



Upper Springfield/Whiterock Neighbourhood Renewal Area

Annual Report
2019/20



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Annual Report 2019 to 2020



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**Upper Springfield Whiterock Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
Annual Report 1 April 2019 - March 2020**

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Chair's Address



I am delighted to present the USDT's 2019/20 annual report. The Trust has continued to expand and develop our services over this past year. In particular, we completed the merger with Springvale Learning in June 2019. This has been a very significant addition to the organisation's portfolio and will help sustain training opportunities for the area and beyond. In addition and as a consequence we have taken on new Board members that will strengthen our board's governance and oversight capacity and I take this opportunity to welcome them to the board.

During the year we saw the welcome return of the NI Executive which gives USDT and other local groups the opportunity to work directly with local ministers to ensure local priorities are advanced. USDT will continue to lobby with local and central government officials to advance already agreed area plans.

At the time of writing the report we seem to be in at the start of an unprecedented pandemic which has started to cause havoc across world and has now reached our neighbourhoods. USDT will ensure it plays its part in supporting our staff's welfare and continue to provide ongoing support to our service users through our varied programmes.

I want to pay tribute to all our staff who continue to provide excellent services across Belfast and often in very challenging times and circumstances in areas such as: employment, training, early years, disability, youth work, community development and education.

Finally I pay tribute to our senior staff who have shown strong leadership in the last year and also to our Board members who provide governance and strategic oversight on a voluntary basis.

Is mise

Noel Rooney

Cathaoirleach, Comhlacht Forbartha an Chluanaí Uachtaraigh Teo

CEO Annual Report 2019/20



Our area is a varied community. It is a community of diverse perspectives, each interwoven, interlocked connected and at times disconnected. And when we act together, our actions create amazing results. When we choose to act, self-confidence grows. And when self-confidence grows, actions grow bolder. It's a positive feedback loop. Civic engagement means having the courage to act within your community. It is the key to changing systems and addressing the root causes of our challenges.

By harnessing people's talent and resources from a variety of sectors we make an impact at a scale and level of effectiveness that a single effort is unable to achieve. By uniting the passion and commitment of funders, community members and local organisations, we create sustainable solutions that changes lives for years to come.

The USDT collaborates with central and local government leaders, local organisations and residents who are closest to our communities' needs. Civic engagement empowers communities to make their voices heard, gain a role in policy decisions and affect institutions that influence their futures and those of their families. At USDT we focus on building local community capacity. We pursue systemic change in interrelated areas: education, health, place and community development. These issues are complex, but together we can make real, lasting change in our lifetimes.

I am thankful for our partners', community members' and funders' commitment who demonstrate their ongoing commitment to address critical challenges directly. Every one of us are needed to create real change. Only when we are all connected and engaged can a vision for our future come into focus.

The recognition of this past year's excellent results is good to note! However, before outcomes are realised there is a lot of hard work that must happen to lead to good outcomes. It is this work that USDT's highly professional and committed staff/volunteers carry out on a daily basis that is able to achieve much. Their commitment is recognised as exemplar and over this past year our teams have excelled in the delivery of achieving positive outcomes for their respective service users.

This report offers you a brief opportunity to read people's stories and see how through their personal efforts and how USDT's support enables them to bring about changes in their lives.

Déanaimis an todhchaí sin a chruthú le chéile agus mo buíochas ó chroí le gach duine a chuidigh linn i rith na bliana

Dónal McKinney

CEO

I leave you with a poem written by the great Irish poet Seamus Heaney:

History says, 'Don't hope
On the side of the grave,'
But then, once in a lifetime the longed for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up and hope and history rhyme.
So hope for a great sea-change on the far side of revenge.
Believe that a further shore is reachable from here.
Believe in miracles and cures and healing wells.

Action Ability Belfast

This project aims to promote social inclusion by engaging people with disabilities and their families. The programme & services work with children, young people and adults with a range of disabilities – from severe complex needs to social & emotional issues; to support positive life changes environmentally, physically and socially.

Advocacy

The advocacy team continue to challenge unfair treatment as well as promote human and disability rights. Our independent service supported people with disabilities to address issues with statutory systems and processes, welfare reform, personal rights, educational rights, right to independent living, skills and confidence. The team also enabled our users to have a voice, to express their views, opinions and defend their rights in both a one to one and peer setting. We collaborated with other community, statutory and private organisations to address issues quickly.

During the year the team delivered OCN Level II: Understanding Advocacy which was taken up by some staff members, volunteers, project service users and member of our self-advocacy group



Speak Out Group

Our aptly named self-advocacy group had many achievements:

Speak Out Group obtained funding for the fourth year running through the Belfast Strategic Partnership 'Festival of Learning'. The group worked hard in preparing for this event at the start of 2020 and attended a promotional interview with NTV before the event was cancelled due to ongoing world events. We hope to deliver this in the forthcoming year.

This year the SAG group participated in the OCN Level II: Understanding Advocacy. Over several weeks the group worked hard and achieved this qualification and enjoyed a celebratory meal to celebrate this achievement

Throughout the year the group delivered four Decision Making, Capacity and Consent workshops to people with disabilities. They were able to target their focus group on people with disabilities and professionals to help them understand decisions, capacity and consent. Events took place in day centres and other community venues within West Belfast.

Work continues with ongoing partnership re Disability rights and accessibility: Stormont All Party Groups, Belfast City Council – Accessibility guide, UNCRPD.



Befriending

Befriending can also reduce the burden on other services which people may use inappropriately as they seek social contact.

This year the befriending project remained in high demand for people wishing to avail of a personalised service. Demand remains high with an increase in referrals for people with disabilities who require social support hours. The team provided 5,710 hours of support and we continue to have new and long term matches in place, supporting an array of service users, with continually good feedback. Our recent 19/20 service user satisfaction survey showed 100% of service users who responded would return to use the Befriending Service again (22 responses), 100% found the service had a positive impact on their lives (27 responses) and 100% gave the service a top rating (27 responses).

Befriending offers supportive, reliable relationships to our service users who would otherwise be socially isolated. The results of befriending can be very significant. Befriending often provides people with a new direction in life, opens up a range of activities and leads to increased self-esteem and self-confidence.

We have been part of many community connections this year enhancing the importance of social support, befriending and tackling loneliness! Working in partnership with many befriending and support services to enhance the importance and promote the benefit of all social support!



Some service user comments:

“My sister’s befriender has given her great self-awareness confidence friendship and companionship. She now the ability to use public transport and go into shops which her befriender helped her with.”

“My daughter really enjoys her time away from home and meeting up with other service users. It’s great to give her some independence away from her mum. It’s also a helpful break for Mum too. I can really trust her befriender and that is hard for me!”

“My daughter really enjoys her time with Kate her befriender. It makes her feel valued and helps improve her wellbeing. She loves going shopping, on the Glider bus and going for a burger. All activities that Aishling really enjoys. It also provides valuable respite time for her family.”

Floating Support

Our specialist floating support services are designed to meet service users’ individual needs with our team providing vital services for those in North and West Belfast. This year we supported service users to address arrange of topics: housing issues, navigate welfare reform change and ultimately maintain independence. The team continue to have strong partnerships with Bryson Home Safety Team and the PSNI to increase safety and security within the home; worked closely with the NIHE and housing associations, and made referrals to counselling services/complementary therapies while also supported people to create links within their local community.

We continue to be a member Belfast Floating Support Homeless Prevention and continue to promote the vital work that is done to prevent homelessness through this channel. In Dec 19, during Homeless Prevention Week we attended a NIHE and Supporting People, hosted event ‘Let’s Talk about Homelessness’. This event was attended by the staff team and our service users to achieve vital service user feedback on all aspects of Housing Executive rehousing processes. This was a great opportunity for our service users to give their vital personal feedback and experiences of navigating these processes, and it has opened a gateway for further service user led workshop partnerships with the HDF and AAB. Our round up of 19/20 Floating Support service user’s satisfaction surveys showed 100% of service users would use the service again and would recommend to others (12 responses).

Service user comments:

“Service is excellent couldn’t do without it!”

“Excellent service! I have now moved and very happy but couldn’t have done it without this support.”

“Top class service couldn’t have got what I needed without their help.”



Projects

The year had many amazing highlights including number of our service users receiving their OCN level II certificates in Understanding Advocacy; runner up in N.I Boccia tournament, our Cook it Programme with a number of our Action New Opportunities (ANO) services users receiving certificates for their continued development. The project enjoyed a successful partnership with Moyard Hostel in the development of our Unique Gardening Project.

With the continued support of BHSCT (and other funders) AAB were able to provide a number of activities for service users throughout the year including a series of pamper days, a day trip to Liverpool, two residential stay overs at White Park Bay and Newcastle and various summer scheme activities throughout the summer period.

Drama Group

AAB drama group performed “When Will I Be Famous” at the Grand Opera House Belfast to a sell-out capacity audience and celebrated 2019 by winning a prestigious Aisling Award in the Culture and Arts category. The award was AAB’s first award and welcomed by all the cast, parents, staff and volunteers. Drama group member Gabriel Novotny enthused: “I can’t quite believe we

won this as we were up against very stiff competition from playwright Martin Lynch and comedian Paddy Raff as well as other nominees, I think we deserved it though as all the cast has put in so much hard work over the past 11 years performing at the Grand Opera House.”



USDT Healthy Living Centre

Barr na Carraige, Top of the Rock Healthy Living Centre, has a strong belief in the concept that a healthy mind and body leads to a healthy life. We promote this message by providing a wide range of high quality services and support that assists our community in their efforts to achieve good health and wellbeing.

We recognise the importance of addressing mental health awareness as well as the physical health needs within our community and indeed, we believe that they will often go hand in hand i.e. when people are striving to improve their mental health they are more likely to be open to be physically active. Likewise, when a person is engaged in regular physical activity, there are automatic improvements in their mental health and sense of wellbeing.

The year 2019/20 saw some staff changes and, as before, we were very sorry to lose two of our valued team members: Shauneen Baker and Louise Headley who have both gone on to pursue new careers and we wish them every success in their new endeavours. We welcomed their replacements Carol Jackson and Shauna Gibson. Both new members bring with them much experience, skills and empathy, making their settling in to our team a completely seamless process.

In the final weeks of the year 2019/20 the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic began to take over, resulting in going into lockdown and working from home in late March. It will be evident in future reports just what the impact of this will have meant but in the meantime we end this year thinking about how we provide our services in a new way.

How much did we do?

Awareness of our Healthy Living Centre has grown over the last year and we now have significantly increased the footfall in our office. We delivered 39 different health and wellbeing programmes, many of them several times, resulting in 78+ programmes delivered in total. 580+ people participated with a total of 3,710+ attendances.

- 443 counselling sessions were delivered to 96 local residents.
- We organised and delivered, in partnership with local organisations, four health day events and attendance at these was between 1,500 and 2,000 people altogether.
- Many more people have been contacted and engaged via brief interventions :

- Approximately 800 smokers were contacted several times a month
- 350+ contacts are given monthly advice on sexual health
- 899 contacts are given regular information and advice on nutrition, and physical and mental health tips.

The programmes delivered during the year were many and broad that included:

Circuits, Boxercise, Yoga, Pilates, Legs Bums & Tums, golf, colour breathing, walking groups, Cook It, flower arranging, Spanish, Choose to Lose, food values, cycling, Tools for Life, Emotional Freedom Technique, smoking cessation, dementia support, pain support, set dancing, Salsa, Chi Me, Take 5 Walks, community gardening, crochet, book folding, woodwork, sexual health, Boccia, mindfulness, personal development programmes. Other activities were:

- A counselling service for local residents.
- Lead partner of a range of primary talking therapies to service users with common mental health disorders
- Coordination of Primary Talking Therapies for Belfast Trust
- Community Resilience Model
- Health checks
- Health events
- Christmas decoration event
- Flower box events
- World Mental Health Day event
- Drop in centre
- Polytunnel support

We have worked in close partnership with a range of bodies including:

- Healthy Living Centre Alliance
- Community Wellbeing Alliance
- Belfast Trust
- Upper Springfield Whiterock Integrated Partnership
- USWIP Health group
- West Belfast Health Forum
- West Belfast Mental Health group
- Sustrans
- Wispa

How well did we do it?

We regularly ask our participants to give us feedback on our services and how they feel their lives have been impacted as a result. We continue to record very positive outcomes arising from their involvement in our activities. We are aware that improvements in the following areas have been achieved by our service users:

Confidence, resilience, self-esteem, self-awareness, mental health and wellbeing, physical fitness, understanding of health and wellbeing issues and supports, feeling of belonging to the community, wider social support network, skills and knowledge.

We noted a large increase in attendance at many of our activity classes this year which is due to the breadth and quality of service.

Feedback from service users as ever is extremely positive. Users stress the enjoyable nature of taking part in group exercises, the chance to do outdoor activities and the social engagement with others as being important. People are delighted to have good reasons for getting out of the house and doing things that helps their physical and mental health.

It is of great value to the HLC to receive such positive feedback as it is an affirmation of our work and an indication that we are achieving our objectives.

The counselling service has received many client affirmations, one of whom said the following:

“It’s been so good to work through things with you, I am finding my voice.”

Another participant from our pain support programme had this to say:

“Before joining the pain management programme at the Top of the Rock Healthy Living Centre I had isolated myself from everyone and everything. Now I have a new outlook on my ‘new normal life’ and I have the skills to work with or around my pains. I also found new friends, new hobbies and a new love for life.”

We are able to provide a quality service due to the professionalism of our team. Our team members avail of many opportunities to develop their own professional development which means great service provision for all our clients. This year we invested in our team by accessing training in the following areas: management, nutrition and Strictly Active Dance training.

Is anyone better off?

It is our goal within the HLC is to make life better for local people, in terms of their physical, mental and emotional health. We are encouraged to learn that the sense of wellbeing has improved for those residents taking part in our programmes. This has been recorded in wellbeing scales by those who provided information to us at the outset and later in the programme.

We are able to report that those participants in HLC activities are all better off as a result of their involvement with us. 90% who began a programme have completed it while 85% will continue with physical activity and 50% have reported an increase in their fitness levels with an accompanying improvement in their mental health. For those who have come to us for emotional support 100% have reported improvement on different wellbeing scales.

The HLC team always seeks to encourage new people to our project and to increase the range of activities that we can offer. We will continue to provide a service for local people to improve and enhance their lives in any way we can.

USDT Job Assist Centre

We continue to provide employment and training interventions to people out of work across West Belfast and beyond. Across the year we continued to design and deliver employability services which have worked with **791** people, supported **1000+** job-related employability interventions resulting in **250** people gaining employment.

Belfast Works:

The Belfast Works project has grown from strength to strength over the past year. The Job Assist Centre's presence and reach in the West Belfast area continues to grow through ongoing partnerships with the Falls Road and Andersonstown Jobs and Benefits Offices which has resulted in a number of highly successful jobs and employment fairs. Job Assist Centre employability mentors have continued to deliver face-to-face mentoring services across West Belfast at a number of community outreach partners and local amenities such as libraries and leisure centres.

The Job Assist Centre parallel support team have been working to develop and deliver an innovative support and wellbeing employability service in conjunction with the employability services already available via Belfast Works. The parallel support team have also been working with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to identify and develop services needed to meet the ever growing employability and support needs for individuals made redundant across various labour sectors. The team have developed highly innovative resources designed to provide guidance and information to those struggling due to redundancy or job loss.

The Job Centre West Belfast's online presence has grown considerably over the past year with three separate active and popular Facebook pages simultaneously providing live local jobs, training opportunities and wellbeing and support advice. The Belfast Work's team have pioneered online social media recruitment and marketing processes across the partnership, proving that a well maintained and active social media presence is vital to successful recruitment and brand awareness in this ever more technological age.

Belfast Works – How well did we do?

708 people received employability mentoring

232 people gained employment

101 people sustained employment after 6 months

210 people completed training

Belfast Works Case studies:

Case study 1

Through psychoeducation and goalsetting, there have been many successes, with clients moving directly into employment. One client has offered a quote following referral from his Employability Mentor:

“She had noticed that my self-confidence was quite low and put me in touch with Carolyn with the parallel support team. Carolyn was pivotal in developing and increasing my self-confidence and mind-set. The anxiety I was suffering from unemployment and lack of future prospects as a result of my degree had been destroying my life. She completely transformed how I looked at life and myself. Instead of trying to make me work around my ASD, she helped me embrace it and learn to form a life that worked best for me. From alternative thoughts to creating a routine and learning to deal with it. She slowly and steadily encouraged me to try new things that I wasn’t comfortable with such as making more phone calls, which at the time was unbearable for me. Under the parallel support programme, I soon realised that knock backs don’t always mean that we aren’t good enough and that we should instead use them to learn and workout what we can do better for next time. Without this help from both Aisling and Carolyn I would not have gained the skills and confidence to move on to the next steps of changing my life.”

Case study 2

19 year old female school leaver eager to find employment.

“My mentor Mark worked with me to prepare a C.V. He printed off some copies for me and helped to find jobs. He was in regular contact with me – identifying jobs in my local area. I was assisted in filling in application forms for jobs that didn’t take CV’s. He helped me with several over the duration of our relationship.

We did a few sessions on dealing with anxiety and interview preparation where we went over relaxation, coping strategies, and going through common interview questions. Mark signposted me to an organization called AWARE who provide support groups for people with mental health anxieties. I feel like the sessions we did really helped me feel prepared for the interviews and ultimately helped me get the job in B&M.

We also worked on some of my anxieties around starting a new job. I was really worried about working with new people. However, after looking into some of these fears, I realised they were irrational and that I was capable of working with strangers. Nerves are normal when meeting strangers.”

The client was successful in an interview and is now working full time. Client stated that she felt: “fully supported and confident throughout the process and would not be in the position of employment without the help of Job Assist Centre.”



Community Family Support (CFSP)

How well did we do?

- 54 families provided with health, social and employability support
- 31 people entered education/training
- 11 people gained employment
- 52 people have improved social inclusion and improved family relationships
- 31 people have reduced their barriers to employment and health

In all areas CFSP have increased upon year one targets which shows that CFSP are going from strength to strength. This is been mirrored in areas such as employment and training through the CFSP Belfast partnership which USDT are the lead.

Case Study

A single mother with a set of twins aged three and young baby nine months living in a single let with not much surrounding family. This mother had been offered social housing but had no furniture, as the previous property was fully furnished. The mentors supported the mother to get help and advice by referring her to the USDT Advice Team and Sure Start, as well as offering transport to and from the housing department and other places for help with items for the new home. The mother also engaged in job searching with the intention of moving into work, but unfortunately became ill and has to focus on regaining her health. Overall, the mentors

sought to develop the family relations by helping the family to attend family events such as Funky Monkeys and family trips. They also sought to help increase the family's social inclusion by asking them to attend coffee mornings: getting the chance to meet new people! Specialist provision was given by Sure Start, USDT Advice Service and St Vincent de Paul and raising aspirations with job search activities. The mother has indicated that when she is fully fit she will reengage with the mentors and the programme due to the positive experience she has had with the CFSP team.



Co-Ment

How did we do?

- 29 young people received employability mentoring support
- 40 young people participated in training
- 7 young people gained employment
- 14 young people progressed to further education

Co-Ment continues to achieve notable successes within the West Belfast area each year.

The development of a summer programme in conjunction with training providers including Springvale Learning Belfast Central Training and Impact Training enabled 47 participants to move into FE/Training, aiding this target for the programme. Additionally, a large number of these participants received industry specific training (including barbering and hairdressing – head message, catering/retail – food safety, CCLD – first aid).

I would like to thank all the organisations who enable us to operate outreach across West Belfast as well as Job Assist staff, USDT, Springvale Learning, DFE, European Social Fund and the Jobs & Benefits Offices. In addition to this I would like to thank our partners across Belfast with whom we deliver Belfast Works LEMIS, CFSP and Co-Ment: GEMS NI, Ashton Community Trust, East Belfast Mission, Springvale, Impact Training/Shankill Job Assist.

Outsource Financial Management Services



Outsource is a social enterprise offering affordable financial services to individuals, groups and businesses in the setting up or the refining of payroll, bookkeeping, auditing, PAYE and budgeting systems. It also works with groups to promote and embed best practice in their financial systems.

During the past year Outsource has worked with a number of groups to ensure the development of compliance and governance issues. Allied to this work the team has also helped to support organisations redevelop their financial management practices and put in place robust finance structures that ensure greater organisational sustainability.

Outsource currently offers the following range of services:

- Helping with the start-up of your business
- Preparing financial forecasts
- Assisting with the installation and management of accounting packages.

- Advising on business tax affairs
- Preparing management accounts
- Calculating VAT returns
- Monthly Bookkeeping
- Payroll
- Self-Assessment Tax Returns
- Preparing statutory year end accounts
- Grant management
- Real Time
- VAT returns
- Finance training
- System review and development

Team

The current staff team are always willing and able to advise new clients of their service needs. Currently the team manage a wide portfolio of clients from individuals, charities and small companies.

As a social economy project all resources earned are reinvested into USDT's development.

Anne McEvoy, Deputy CEO

Saol Úr Sure Start

How much did we do?

Children and Families using Sure Start services 2019 – 2020

Description	Total
Number of children registered in Saol Úr Sure start	963
Number of mothers registered in Saol Úr Sure Start	835
Number of fathers registered in Saol Úr Sure Start	106
Number of families registered in Saol Úr Sure Start	863
New pregnant mothers registered	59
Home visits for families	2276
Parent and child programmes sessions	1407
Child only programmes sessions	700
Parent only programmes sessions	717
Signposting support for families	273
Grants for families	NA
Food parcels for Families	384

How well did we do it?

Childcare Team

The childcare team ran a wide range of programmes throughout the year 2019 / 20. These programmes have included parent & child, parent only, as well as our developmental programme for two to three year olds.

Our parent and child programmes encourages parents and children to enjoy a range of activities together and enjoy some play activities in a relaxed atmosphere promoting play development with parent and children and the opportunity to learn new play skills in a play environment outside the home. Popular play programmes this year included: - messy play, parent & child cookery, theme play and Baby Club.

We also offered a range of parent and child group activities that gave children the opportunity to mix with other children in a play environment. Some of these programmes included: - Little Buddies, Sing, Sign & Rhyme, Once upon a Time & Little Stars

Our parent only programmes allow the exploration of a range of activities, which parents can bring into the home environment. It also allows 'me' time for the parents and the opportunity to mix and meet new friends. Some of these programmes included: - parents' craft club and messy play for parents.

Our children only services included our developmental programme for two to three year olds which is for their "pre" preschool year. The programme is funded through the Department of Education and the programme supports children developmental in a play from home environment.

Our Shooting Stars' Programme was developed in response to an identified need in children who have applied to the developmental programme for two to three year olds. This programme aims to provide a sensitive and highly supportive early years' play experience for children with a wide range of developmental needs.

Family Support Team

During 2019 – 2020 the family support team ran a range of programmes. Programmes have included:

Mental Health programmes:

- Mindfulness
- Emotional wellbeing
- Time for you

Physical health programmes:

- Musical Movers
- Walk in the park
- Pramarama
- Let us get physical

Cooking programmes:

- Cook – it
- Snack attack
- Baking for success

Parenting programmes:

- Nurturing programme
- Pram to primary
- Positive parenting

- Parenting matters

As well as developing and delivering a wide range of programmes the team work on a one to one basis supporting families within the Upper Springfield, Falls Park and Whiterock wards. Support in the last year has included issues such as:

- Housing / homelessness
- Benefits / Financial issues
- Addictions
- Mental health / Emotional wellbeing
- Child development
- Domestic abuse

We have also worked closely with Storehouse and Save the Children to ensure that our families receive appropriate and on time support.

Maternity Team

The maternity team ran a variety of programmes and offered many services throughout 2019-2020.

Our feeding support worker continued to facilitate the Marvellous Milk Club on a weekly basis. The group welcomes breast and formula feeding parents/ babies and mothers during the antenatal period, but would mainly consist of post-birth mums and their infants.

Our maternity support worker continued to run hypnobirthing sessions throughout the year. It is extremely beneficial in preparing mums/partners for pregnancy & birth, and has proven to be highly effective in reducing fears and anxiety.

Our midwife has taken a new twist on providing a range of antenatal programmes. The 'Bump Club' programme was facilitated on the first Thursday of every month and facilitated in the evenings to encourage working parents and fathers to attend. We provided

arts & crafts, treats and also information sessions throughout the evening. The information sessions give evidenced based information, empowers parents-to-be to make informed choices about their care throughout pregnancy, birth and post-birth.

Additionally, the 'Getting Ready for Baby' programme was introduced in 2019. This programme is co-facilitated with midwives from the Belfast Trust, to provide antenatal education at every core clinical appointment to first time parents. Saol Ur Sure Start were the first Sure Start in the north of Ireland to facilitate this programme and provide holistic continuity of care for first time parents.

The end of February 2020 seen the completion of the all collaborated work carried out across four Sure Starts in Belfast in relation to level three Baby Friendly Accreditation. The feedback from the mother's audits was outstanding with 100% satisfaction results in relation to services provided and relationships between staff, parents and children, to state a few. The maternity team will continue to lead on keeping up the accreditation standards through audits & training with support from management.

Speech and Language Team

Speech language and communication input is at the core of all Sure Start programmes. This begins with education of parents and staff around baby brain development at antenatal stage; promotion of the parent-child bond through fun and inspiring programmes when baby is born, such as 'Baby Sensory', 'Baby Singalong' 'Baby Sign'. These are designed to capitalise on the window of maximal brain plasticity. Input continues in all play programmes through staff training, and advice rechoosing activities which maximise parent child interaction, speech and language development and learning.

Speech, language and communication are the cornerstones of the developmental programme for two to three year olds, and also of the recently established Additional Needs' Programme (for children who are displaying signs of having a pervasive developmental disorder, or social communication disorder - Autism). Our ethos is that children learn to talk, and then talk to learn. Speech language and communication development future proofs learning development. Helping staff identify when to be concerned about a child's communication is a fundamental part of the SLT role.

Staff have benefited from Solihull Foundation Training, Hanen 'Learning Language and Loving it' training, 'Foundations' (Sensory development) training and a dozen staff have completed their CACHE Level III in 'Understanding and Working with Children with Autism', which is an OCN Qualification. Bespoke training takes place regularly depending on what current needs are- e.g. Bilingual training, Understanding ACES and Trauma

Is anybody better off?

“I just wanted you to know the Saol Ur Sure Start team are simply amazing and have been an excellent support for my family. My eldest son is almost three years old and has struggled with speech and language and the team helped us when we simply did not know what to do. Not only did they have their own speech and language therapist come to our home to evaluate him, but they encouraged us to take part in many of the activities that they run for toddlers. When applying for the 2-3 programme they looked at my child’s needs and decided that he would cope better in a smaller group, so they designed a programme for him and three other children which runs twice a week. To know that the team know my son that well and want to help him so much as to tailor a programme to his needs, I am beyond grateful. The progress we have seen over the past few months with my child’s speech is amazing and I put this down to the Sure Start team. They are all extremely dedicated and caring and you honestly could not find a nicer bunch of people! Thank you all.”

“Just wanted to say that your team up in Sure Start are amazing. What you guys are doing for my child goes over and beyond anything. You guys are amazing. Seana (SLT) is really trying everything for my child and she really cares. Trisha (family support worker) even got my other children into after-schools. Even from the guys in this old 2-year-old programme just had my child’s back. And he is settling into the shooting stars room. I am so thankful for you guys. Just wanted you to know how thankful we are. XX”

“I have seen massive improvements in my child’s speech and language. He is much more confident in his use of words. I have also noticed an increased attention span and patience when it comes to trying activities. My child has developed his social skills in this group and now loves to play with other children whereas before he didn’t really engage”.

Shooting Stars has also helped family members:

“It relieved a lot of stress on us as a family. The group has helped me to understand how he is developing and ways in which I can encourage him”

“Linda really helpful with information during pregnancy as I had some issues.”

“100% positive about Saol Ur – brilliant service. Looking forward to September when I can access groups again. I enjoyed going to groups with my older child – especially loved Big Cook, Little Cook.”

“Would have given up breastfeeding without Sure Start support. Felt safe breastfeeding in Sure Start as didn’t always feel comfortable breastfeeding in other venues – good to feel safe in Sure Start.”

“Baby group welcoming and enjoyable. Breastfeeding support helpful as had no other breastfeeding support after midwives stopped visiting.”

“Sure Start is a great service. I used to think it was only for non-working. Has been great help. Good for my mental well-being.”

“Sarah supported me to keep going and to know what’s normal with breastfeeding.”

“Loved bump club. Met old and new friends there.”

“Looking forward to autumn clubs. Linda was brilliant and very reassuring.”

“Sure Start is awesome. Appreciated the help a lot. Toddler enjoyed services too.”

“Really enjoyed ante-natal yoga. Really enjoyed Sure Start. Staff very friendly. Learned something new at all classes.”

“Brilliant pregnancy services. Sure Start is fantastic. Without Sure Start my mental health would have been a lot worse.”

“Sure Start is my life; the staff are like my family and I love attending the programme”.

“Sure Start services are fantastic. Incredibly supportive and just felt comfortable. Enjoyed adult conversation and had a sounding board. Talking to a person is better than Google.”

“There's a real feel good factor after singing”

“You aren’t just a number in sure start, you are part of the amazing family, my child loves the staff “.

"I sing in the house all the time now, she loves it"

“We clap and sing to whatever’s on the radio”

"It puts you in a good mood for the rest of the week"

Case Study

A mum with four children registered with Sure Start to get family support as she was struggling with her own mental health and was finding it difficult to deal with day to day family issues.

Our family support worker started working with the mum and assessed the needs of the family at that time. The worker then started some goal setting with the parent. It was easier for the parent to look at one issue at a time and with the support of the worker they put tools and interventions in place to try and overcome these issues.

One of the children identified at that time was needing support with child development. So through the support of our Speech and Language therapist and the support worker the child was able to get a place in our shooting stars programme.

Through her journey of working alongside family support the parent was empowered to improve on her own mental health and gained new skills in Parenting and home management. The mum also found with the improvement in her own mental health she found it easier to start meeting the needs of her children educationally and socially. The parent was supported with the referral systems and had continued support for the family during the diagnosis stage.

Mum has been able to withdraw now from intense one to one support but still engages with all our Sure Start parent only programmes and parent & child programmes. Other children from the family have also had the experience of a place within the 2 year programme and overall the family are doing well and still actively participating in their own development.



Upper Springfield Whiterock Integrated Partnership

The Upper Springfield Whiterock Integrated Partnership (USWIP) applies a community development approach to addressing the inequalities that exist within the local area. This collective approach among local community groups and representatives is vital in enhancing residents' and organisations' knowledge, skills, confidence, motivation, networks and resources.

On the basis of the consultation process, the partnership identified two key themes of work:

- Theme 1: Community Well-being
- Theme 2: Quality of Place

Following various engagements between the stakeholders involved in the integrated partnership, it was decided to establish five working groups to actively work on the two overarching themes:

- Community Safety
- Health
- Capacity Building
- Youth Connectivity
- Regeneration

Health

As the Whiterock ward (and surrounding wards) has the worst health inequalities in NI there is a real and immediate need to focus on health outcomes. It is also important that people are able to have a real say in their own healthcare. The idea that people should have a stronger voice in decisions about their health and care, and that services should better reflect their needs and preferences is widely agreed. People want it, and the evidence shows that when they are involved, decisions are better, health and health outcomes improve, and resources are allocated more efficiently.

Leisure and Health Transformation Programme.

The partnership has lead the area discussions about the development of a new health and community hub located on the Whiterock Leisure Centre site. The multi million pound investment will see the development of new health and leisure facilities that will have

positive health outcomes for our residents. The partnership will continue to lobby political and statutory bodies for this facility's development which will have a transformative effect for the area

The partnership will also ensure that any capital investment project is done by way of a proper community consultative process that identifies needs; including current services users, relevant stakeholders, our youth and older population.

Fuel Poverty

During the year the partnership continued to deliver on our fuel poverty strategy with a number of successful cavity wall insulations carried out in homes across the Turf Lodge and New Barnsley area. This project ensures houses are properly insulated and provide proper living conditions for our residents.



Pandemic: Covid 19

The emergence of a new and unknown virus (Covid 19) has presented the community with serious health and social concerns and an unknown next few months!

At the outset of this community health crisis the partnership coordinated and worked with a number of community representatives, organisations and local residents to create a grassroots' platform for a collective community response to the greatest public health emergency of our times. The partnership ensured the community response was robust and able to protect the elderly or vulnerable within the community.

Community Safety

- The partnership has an established Upper Springfield community safety structure in place. This structure has the participation of residents' associations, West Belfast community safety officers and statutory agencies.
- A monthly community safety meeting is held with local residents and statutory bodies.
- We are part of a consortium project across West Belfast in partnership with Sally Gardens, Roden Street Development and Falls Community Council as part of the Fresh Start initiative around community safety and urban regeneration.
- During the year, we also held a community safety fair for senior citizens and vulnerable residents.

Capacity Building

- Central in organising several local community events attended by thousands of local residents from the USW area. This year we had to cancel our annual St Patricks Day event due to COVID-19 guidelines; however we still managed to organise a virtual Upper Springfield St. Patricks Day stay at home event.

We also held our ever successful Halloween and Winter Wonderland Christmas Events with the additionality of a cinema screening this year as well as our annual 8th of August family fun-day and colour run.

- Organised a series of Community Clean-up's in conjunction with Residents Associations, NIHE and BCC.



Regeneration

- We as a partnership continue to push and lobby for a fit for purpose road infrastructure in our community; particularly in New Barnsley and Moyard which are in dire need of resurfacing
- We are continually working on a traffic management plan for the Upper Springfield/Whiterock area; to alleviate the build-up of traffic at key junctions.
- Working on the development of a coherent physical regeneration plan linked to community planning and the Belfast agenda including Black Mountain Shared Spaces Project, Whiterock Leisure Centre and Falls Park/City Cemetery Masterplan.
- It was also great to be involved in the redevelopment of Newhill Youth and Community Centre. Exciting to see what the future holds for Newhill and the young people from Dermott Hill and New Barnsley. Go n-éirí an bóthair libh!
- We have also been instrumental in lobbying statutory agencies to bring about some environmental regeneration to our area including the planting of crocus plants, wildflower meadows and the development of an entrance feature at the top of Whiterock.



Youth Team

The Upper Springfield Youth Team works for the social inclusion of young people age 11 to 25 years old by using a needs led and outcome driven community youth work approach. We deliver programmes 12 months of the year in a range of locally based settings. This includes a number of particularly strong strategic partnerships with Newhill Youth & Community Association and Glór na Mona. This year the team have worked with hundreds of children and young people aimed at enhancing their social inclusion, participation, educational attainment, and health & well-being.



How much did we do?

150 young people registered with the youth team. 133 young people registered with Glór na Mona Uachtair Cluanaí, and 104 young people registered with Newhill Youth Club this year.

- The Street Works youth 'drop in' continued on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, 150 young people registered completing 117 sessions.
- Newhill YC continued to operate 4 x evenings per week, 192 sessions delivered, 104 young people registered, 4,800 attendances.
- Glór na Mona operated 3 x sessions per week supported by the Youth Team, 133 young people registered, 144 sessions delivered, with an average of 75 young people in attendance per session.

- 45 young people completed our tailored personal and social development programme 'Training for Life' and 10 young people completed Sport Changes Lives Programme.
- 33 young people completed the Y Change programme which combines group work and 1 to 1 mentoring to support young people who are experiencing health and well-being issues.
- 30 young people completed the Training for Transition programme.
- 18 children completed our 'siblings' 1 to 1 mentoring programme.
- 15 young people completed Community Peer Leadership Programme this included 15 x young people completing OCN Level II in leadership and OCN Level 2 in Diversity and Good Relations, this group of young people provided 520 additional community volunteer hours.
- 59 young people completed our TBUC camp and 20 young people participated in our cross border European Exchange programme funding via Erasmus +.
- 273 young people participated across our summer engagement programmes including 86 'new' young people who had not previously engaged with the programme.
- Our flagship community health and well-being festival Féile na gCloiginí Gorma was also our most successful yet with 1528 local people participating across 28 events in 7 days!



How well did we do?

All our programmes are robustly monitored and evaluated. This year 100% of participants reported that they enjoyed our programmes and would recommend it to others. 90% of participants reported that they felt more included in their community as a result of their involvement with the project. 30% of the young people who registered with the youth team were 'new' young people who had previously benefited from the project

Community Testimonies:

"Another amazing summer with a wide range of activities for young people from the Upper Springfield. One of the big positive points for myself was the volunteer led summer week in Springhill. A week that saw the volunteers do the majority of the planning and delivery of the programme."

"They are youth workers! That's what they are paid to do! What nonsense!....Knowing first hand with my own son going on his trips with USDT youth team all volunteers go above and beyond to give these kids an unforgettable experience. THANK YOU ALL."

"Thanks to @Mickymaco we have developed a valuable partnership with @USDTYouthTeam due to Mick's passion and dedication our young people living in our homeless schemes in west and South Belfast felt inclusive and valued in our communities so thanks again."

"Thank you for having a brilliant summer scheme Roise loved everything she was involved with from camping to going on day trips, enjoy your well-earned and deserved break thanks again."

"Thank you for organising such a brilliant summer scheme my daughter Cara had a fab time at all the activities and trips and has loved every minute of it. Lots of great memories and experiences for her, thank you!"

"Thank you so much for all your hard work, Gabriel has had such an action packed summer with yourselves which we are so thankful for. Keep up the hard work and thanks to each and every one of you. Newhill has to best youth club about, thanks X."

USDT Advice Service

What did we do?

- 912 clients attended our Centre for assistance (528 women, 457 men)
- We assisted digitally with 340 Universal Credit Claims and issues arising out of them
- We recovered £4.6 million for our clients
- We challenged 151 department decisions. We referred 45 clients to City wide Tribunal for free Tribunal Representation
- We carried out 15 home visits
- We provided 50 emergency food parcels for families and single people struggling with Welfare Reform/ Universal Credit/ Migration from DLA to PIP/ general poverty issues
- We dealt with 3162 cases including benefits, housing, employment, health.

How well did we do it?

Some quotes from our Service users:

“We were made to feel welcome and nothing was too much trouble. It didn’t matter what the issue was, we managed to resolve it together.”

“I was at my wits end, I had a very sudden drop in income and didn’t know how I would manage. I was advised on my options and assisted to claim benefits and provided with a food parcel. I can’t thank the centre enough. You were a life line.”

Highly trained staff:

100% of Advice Service staff have:

- completed Housing Rights financial capability course

- completed quality of advice training
- completed Advice NI Employment Rights Course
- completed Advice Pro Case Management System Training

Quality Standard: We passed Advice NI quality advice audit with a pass mark of 91.7%.

Is anyone better off?

Two Volunteers have benefited in personal development terms in a supported environment One Volunteer has completed Level 4 Accreditation in Providing Social Security Advice which has increased her chances to work in the advice sector in the future One Volunteer has completed and passed Level 1 in Business and Administration thus increasing her employment prospects

CASE STUDY 1

Client sought advice on claiming Attendance Allowance (AA). Client and his wife are both in receipt of State Pension, his wife receives PIP enhanced in daily living and mobility, client also has an underlying entitlement to Carers Allowance. We assisted client in completing the claim form and advised him that he may be called for a medical assessment and what procedure would entail. Client was informed that his claim had been disallowed. We successfully challenged the decision and client was awarded high rate AA of £87.65 indefinitely. Client was also assisted to claim Pension Credit and he was awarded £146.00. Overall the client's income was increased by £233.65 a week.

CASE STUDY 2

Client had underlying health issues including a diagnosis of cancer and wanted assistance to claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to complete the claim form. He was then invited to a face to face medical assessment and was advised on the procedure and what to expect. Client received his decision and was disallowed on both components of PIP. He approached his GP for supporting evidence and we assisted him to challenge the decision. The client received a successful outcome, his decision was revised and he was awarded PIP standard for daily living and enhanced for mobility for four years. He received arrears of £2,600 and his income increased by £121.95 a week. Blue Badge was also applied for. "I can't thank the advice team enough, I was given a warm welcome from the outset, shown empathy and understanding. I would not have been able to challenge the decision without assistance. The extra income will improve the quality of my life enormously."

CASE STUDY 3

Client needed urgent advice, as a single parent with two dependent children with a change in circumstances. She was in receipt of Income Support, Carers Allowance (CA), Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit but has been notified that her young daughter has been disallowed Disability Living Allowance (DLA) on renewal. We provided ongoing assistance with challenging this decision and advised that CA will stop after 8 weeks and she no longer qualifies for Income Support. We assisted client digitally to claim Universal credit and made a separate claim for rates. Emergency food parcel was arranged as she will have to wait at least 5 weeks for her first payment of UC. Eventually DLA decision was revised after three months and daughter was now entitled to high rate care and low rate mobility. The initial wrong decision by the department had an enormous impact on all of our client's benefits and caused a great deal of stress to the family

USDT Board Members

Noel Rooney	Chair
Seamus O'Prey	Chair: Finance, Audit and Risk
John McGeown	Chair: Human Resources and Governance
Brenda Turnbull	Member
Denise Rooney	Member
Cathy Fitzsimons	Member
Thérèse McKernan	Member
Harry Connolly	Member
Conchur O'Muadaigh	Member
Tommy Holland	Resigned 23 October 2019
Alan Braithwaite	Resigned 19 March 2020

Senior Leadership Team

Donal McKinney	CEO
Annmarie Meryn	Asst CEO (Operations)
Anne McEvoy	Asst CEO (Finance)

Auditors

Jones Peters
44 Elmwood Ave
Belfast
BT9 6AZ

Solicitors

Edwards and Company
28 Hill Street
Belfast
BT1 2LA

UPPER SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL AREA EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN ACROSS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following table details current projects funded via the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment fund. It also details the 2019/20 individual spend for each project, the total amount of expenditure by strategic objective and the overall total expenditure in the Upper Springfield Neighbourhood Renewal Area

Revenue Projects:

Programme/Project	CFF Funding Period	CFF Funding Amount (Project allocation)	19/20 Spend (as at 31/03/20)
COMMUNITY RENEWAL			
Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT) – Advice Service	01/04/19-31/03/20	£102,185.22	£96,761.89
Upper Springfield Resource Centre (USRC) - Housing and Environment	01/04/19-31/03/20	£19,384.56	£19,383.04
Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT) – Building Better Communities (BBC)	01/04/19-31/03/20	£184,284.94	£178,534.28
Total Community Renewal		£305,854.72	£294,679.21

Programme/Project	CFF Funding Period	CFF Funding Amount (Project allocation)	19/20 Spend (as at 31/03/20)
Expenditure			
SOCIAL RENEWAL - HEALTH			
Ardmonagh Family and Community Group (AFCG) – Good Morning West Belfast (GMWB) – Elderly Services Project	01/04/19-31/03/20	£99,912.07	£95,489.13
Centre for Health and Wellbeing (CHWB) – Health and Wellbeing Project	01/04/19-31/03/20	£55,401.26	£54,969.62
Springhill Community House (SCH) - Health and Wellbeing Project	01/04/19-31/03/20	£15,184.01	£15,083.27
Holy Trinity Centre (HTC) - Health and Wellbeing Project	01/04/19- 31/03/20	£38,704.13	£38,704.13
Voices Women’s Group (VWG) – Health and Wellbeing Project	01/04/19-31/03/20	£28,883.80	£28,699.53
Total Social Renewal (Health) Expenditure		£238,085.27	£232,945.68
SOCIAL RENEWAL - EDUCATION			
Ardmonagh Family and Community Group (AFCG) – Children, Young People and Families Project (CYPF) - Little Monsters Day-care	01/04/19-31/03/20	£31,923.70	£31,916.15
Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT) – Youth Team	01/04/19-31/03/20	£159,947.61	£148,198.60
St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) – Children, Young People and Families Project	01/04/19-31/03/20	£31,746.51	£21,386.56
Whiterock Children’s Centre (WCC) – Children, Young People and Families	01/04/19-31/03/20	£27,053.67	£27,038.19

Programme/Project	CFF Funding Period	CFF Funding Amount (Project allocation)	19/20 Spend (as at 31/03/20)
Project			
Springhill Community House (SCH) – Training and Education Programme	01/04/19-31/03/20	£15,387.26	£15,362.23
Total Social Renewal (Education) Expenditure		£266,058.75	£243,901.73
TOTALS		£809,998.74	£771,526.62

Capital Projects:

Expenditure	Funding period	Funding allocated	Total spend
Total Capital Expenditure	01/04/19 – 31/03/20	£0.00	£0.00
Total revenue/capital spend for Upper Springfield/Whiterock Renewal Area	01/04/19 – 31/03/20	£0.00	£0.00
Overall Total Capital Expenditure	01/04/19 – 31/03/20	£0.00	£0.00

Upper Springfield Whiterock Neighbourhood Partnership Conclusion

In the 2019/20 financial year, Upper Springfield Whiterock Neighbourhood Partnership total overall spend was **£771,526.62**

This does not include services delivered on a West Belfast wide basis and across the Greater Belfast area. These services received **£1,095,179** in 2019/20 from Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Funding.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUNDING IN 2019/20 YEAR

Community Relations Output Measures

PROJECT	HTC	SCH	SVP	USDT YOUTH TEAM	USRC	VWG	WCC	USDT ADVICE	USDT ACTION ABILITY	AFCG GMWB
CR1 - Number of people participating in community relations projects		10				30				
CR2 – Number of people participating in community bonding projects						30	57			
CR3 - number of people volunteering for community development activities	10			10			10			27
CR4 - Number of people engaged/involved in unpaid voluntary work					60	20		2	20	
CR5 -Number of people receiving training in community development skills/capacity building				30	60					
CR12- Number of enquires and clients by category								3162	20	
CR13-Total number of beneficiaries								4079	250	774
CR15- Number of appeals and success rates								44		
CR17- Value of benefits claimed as a result of advice given								£4,626,902.76		

Education Output Measures

PROJECT	AFCG CYPF	CHWB	HTC	SCH	SVP	USDT YOUTH TEAM	WCC	USDT ACTION ABILITY
SR(Ed) 1 - Number of childcare/nursery school places crated/safeguarded	96		30				200	
SR(Ed) 3 - Number of pupils whose attainment is measurably enhanced/improved				22				
SR(Ed) 5 - Number of people engaged in parenting skills development programmes	50						220	
SR(Ed) 16 - Number of young people having access to specialist support to address assessed needs	60						20	30
SR(Ed) 19 - Number of pupils whose attainment is measurably enhanced/improved against baseline position					36			
SR(Ed) 20 - Number of children and young people having access to specialist support to enhance their physical and emotional well-being	36	14				33		
SR (Ed) 28 Number of people undertaking accredited courses and qualifications completed				72				

Social Renewal - Health Output Measures

PROJECTS	AFCG CYPF	CHWB	HTC	SCH	SVP	USDT YOUTH TEAM	USRC	VMG	WCC
SR(H)1 - Number of people benefiting from Healthy Lifestyle Projects				311					101
SR(H)2 - Number of people attending Health Education/Awareness initiatives	54			186	34	210		60	
SR(H)3 - Number of people accessing intervention/treatment services		748	570						
SR(H)6 Number of people participating in suicide prevention projects			374	63				28	

Social Renewal - Crime Output Measures

PROJECT	AFCG CYPF	CHWB	USRC	USDT YOUTH TEAM
SR(C)6 - Number of young people benefiting from youth inclusion/diversionary projects				275
SR(C)7 - Number of victims of crime supported		43		



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