

ANNUAL REPORT 2013:2014





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



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Director's Report

Core training in Health & Safety, Safeguarding and First Aid for both practicing and prospective childminders has meant a commitment to a basic level of training; the introduction of formal Childminding policies has required every childminder to think about their day-to-day practice and ensure that those policies are relevant and appropriate and have been agreed with parents. NICMA have supported childminders through every stage of the implementation of the Standards and will continue to do so in the coming year. The standards have underpinned so much of NICMA's work throughout the year and it is important to recognise the role that all of NICMA's staff teams have played in the development and delivery of training, support and advice to help upskill the sector.

NICMA as an organisation has also gone through changes and challenges, not least the untimely death of our colleague and friend Barbara Quinn who, as Training Manager, had been part of the organisations growth and development for nearly 18 years. This report has to be dedicated to Barbara.

Jim Currie, NICMA Chair, retired in November due to ill health and we thank him for his contribution to the organisation throughout the years. Norma Shearer, CEO Training for Women Network has taken on the role of Chair and we have also welcomed new members to the Board of Trustees.

We welcomed Bright Start, the NI Executive's Strategy for Affordable and Integrated Childcare and the Strategic Framework and Key First Actions as a starting point in developing services. As I write this report, plans are afoot to carry out a full Consultation exercise to develop a long term Strategy and it is hoped that the value and the benefits of Childminding for children and families will be recognised and included within that document.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget Nodder". The script is cursive and fluid.

Bridget Nodder
Director

The year has been one of continuing change for Early Years and Childcare but probably more so for Childminding than any other part of the sector. The introduction of the Minimum Standards for Childminding and Daycare in July 2012 has required all childminders to make changes to the way in which they deliver their own childcare service.

Childminding Development

NICMA's team of five Childminding Development Officers work across Northern Ireland to: **'promote quality home-based childcare for the benefit of children, families and communities'**

The role of the Childminding Development team has changed in recent years with more of an outcomes - focused approach to supporting and enhancing childminding services. Whilst promoting Childminding as a worthwhile career is still important, there is less of a need to carry out targeted recruitment campaigns. The requirement for prospective childminders to attend a **pre-registration Briefing Session** prior to making an application for registration ensures that those individuals are making an informed choice as to their career and are **committed to the process. Much of the teams work this year has focused on the Minimum Standards** and ensuring that childminders are fully informed of all the changes and new requirements and supporting them through the process.



Fun & Facts Day, Ballyclare

Outcomes:

Promoting and supporting Childminding provision throughout the Trust areas

- Over **50 Pre-registration briefing sessions** held for prospective childminders with **965 attending**
- Raising awareness of the **legal requirements of Childminding registration**, thereby reducing the level of 'unregistered childminding'

Supporting currently registered Childminders

- Supporting **28 support/buddy groups with advice & training**
- Advising on **the implementation of the Minimum Standards** for Childminding and Daycare
- Supporting **'Childminding Week'** to raise awareness locally

Providing a local Childminding Information & Advice service

- Helping both **childminders & parents with advice**
- **Information Events/Promotional activity** to raise the profile of Childminding

Enhancing the quality of Childminding provision

- **Providing training opportunities** through a range of courses
 - Core Training, 'Getting off to a Good Start' Business training, Messy Play, Early Movers



Childminding Information stand

"My first point of contact was with NICMA. They were invaluable in the advice and practical support they provided on a variety of issues linked to my new role as a registered childminder."
Julie Dilley, registered Childminder, Bangor



Childminding Week 2013

'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.

Over 26 events and activities were held during Childminding Week in May around the theme of **'Promoting the Childminding Experience'** facilitated by NICMA's Childminding Development team and supported by a number of Childminding Groups and Networks.





Supporting families through SureStart Childminding Networks

There are currently **7 Childminding Networks** attached to SureStart programmes in Northern Ireland which are jointly managed by NICMA and by each of the respective SureStart 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'.

Within the Networks we have **106 childminding network members who offer over 600 childminding places**. Over **700 respite sessions** were used by SureStart families under the respite placement scheme which is an invaluable service to both children and their parents.

Childminding Network Co-ordinators also provide Drop-in facilities for Childminders and their children.

This year a total of **82 sessions** were held and **63 childminders and 96+ children attended**. **43 support group sessions** were held with **137 attending** throughout the year. Being part of a support group or drop-in helps to lessen the isolation often associated with childminding and helps the children avail of large group play opportunities.

Childminders who are Network members are encouraged to gain their **Quality First Accreditation award** as well as any **continuous professional development opportunities** in order to enhance their practice. This year, as well as attending Core Training in order to meet the Minimum Standards, a range of additional training took place including Emotional Wellbeing, Physical Play, Food Hygiene, Child Safety and Business Training – **over 200 childminders accessed training**.

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





My Childminder is...
...the
Best!



The Benefits of Core Training

Last year, GOLD SureStart Childminding Network, Cookstown, was given the opportunity to attend NICMA's **Core Training in Health and Safety and Safeguarding Children**.

Like everything, there was a catch; it was to be held on a Saturday! After working all week, no one really enjoys giving up their precious free weekends for training, because let's face it, it's not the most exciting of training courses that we have to attend. However, the training is valid for 3 years, is a requirement of our Childminding Registration, so who couldn't give up one day to attend a course that is so vital to running our business. In hindsight, **6 hours of our time for 3 years of peace of mind was a pretty good deal.**

Facilitated by NICMA's Training Manager, Susan Anderson, the course focused on the importance of Health and Safety in our business, how to carry out risk assessments and how to implement them into our practice, as well as the importance of Safeguarding the children in our care and the channels to follow if safeguarding issues were to arise.

This course became available to us around the time the Minimum Standards were being introduced. I think we could all agree that there was still confusion and conflictions around these standards, but the courses really helped to link into these standards and help us to understand what really was expected of us as childminders.

Until attending the training you aren't quite aware of the importance of these courses to your business, not only to the children but your setting and yourself. It amazes me how much we actually use these policies on a daily basis, just as normal routine, by constantly risk assessing our surroundings, the children, the toys, the activities being carried out and our own home. After attending these courses, you can fully understand and appreciate why they are **mandatory** for all childminders.

Katrina Smith, Childminder, GOLD SureStart Childminding Network



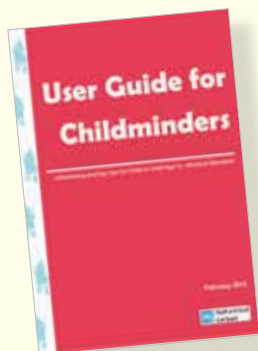
Training and Quality Initiatives

Minimum Standards In Childminding & Daycare Core Training

It has been another busy year 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. NICMA were awarded further funding 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 for prospective childminders. This has been a major piece of work for NICMA and is reflected in the outcome of **134 courses with 1824 learners** accessing this training.



User Guide and Self-Evaluation Training



As a result of the launch of the **Minimum Standards**, the inspection process for childminders is changing. Childminders are now required to complete a self-evaluation form prior to their inspection taking place. NICMA have been commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board to deliver training on the Minimum Standards and the new self-evaluation process in partnership with the Early Years teams to **4000 registered childminders across Northern Ireland**. The training is free of charge and lasts 2½ hours. Every childminder who attends the training will receive a copy of **“User Guide for Childminders”** which has been specifically written for childminders. This is not a replacement for the Standards but does cover each Standard, how it applies to childminders and the minimum needed to provide for inspection.



Level 3 Diploma for Children’s Care, Learning & Development

This year the very first pilot group of childminders completed their Level 3 Diploma for Children’s Care, Learning & Development. For the last 2 years these childminders have been attending regular training sessions and completing assignments in order to build up a portfolio of evidence. They have also been directly observed in their childminding setting. Achieving this qualification shows that they are competent to do the job and have the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to meet the standards required by the sector.

Reflections on Childminders Learning Journeys

describes the childminders learning journeys as they progressed through the diploma.

Some of the comments from learners include:

“The course gave me a huge sense of pride as I had not been in education for nearly twenty years and seeing my portfolio take shape as I completed the units, made me eager to finish. I also enjoyed putting my new knowledge into practice in my childcare setting.”

“As an accomplishment I have built confidence and self-esteem within myself, with a flexible attitude within my childminding business. Both the children and I have benefitted from the knowledge that I have been taught. I would advise anyone in the childminding setting to undertake NICMA training with excellent tutors to provide knowledge and understanding and the importance it has and the impact on children and their families lives’ in building a positive future.”



In December 2013 NICMA received bursaries from the Childcare Partnerships to take another group of childminders through the Level 3 diploma. Childminders throughout Northern Ireland were given the opportunity to apply for this training providing they met the criteria set. This training commenced in March 2014 and all learners are progressing well.

British Heart Foundation Early Movers training

5 NICMA staff had the opportunity to attend a training of trainers for the **British Heart Foundations (BHF) Early Movers Training**. It was then delivered by NICMA staff and representatives from each Trust to childminders across all areas. The training was designed to increase knowledge of the **physical activity guidelines for early years** as well as provide practical ideas on how to increase physical activity for children under five. It provided childminders with a greater understanding of the important role physical activity plays in early year's development. All childminders who attended the training received a free pack consisting of guidance booklets on how to promote physical activity for under 5's.

Developing an Awareness Of Caring For Children With Additional Needs

NICMA were commissioned to deliver 4 **Disability Awareness Raising workshops** within the Children with Disability Training Programme from January - March 2014. Funding to support this Training Programme was awarded through Bright Start - the NI Executive Programme for Affordable and Integrated Childcare. The overarching aim of this was to increase the number of childcarers equipped with the relevant skills and confidence to help care for a child with a disability.

Round up of Training 2013 - 14

| Training Course | No. of courses | No. of learners |
|--|----------------|--|
| Core Training [3 elements] | | |
| Prospective childminders: | | |
| Health & Safety in home-based settings | 33 | 560 |
| Safeguarding Children | 33 | 560 |
| Introduction to Paediatric First Aid [facilitation only] | 28 | 390 |
| Minimum Standards User guide & Self Evaluation | 7 | 104 |
| Current childminders: | | |
| Health & Safety in home-based settings | 39 | 682 |
| Safeguarding Children | 29 | 526 |
| QCF Diploma for Children's Care, Learning & Development | 1 | 10 |
| An Introduction to Caring for Children with Additional Needs | 2 | 32 |
| Promoting Positive Behaviour in the Early Years | 2 | 36 |
| Unit 079 Understand how to set up a home-based childcare setting (1 unit from the Level 3 Diploma) | 1 | 12 |
| Bright Start Programme – Developing an awareness of caring for children with additional needs | 4 | 63 |
| QCF Diploma for Children's Care, Learning & Development | Session 1 | 39 |
| BHF Early Movers | 7 | 96 |
| 'Getting off to a good start' Childminder Business training – 3 hour workshop | 19 | 219 |
| Messy Play session with childminders & children | 23 | 200 childminders 600 children participating |
| TOTAL | 229 | 3529 childminders |





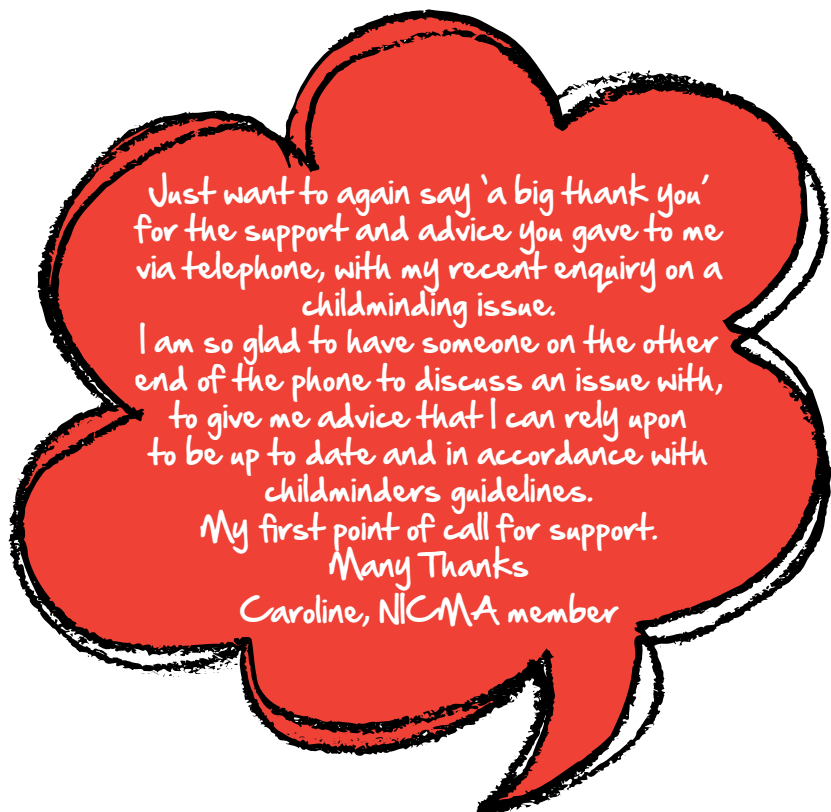
Childminding Membership Services

The purpose of NICMA Membership is to deliver a **support service to registered Childminders across Northern Ireland**. We do this by offering an **annual Membership Package** which provides **access to training & quality initiatives, publications, childminding policies, peer support and advice on running a high quality childcare business**. During the year, NICMA provided services to a total of **2742 (72% of total registered childminders)** members and kept a freeze yet again on the annual membership fee. Membership was fairly evenly spread across Northern Ireland in the Trust areas listed below.

| Health Trust | No. of registered Childminders | NICMA Members receiving a support service during the year |
|---------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Belfast | 523 | 360 |
| South Eastern | 891 | 620 |
| Northern | 1137 | 641 |
| Southern | 619 | 574 |
| Western | 634 | 547 |
| TOTAL | 3804* | 2742 |

*Unconfirmed statistics

- ✓ NICMA also welcomed over 400 new members to the association during the year.
- ✓ Each member is fully protected by both Public and Legal Liability insurances.
- ✓ Training is offered to members at a subsidised rate to ensure that each can comply with the requirements of the new Minimum Standards.
- ✓ During the year, NICMA also offered a range of discount options for members including a £10 loyalty discount for each member who had at least 10 years membership and an additional £5 discount voucher for those regularly attending peer Support Groups.
- ✓ The WHSCT continued to subsidise the childminders registered in their trust area by awarding a grant to NICMA which enabled us to reduce their membership fees.



Childminding Information, Advice & Vacancy Service

This is a key service for parents, childminders, employers and other stakeholders.

We offer access to:

- A database of detailed **Childminder vacancies** to match parents or employers specific childcare needs;
- A telephone and web based **Information & Advice service** to answer all queries related to childminding services;
- A **'Childminding Business Pack'**, updated annually, to assist childminders in offering a professional childcare service;
- A range of **publications and resources** to enhance childcare practice.

In the last year, the service received over 16,000 calls from current childminders, prospective childminders, parents and other stakeholders.

Although the use of the website continues to increase there are still those who prefer the sound of a friendly voice on the end of a phone. Public forums such as NICMA's social networking sites, Facebook and Twitter are becoming more popular and are used daily as a source for information sharing.

NICMA's website is updated daily, with training course details, childcare practice information, latest news and not forgetting the essential opportunity for members to advertise their childminding businesses. Almost half of members use this facility but we would like to see more, as we know that more parents are turning to web-based services for the information they require.

'My Childminding Policies' pack has been developed in response to the Minimum Standards which requires that all aspects of childminding practice have written policies that have been discussed with parents and implemented into the setting.

The pack contains **29 policies** which were developed primarily for members but are also available for purchase by non-members. They are regularly reviewed and can be downloaded (by members) from the members area of our website free of charge.

NICMA is currently developing other new web-based services and hope to redesign and relaunch a new website in the coming year.

Happy reflections on childminding! Blanche Cousins

How would I sum up over 30 years of childminding I ask myself? It's impossible to do so but the words 'challenging, rewarding and fulfilling' come to mind.

When I became a member of the Northern Ireland Childminding Association... it added an important dimension to my role as a childminder. NICMA organised many training courses which proved to be not only interesting but very useful while working with children.

I would promote the home environment for looking after children of any age as they become extended family. Playtime, homeworks and sharing meals are all part of family life. Each child can share experiences about their day and any worries or concerns can be noted and passed on to parents. As an example of this, I have seen past minded children returning to visit and regularly keeping in touch. One girl minded from an infant until 'big school' was doing a school video project and she chose to record her growing up years in our home.

When NICMA celebrated their 25 years at Stormont Buildings, the children and me enjoyed a fun filled day. To any who are committed to caring for children, and who are willing to be flexible and adaptable, I would wholeheartedly recommend childminding as a career.

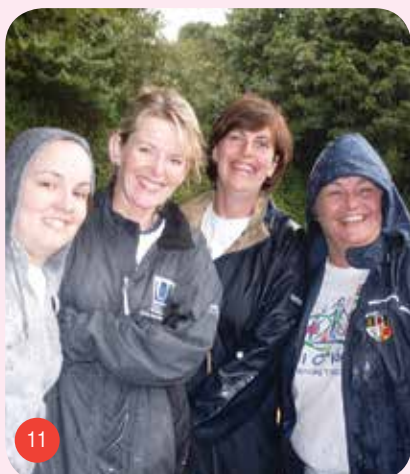
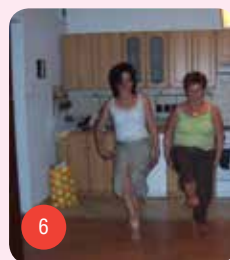
I truly will miss being "Auntie Blanche" as I have been known for so many years! I would add as a footnote that NICMA is a wonderful, helpful team and I found them to be consistently pleasant and helpful and wish to thank them for everything.



Tribute to Barbara Quinn

Barbara Quinn was first employed by NICMA as an NVQ Assessor in May 1996; her role was to support and assess Childminding candidates as part of NICMA's NOW [New Opportunities for Women] NVQ project. That project was the start of 'Training & Quality' for NICMA and the Childminding sector - Barbara went on to become Training & Development Project Officer and finally was appointed as Training Manager from 1998 until her untimely death in February 2014.

Barbara was a massive personality and touched everybody, wherever she went, mainly with her sense of humour but also with her belief in the value of childminding for children. Her achievements with NICMA are too numerous to mention but to honour her life and time with NICMA can be best highlighted in some of the pictures below.



- 1 Lithuania 2009 with 'SMILEY TED' mascot
- 2 Training Awards Ceremony 2001
- 3 Launch of A Way Forward 2005
- 4 National Training Awards 2002
- 5 Smiley Faces 2008
- 6 the inimitable Barbara Quinn!!
- 7 NICMA's 25th Birthday 2009
- 8 Training with the Chinese Community
- 9 NICMA Conference 2012
- 10 Training Awards Ceremony 2003
- 11 Finger Painting Challenge 2009
- 12 Childminder of the Year

Summary of Annual Accounts and Report 31 March 2014

NICMA's financial position for the year ending 31 March 2014 is reported in the statement of financial activities indicated as follows:

During 2013/14 NICMA was fortunate enough to secure funding from a number of sources. The main sources for grant income awards were:

- DHSSPS towards our core services
- The 5 Health Trusts towards Childminding Development
- Health and Social Care Board to fund core training for prospective childminders
- Childcare Partnerships for Diploma Bursaries
- Department of Education to support Childminding Networks in 7 SureStart areas

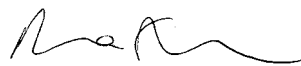
Income was generated from our members in the form of membership fees and publication sales. NICMA also developed a set of Childminding Policies for members. These are available as a free download to members but have also been available to both members and non-members to purchase.

Further income was generated by NICMA's development and provision of Core Training which we were then able to roll out to both members and non-members, enabling the sector to ensure compliance with the training requirements of the new Minimum Standards.

Membership income is represented by 39% of our total annual income. The charities reserves policy, based on the equivalent of six months running costs to support the organisation, is now reporting that our reserves at 31st March 2014 were £345,106.

In comparison to the previous year, NICMA has managed to improve the balance between income and expenditure and ended the year with a small excess of funds which has been reinvested into the current year. Thus, in conclusion, I am reporting on an overall positive note in terms of NICMA's financial position at 31st March 2014 and I hope to continue with this in the coming year.

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.



Norma Shearer
Honorary Treasurer/NICMA Chair

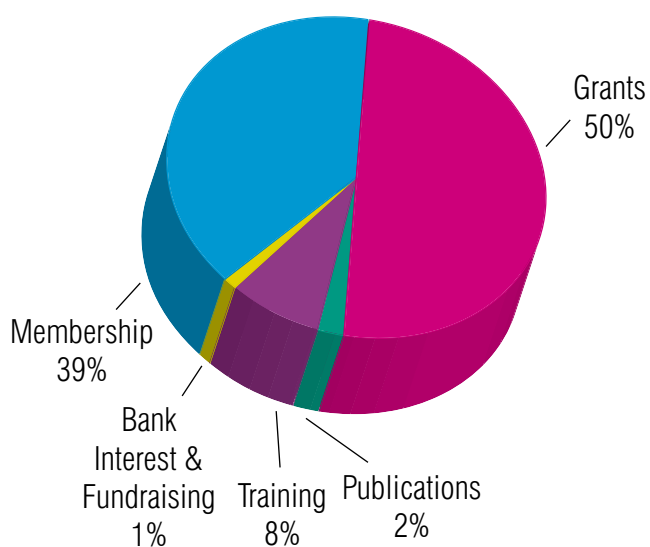


| Statement of Financial Activities | Unrestricted Funds | Designated Funds | Restricted Funds | Total 2014 | Total 2013 |
|--|--------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Incoming Resources | | | | | |
| Voluntary Income | 268,728 | - | 405,925 | 674,653 | 654,488 |
| Activities for generating funds | 13,765 | - | 58,114 | 71,879 | 63,255 |
| Investment income | 256 | - | - | 256 | 182 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 282,749 | - | 464,039 | 746,788 | 717,925 |
| Outgoing Resources | | | | | |
| Charitable Activities | 116,346 | - | 500,851 | 617,197 | 585,199 |
| Governance | 62,978 | - | - | 62,978 | 60,444 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 179,324 | - | 500,851 | 680,175 | 645,643 |
| Net Incoming/Outgoing Resources for Year | 56,776 | - | 9,837 | 66,613 | 72,282 |
| Fund Balances Brought Forward | 288,330 | - | 8,472 | 296,802 | 224,540 |
| TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD | 345,106 | - | 18,309 | 363,415 | 296,822 |

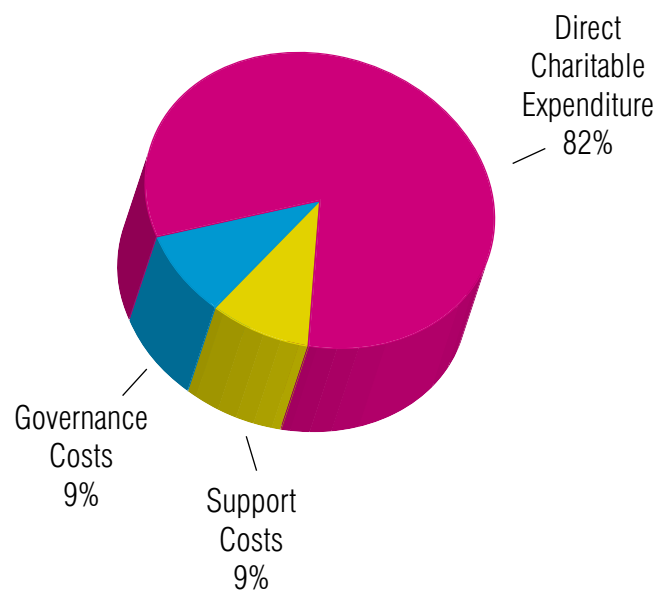
Norma Shearer
Honorary Treasurer

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

13/14 Income



13/14 Expenditure



Acknowledgements

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 and to childminding members whose commitment and support is very much appreciated. In 2013/14 our stakeholders included:

ABBEY SureStart
Arke SureStart
Blossom SureStart
Childminding members
Clogher Valley SureStart
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 Children's Bureau [NI]
Health & Social Care Board
NICMA Board of Trustees
NICMA Childminding Advisory Council
NICMA Childminding Support Groups
Northern Childcare Partnership
Northern Health & Social Care Trust
Belfast Childcare Partnership
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
Southern Regional College

Thanks to Danna McCann, Registered childminder from Belfast and her children whose photographs are featured in this report

Thank You!

NICMA Staff Team

Bridget Nodder
Angela Stallard
Valerie Earney

Director
Assistant Director – resigned Oct 13
Director's Secretary

CHILDMINDING DEVELOPMENT TEAM

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Brown | Childminding Development Officer, ECCP & NCCP |
| Fiona Clendinning | Childminding Development Officer, ECCP |
| Michelle Grant | Childminding Development Officer, SCCP |
| Maria Magee | Childminding Development Officer, WCCP / Little Hands SureStart |
| Clare McKay | Childminding Development Officer, NCCP |
| Lyn Bradley | Secretary, Development Team |

TRAINING & QUALITY TEAM

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Barbara Quinn | Training Manager – deceased Feb 14 |
| Susan Anderson | Training Officer/Training Manager from March 14 |
| Maeve Milne | Training Officer |
| Claire Vitti | Training Administrator |

CHILDMINDING NETWORKS

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Liz Flanagan | Childminding Network Co-ordinator, ABBEY SureStart |
| 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 |
| Tina McKeown | Childminding Network Co-ordinator, G-old SureStart |
| Roisin Rogers | Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Splash SureStart |
| Katie Turkington | Childminding Network Co-ordinator, Blossom SureStart |

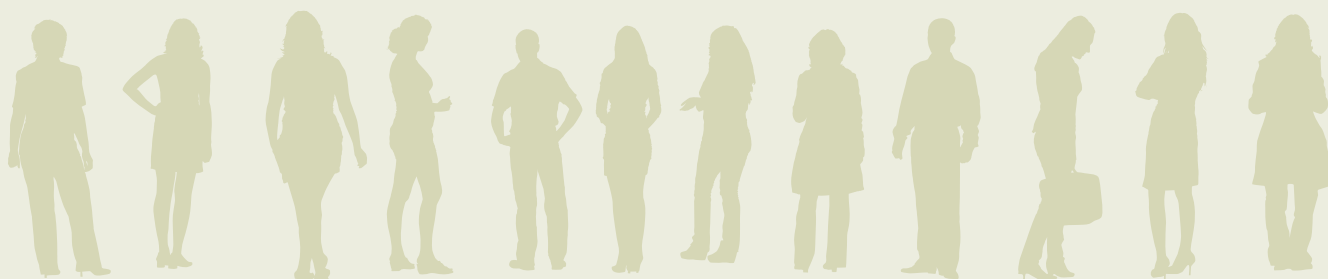
FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Joan Hewitt | Finance & Administration Manager |
| Catherine Rogers | Finance & Monitoring Officer – Maternity Leave from Feb 14 |
| Briony Simpson | Finance & Monitoring Officer – Maternity Leave cover from Feb 14 |
| Nikki McGrattan | Membership Administrator |

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Jim Currie | Chair – retired Nov 13 |
| Norma Shearer | Treasurer/Interim Chair |
| Barbara Wilson | |
| Teresa Geraghty | |
| Margaret Fletcher | |
| Margaret Baumann | From Sept 13 |
| Edward Smyth | From Sept 13 |
| Stephanie Mallon | From Sept 13 |
| Karen Hanna | From Sept 13 |
| Barbara Stewart | From Sept 13 |
| Alison McNulty | Resigned April 13 |

Nb. Some staff have taken on multiple roles during the year which is not necessarily reflected in the job title





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