Cookstown members of **GOLD SureStart Childminding Network** held their annual celebration with a Rhyme Time session with music, rhymes, songs and bubbles.

GOLD Childminding Support Group members also took part in a workshop on "Promoting Language and Interaction through Storytelling."

Abbey SureStart Childminding Network Childminders and their minded children attended a 'Stay 'n Play' session and Blossom SureStart Childminding Support Group held a Story Telling Morning. Dungannon Childminding Support Group and Banbridge Childminding Support Group both organised Rhyme Time Sessions as part of their celebrations.

GREATFUN WAS HAD BY ALL!











Children's Play - more than fun and games

Funding from the Western Area Childcare Partnership has enabled NICMA to deliver a successful programme of **Play Workshops and Messy Play sessions** in the Western Board area (Limavady, Enniskillen, Derry, Omagh and Dromore).

The programme entitled 'Children's Play - more than fun and games' was delivered in two parts – a **training workshop** which focused on the value and importance of play; and **practical Messy Play Sessions** which offered children and childminders the opportunities to explore natural play materials and extend the childminders knowledge and

skills in providing a varied range of play experiences within their settings.

Alongside the training childminders received a Play Booklet which aimed to reinforce the value and types of play discussed during the training and included practical play ideas for use in the home setting. Over **60 childminders and 114 children** attended the sessions.

'Making Connections' AGM/Conference 2012

NICMA were delighted to welcome Dr. Suzanne Zeedyk at this years Conference who presented the Keynote Address to delegates on the theme of:

"Joy in the air – How childminding actions build children's brains"

This was followed by a choice of workshops: Nurturing joy in the Childminding Setting

Dr. Suzanne Zeedyk

Arts & Crafts

Aisling Reynolds

Signing 4 Childcare

Deirdre McLaughlin

Delegates reported that the day was extremely interesting, valuable and lots of fun!



"The resources used to deliver the sessions were excellent.
The methods were explained really well."

"Great
opportunities to meet
other childminders and
share information
and ideas."

Supporting families through Sure Start Childminding Networks

There are currently **8 Childminding Networks** attached to Sure Start programmes in Northern Ireland which are jointly managed by NICMA and by each of the respective Sure Start programmes. A Childminding Network is defined as:

"...a formal group of registered Childminders who are recruited in a particular geographical area and assessed and monitored to quality standards by a Childminding Network Co-ordinator. The Network is a means of ensuring that Childminders provide high quality care and learning to children and families'.

Childminding Networks are attached to Sure Start programmes in the following areas:

- Clogher Valley
- Newtownabbey [ABBEY]
- G-old, Cookstown area
- Shantallow, Derry
- · Little Hands, Derry
- Splash, Brownlow/Lurgan
- Blossom, Portadown
- Arke

Within these Networks, 104 childminding network members provided 536 childminding places. Of these, 65 sessions were used by 15 children whilst their parent availed of training or employment opportunities, 56 sessions were used by children using community childminding in Clogher Valley SureStart and 67 children were provided with 1725 hours of childcare under the respite placement service.

Key benefits of the networks for children:

- The enhancement of the quality of care provided by Childminders who are network members, in particular, through access to training
- The variety and quality of activities provided for children by network members
- The opportunity for children to mix with other children at the network drop-ins
- The opportunity to go on outings organised by the network which parents either could not easily afford or could not easily manage to organise themselves
- Improvements in all areas of children's development including social skills

Childminders who are Network members are encouraged to gain their **Quality First level 3 accreditation award**. This year **34 childminders completed or were working towards** accreditation. Childminding Network Co-ordinators also provide Drop-in facilities for Childminders and their children. A total of **72 sessions** were held and **49 childminders and 91 + children attended** them. **24 support group sessions** were held with **60 + attending**. Attending the support groups and drop-in helps to lessen the isolation often associated with childminding and helps the children avail of large group play opportunities.

Childminding Network Co-ordinators continue to offer advice, support and mentoring to all potential and registered childminders who are resident within their areas.





"The Childminding Network has given me great support which is much needed when you're a lone worker working from home. Help is only a call away and training opportunities are promoted and highlighted on a regular basis..."





Training Department

Enhancing Childminding services through Training and Quality Initiatives

In all areas of employment, it is vital to update skills and knowledge, and acquire new ones so that the service provided to families is to the best of the carers ability. Childminders who ensure that they are continually updating their professional development are much more likely to offer a high quality service to the children that they care for.

NICMA believe that all children cared for in home based settings are entitled to a high quality experience and therefore, we were delighted that, after many years of lobbying, the 'Childminding and Day Care for children under 12 - Minimum Standards' introduced a requirement for mandatory Core Training. Safeguarding, Health & Safety and Introductory First Aid training are only the very basic skills needed to develop a childminding service and do not take into account the need for knowledge in child development, business & self employment, and working in partnership with parents. We were disappointed that the requirements did not go further in terms of training and qualifications but believe that this is a starting point to build upon.

"Both trainers were very competent, handling 'tough issues' with clarity and sensitivity and all trainees enjoyed their training." Geraldine Anslow Employment Support Mentor Network Personnel, Ballycastle



"I really
enjoyed the style of training.
Very relaxed and open. It was great to
hear a childminders knowledge and
experience. It was useful to read over sample
policies created by NICMA based on the new
standards. Sample scenarios opened a lot of
discussion and helped me understand how
to protect the child and me. Thank you for a
professional informative session."
Childminder, Belfast

The last year has been a busy one with regard to the **development and delivery of Core Training** for both prospective childminders and for the current workforce. With nearly 30 years experience of the Childminding sector NICMA is best placed to design, develop and deliver this training for childminders. Our expertise in this field enabled us to be **commissioned by the Health & Social Care Board** to deliver and facilitate the three core elements — Safeguarding, Health & Safety in a home-based setting and Introductory First Aid — all delivered as 3 hour workshops.

During March 2013, Network Personnel in Ballycastle organised a **funded employment training package for a group of 12 people wanting to become childminders.** NICMA were crucial partners, delivering the statutory required training in Safeguarding, Health and Safety and adding valuable knowledge and skills with specific Business and Record Keeping training focused on child minders' particular situation. Together with their Paediatric First Aid and Disability Awareness, NICMA training made our group of trainees optimally set up to embark on successful child minding careers.

Level 3 Diploma for Children's Care, Learning and Development



The **Level 3 Diploma for Children's Care, Learning and Development** is a nationally recognised qualification currently used as a minimum requirement for anyone wanting to work in a supervisory role in childcare settings throughout the UK. Completion of the qualification proves that a childminder works to National Occupational Standards which are set by experts in the field of childcare. It shows that the provider has the skills, knowledge and understanding about children and young people across the age range 0–19 years.

The diploma is a work-based qualification and in order to complete the full qualification, learners need to be working with children under 5 whilst completing their award. NICMA currently have a pilot programme of the Level 3 Diploma running for 10 registered childminders. The course has been delivered once a month in the NICMA offices starting from September 2012 and will complete in December 2013. The Childminders complete written work at home and all direct observations of their practice are carried out within their childminding setting. As no funding is currently available, the childminders are self funding the course.

Jane Thompson Rutherford states: "Level 3 Diploma has exceeded my expectations! I'm currently studying towards my level three Diploma and thought I would share with Childminders who may be considering to take the course on. I was unsure about the course as I heard the work can be demanding; and it is especially if you don't keep on top of it."

"However, as strange as this may sound I'm so glad that I decided to do it. I've completed lots of training with NICMA and Surestart over the years and did not appreciate until now how much learning I would get from this course. I'm going to have so much more now to offer to children and parents in my setting and can be sure that I will be offering a quality service."

"We get assignments each month and it's tough going but once they are handed in I get excited about what we are going to learn about next wow!! The course work is of a high standard and I know by the end I will have got myself a good QUALITY level 3 Diploma."

Round up of Training 2012 - 13

Training Course	No. of courses	No. of learners		
Introduction to home-based childcare	6	103		
Child Protection, SCCP	5	40		
Inclusion & Diversity, SCCP	3	30		
Core Training [3 elements – Health & Safety,				
Safeguarding & Introduction to First Aid]:				
Prospective childminders:	16	249		
Current childminders:	6	96		
Business Side of Childminding	1	12		
QCF Diploma for Children's Care, Learning and Development	1	10		
Additional training delivered or facilitated by: Childminding Development team include: Business side of Childminding, Children's Play/Messy Play, dangers of carbon monoxide, home accident prevention	27			
Childminding Network team include Policies & Procedures, Blind Cord safety, Infection control	10			

NCB Childminding Research

Childminding in Northern Ireland: an exploration of practice, quality and the impact of vertical placements on children



In conjunction with NICMA, the National Children's Bureau (NCB NI), is currently conducting research on childminding practice, exploring issues around practice and quality. The research which is funded by the Office of the First and deputy First Minister is the first piece of research of its kind here in Northern Ireland.

Phase 1 of the research explored topics including:

- Profile of childminding practice and childminders in Northern Ireland
- The important factors in determining the quality of childminding practice
- The benefits and challenges of vertical placements (i.e. children of different ages being cared for in the same setting)
- Views on the care and education of children by childminders
- Parents' motivations for choosing childminding as opposed to other forms of child care
- Childminders access to training and support.

Commenting on this phase Teresa Geraghty, Senior Research & Development Officer, and Project Manager, National Children's Bureau NI said: "We know already from phase one that this research has important messages for policy makers, training organisations, childminders, and of course parents. Parents and childminders are very clear that childminding is not about babysitting; it is an essential combination of early education and care."

Phase 2 of the research is now underway. The purpose of this is to explore in greater detail some of the survey findings and to gain a more in-depth understanding of the issues associated with quality of practice. Views are also being sought from children themselves.

The final report from this research is due to be published in January 2014.

Childminding Membership Services

The purpose of NICMA membership is to **provide a support service to registered Childminders across Northern Ireland**. We do this by offering an annual Membership package which provides access to training and quality initiatives, peer support, publications, advice and information and appropriate insurance protection.

We are very aware of the economic difficulties with regard to childcare and therefore, have been able to keep the annual Membership fee constant for a staggering 6th Year! We recognise the value of loyalty from members and for those with 10 years membership or more we have been able to give them a £10 discount. Buddy/support group members can access an additional £5 discount.

The Western Health and Social Trust continued to support childminders in their area by contributing £12 per childminder to their NICMA membership.

Childminding, like any other profession, is subject to attrition and every year, a number of childminders leave the profession — either as a result of natural wastage or because they are unsustainable as small businesses. Nevertheless, we welcomed **414 new members** this year which gave NICMA a final **membership total of 2437** [61% of sector].

Registered Childminders 31/03/13	NICMA Members 31/03/13	% childminders as NICMA Members	Registered places NICMA members
4023	2437	61%	12,248



Childminding Information, Advice & Vacancy service

NICMA's **Childminding Information**, **Advice & Vacancy service** has been the cornerstone of our work for many years as the sole organisation supporting and helping to develop high quality childminding. The service is offered to different target groups:

Prospective childminders – who may be considering childminding as a career.

Currently registered childminders — who may require advice about the business aspect of their job or need help filling vacancies.

Parents - looking for childcare places or requiring information about the business side of childminding.

NICMA's website has continued to be the first port of call for both childminders and parents for information with **50,705 visits** to the site. This is mirrored by the decrease in calls received in the office as people turn to the internet more and more as 'the source of all knowledge'.

The **Childminding Vacancy service** provides full details of all Childminding members, both as a telephone service and on the website. There are currently **903 members** advertising their vacancies on the website. The members section of the website has been utilised more this year with childminders downloading Policies and Factsheets to enable them to meet the Minimum Standards for Daycare and Childminding.

In our quest to keep in touch with members NICMA are now using social media such as **Facebook** and **Twitter (@NIChildminding)** to share news and communicate with our followers. NICMA's Facebook page continues to be well used with **1090** followers currently which is a **38%** increase on last years figure. Many Childminders and parents now use Facebook to pose questions and queries and we in turn are finding it a very useful tool in getting our information out to our target audience.

During the year we have developed a bi-monthly **E-Brief** which also acts as a tool for sharing news and policy developments.

Childminding Advisory Council



As a membership organisation, it is essential that we engage with childminders to ensure that their '**voice**' is heard and that they have an opportunity to input into the running of the organisation.

The **Childminding Advisory Council** was set up to bring together member representation from across Northern Ireland and we meet regularly moving around the province.

Some of the issues that have been discussed and addressed include:

- Membership & Business pack for childminders
- AGM/Conference
- Minimum Standards
- Childcare Strategy Consultation
- Business Training for Childminders



Summary of Annual Accounts and Report 31 March 2013

NICMA's financial position for the year ending 31 March 2013 is reported in the statement of financial activities indicated as follows:

Throughout 2012/13, the Departments of Health, Social Services & Public Safety and Education continued to support NICMA for Core Services to childminders. Further funding from the Health & Social Care Board enabled NICMA to provide and facilitate prospective childminders with access to Paediatric First Aid, Safeguarding Children and Health and Safety training.

These elements of the newly implemented Childminding Standards are now mandatory as part of childminding registration. The 5 Health and Social Care Trusts, through the Childcare Partnerships, continued to contribute to the funding needed for our development work, thus enabling the Childminding Development Team to maintain their much needed services across all of Northern Ireland.

Childminding Networks (funded by the Department of Education through local Childcare Partnerships) attached to 8 of the SureStart programmes continued to operate successfully in delivering local childminding services for families in their specific areas.

At 31st March 2013, NICMA's total income was very similar to the previous year although the percentage attributed to grants continues to drop. This shift emphasises the need for the organisation to continue to develop and expand on all of the services we provide for our members as the funds we generate from our membership now represent 35% of our total annual income. The charities reserves policy is based on the equivalent of six months running costs to support the organisation and although we aspire to achieve the ideal level of approx £350,000, I am pleased to report that NICMA reserves at 31st March 2013 were £288,223.

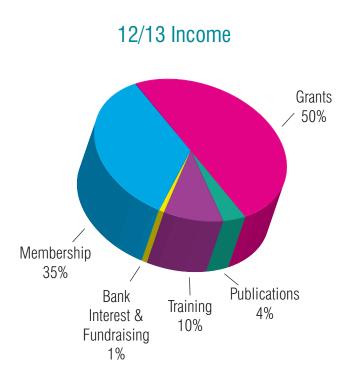
In conclusion, I am happy to report that during the financial year ending on 31st March 2013, NICMA continued to be admirably supported through these difficult times by both members and stakeholders proving that there is undoubtedly a need in the sector for all of the extended support services that we can offer.

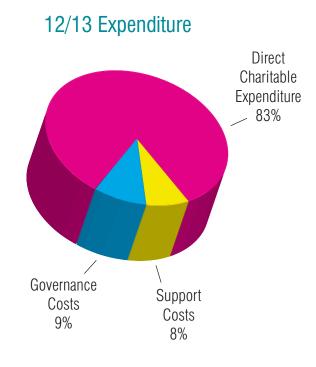
On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to conclude with my thanks to all stakeholders, members, staff, volunteers, and funders for all their support of NICMA and childminding in Northern Ireland.



Statement of Financial Activities	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2013	Total 2012
Incoming Resources					
Voluntary Income	236,166	-	418,322	654,488	625,504
Activities for generating funds	26,130	-	37,125	63,255	93,476
Investment income	182	-	-	182	1,148
TOTAL INCOME	262,478	-	455,447	717,925	720,128
Outgoing Resources					
Charitable Activities	128,303	_	456,896	585,199	665,293
Governance	60,444	-	-	60,444	59,537
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	188,747	-	456,896	645,643	724,830
Net Incoming/Outgoing Resources for Year	73,731	-	(1,449)	72,282	(4,702)
Fund Balances Brought Forward	214,619	-	9,921	224,540	229,242
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	288,350	-	8,472	296,822	224,540

Norma Shearer Honorary Treasurer





^{*}A full and detailed copy of the accounts is available on request.



Acknowledgements Thank You

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of a large number of organisations who have funded staff posts and supported Childminding initiatives over the last year. We would like to extend our thanks to those organisations. We also extend a huge thanks to our members whose commitment and support is very much appreciated. In 2012/13 our stakeholders include:

- Arke SureStart
- Blossom SureStart
- Childminding members
- Clogher Valley SureStart
- · Craigavon Intercultural programme
- · Department of Education
- Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety
- · Early Years
- Eastern Childcare Partnership
- · Eastern Health & Social Services Board
- · G-old SureStart
- Little Hands SureStart
- National Childrens Bureau [NI]
- Network Personnel, Ballycastle
- NICMA Board of Trustees
- NICMA Childminding Advisory Council
- NICMA Childminding Support Groups

- · Health & Social Care Board
- Shantallow SureStart
- South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust
- Southern Childcare Partnership
- Southern Health & Social Care Trust
- Splash SureStart
- Western Childcare Partnership
- · Western Health & Social Care Trust

NICMA acknowledge Sharon Gallagher, Childminder from Dungannon and her minded children for the photographs used throughout

NICMA Staff Team

NICMA STAFF TEAM

Bridget Nodder Director

Jenny Adair Assistant Director [to Nov 12]
Angela Stallard Assistant Director [from Jan 13]

Valerie Earney Director's Secretary

CHILDMINDING DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Liz Brown Childminding Development Officer, ECCP & NCCP [from Aug 12]

Fiona Clendinning Childminding Development Officer, ECCP
Michelle Grant Childminding Development Officer, SCCP
Maria Magee Childminding Development Officer, WCCP
Clare McKay Childminding Development Officer, NCCP

Lyn Bradley Secretary, Development Team

TRAINING & QUALITY TEAM

Barbara QuinnTraining ManagerSusan AndersonTraining OfficerMaeve MilneTraining OfficerClaire VittiTraining Administrator

CHILDMINDING NETWORKS

Maria Kelly Childminding Network Co-ordinator, ABBEY SureStart [to June 12]
Liz Flanagan Childminding Network Co-ordinator, ABBEY SureStart [from Sept 12]
Una Leonard Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Clogher Valley SureStart

Joanna Legg Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Shantallow SureStart and Little Hands SureStart

Michelle Grant Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Arke SureStart
Tina McKeown Childminding Network Co-ordinator, G-old SureStart

Roisin Rogers Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Splash SureStart [from Sept 12]

Katie Turkington Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Blossom SureStart

Anita Stansfield Daycare/Training Co-ordinator, Clogher Valley SureStart [on secondment from Nov 12]

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Joan Hewitt Finance & Administration Manager

Catherine Rogers Finance & Monitoring Officer
Niky McGrattan Information & Advice

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Barbara Wilson Chair [to April 12]]
Jim Currie Chair [from April 12]
Norma Shearer Treasurer

Norma Shearer Margaret Fletcher Teresa Geraghty Alison McNulty

