A note from our Chief Executive

Welcome

We are pleased to present our annual review of activity. We hope you will enjoy reading more about the range of initiatives and services Midlothian Sure Start offer families through our 6 Family Learning Centres and on an outreach basis.

The past year was another busy year with the organisation working with 809 main carers and their children. During the course of the year we were delighted to move our Gorebridge Family Learning Centre, to the long awaited Gorebridge Beacon. We continued to offer A Good Start to over 200 babies and their parents, provide a range of family learning and therapeutic services to adults and children and develop new services like our Positive Futures project. We have continued to develop partnership working leading to improved services for children and families.

The past year has at the same time, been exciting and challenging as we continue to grow and adapt in preparation for 1140 hours in 2020.

It was another busy year and the Organisation continues to work closely with the community to ensure that services remain driven by local need.

We would like to thank the board and staff for their dedication, hard work and support in working towards our ambition for all Midlothian’s children to build the foundations of a happy childhood that last a lifetime. Most of all we wish to thank families for working with us to Build Best Beginnings.

Cheryl Brown & Su Duthie

Chief Executive Chair
Family Learning & Family Support

79 families engaged with the Peep service across our six Family Learning Centres in 2019, and A Good Start was delivered to 204. Families also engaged in a range of other Family Learning activities such as Bookbug, Stay and Play sessions, Speech and Language sessions and Health Visitor workshops. We have partnered with Pen Green and Midlothian Council to deliver Parents Involved in their Children’s Learning to 74 practitioners in Midlothian, which commenced this year. Additionally we trained 15 staff in ELKLAN, an early communication skills course and commit to rolling this out further.

Early Learning and Childcare

In 2018-19, we continued to deliver funded hours to eligible 2 year olds through Midlothian’s ‘A Good Time to be 2’. 266 children received this service, including 6 in a blended placement with Childminiders. In addition to this, in January we received 33 expanded places of 1140 hours, and 10 blended spaces.

These places supported the Organisation to build capacity ahead of full delivery of expanded Early Learning and Childcare in August 2020. Our Centres continued to receive glowing feedback from the Care Inspectorate, with Gorebridge Family Learning Centre receiving the highest grading of 6 (Excellent) for Care and Support, whilst our other inspected services consistently achieved 5s (Very Good).

Dynamic Dads

This was the final year of Big Lottery funding for our Dynamic Dads team. The Organisation remains committed to supporting Dads and has secured funding for a Dad’s Family Support Worker.

The service delivered dads2be to 58 dads and 129 dads have accessed a Dynamic Dads Saturday session. Six young dads engaged in one to one support work and 66 Dads have accessed peer support groups. Dads from the Saturday session at Penicuik are committed to running that session as volunteers and training is planned for 2019-20 to support this.

Empowering Families Partnership

With HomeLink Family Support and Play Therapy Base we continued our work in schools this year in the Newbattle Learning Community. We delivered Mindfulness and Yoga to over 50 people, in addition to 38 therapeutic interventions to adults, children or families. A further 20 children received Art Therapy. Additionally Mindfulness training was delivered to 3 staff groups within schools to build a whole school approach.

Therapeutic Services

58 families benefitted from individual counselling in this year. In addition to this, one family received a dyadic service and another 9 parents accessed a therapeutic group. Funding has been secured to develop our student placement policy and provision, in order to increase capacity within the service.

Our service also commenced a storytelling project at Mayfield Primary School.

Health Improvement Fund

The focus of our Health Improvement Fund is to train multi-agency staff and volunteers and to be trauma informed in their practice. This service delivered 15 screenings of the film ‘Resilience’ to 438 Midlothian staff and / or volunteers. 8 of these screenings were followed up by therapeutic skills training across five primary schools. The service also delivered A Good Start training to 12 participants, and undertook scoping work of antenatal services in Midlothian to further develop A Good Start.

I really enjoyed [storytelling] because it helps me settle down after break and the stories are helping me concentrate. The work has helped me to use my imagination build my courage and make my own riddle”.

Child (anonymous)
Open Kindergarten

Working in partnership with Parenting Across Scotland, Children in Scotland, Stirling University and Edinburgh City Council, Midlothian Sure Start undertook research regarding supporting families in 2018. Focus groups and interviews with families as well as professionals scoped successes and barriers to families engaging and benefiting from services. With a view to a Scandinavian model of an ‘Open Kindergarten’, this evidence base was used to secure funding to pilot the service in 2019-20 at our Mayfield Family Learning Centre.

Parenting Support

121 parents engaged in a peer support group in 2018-19. We delivered 31 sleep clinic sessions to families in Midlothian, and an additional 22 families received individual family support work. We built capacity within our staff to deliver parenting courses – 4 staff members were retrained to deliver in Incredible Years, and another 4 staff members were trained to deliver Raising Children with Confidence.

Winston Churchill Award Recipient

Our Chief Executive, Cheryl Brown was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to explore community based mental health. This allowed her to visit Australia and attend the International Childhood Trauma Conference. While in Australia, Cheryl had the opportunity to visit a therapeutic nursery, learn about therapeutic work in primary schools and visit an inspirational project called ‘family by family’ where ‘giving’ families were helped to support ‘receiving’ families. The difference between this and more traditional befriending support is that the whole family is involved.

This year Cheryl travelled to the USA and visited ‘Healthy Steps’ services in New York, a therapeutic nursery in Baltimore, the Child Parent Psychotherapy work in San Francisco and trauma informed provision at a primary and high school near Seattle.

Cheryl also established links with the organisation ‘Zero to Three’ in Washington. Cheryl is keen to share the learning from her trip.

Positive Futures

In 2018 families told us that financial stress was increasing, and due to this we included ‘Child Poverty’ within our Strategic Plan. We were successful in then gaining social innovation funding from The Hunter Foundation and Scottish Government to support this theme.

In early 2019 we recruited three Development Workers and a Dads Family Support Worker to support families to engage with Financial Advisor, undertake training and qualifications, and seek employment.

We are working in partnership to support system change. We plan to promote Early Years as a career to men and/or families with ‘lived experience’ and provide support to achieve this goal including through our own recruitment.

Parent Champions

Another new service for Midlothian Sure Start in 2018 is the Parent Champions scheme. Supported with funding from Coram, and by our Positive Futures staff, Parents are able to formally volunteer and ‘Champion’ our services to the community, particularly promoting funded Early Learning and Childcare. Parents are supported to undertake this role with training and peer group meetings. In 2018-19 we enrolled 6 Parent Champions.

World Mental Health Day

In 2018 we celebrated World Mental Health Day on 10th October with the first procession through Dalkeith. Working with Health in Mind and other local partners, over 100 people participated in walking through Dalkeith to ‘Share the Journey’, culminating in a marketplace at St John’s Church. The procession, in addition to raising awareness of mental health issues, helped “mobilise local community action in support of mental health” (The Edinburgh Evening News, 11th October 2018).

The Organisation is committed to facilitating this event in the coming years.

“every little bit has helped our family and turning my life around. You guys make a big difference to families that need help”.

Parent, Positive Futures
Fundraising

In 2018 we were successful in gaining funding from Tyne Esk Leader to recruit a fundraiser. Nadia Aslam joined Midlothian Sure Start in early 2019, setting out to develop a fundraising strategy and build on the already successful fundraising efforts within our Family Learning Centres.

If you are interested in volunteering as a Community Fundraiser or supporting our fundraising efforts please email Nadia, nadiaaslam@midlothiansurestart.org.uk.

£3,031

raised by our Family Learning Centres in 2018/19. This money funds, at the parents discretion, a range of trips, activities and events. Well done to all our families!

This year Catherine Fairley won Nursery Personality of the Year at the NMT Nursery Awards Scotland

“The Judges chose Catherine because her calm and nurturing personality shone through. This, combined with her passion for her work and determination to make a real and practical difference in the lives of the children, parents and her colleagues within the setting.”

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Income

- A Good Time to be 2
- Family Learning
- Big Lottery
- Therapeutic Service
- Social Innovation Partnership
- Donations

Expenditure

- Accommodation costs
- Repairs, maintenance & refurbishment
- Beneficiary costs
- Support costs
- Management Board expenses
- Audit, accountancy & bank fees
- Professional fees
- Partnership providers
- Fundraising

Midlothian Sure Start would like to thank the following funders for their support in 2018/19:


We have been successful in developing new projects which will commence in 2019/20, funded by The Robertson Trust, STV Children’s Appeal, Carcanit Community Fund, Radio Forth Cash for Kids & Children in Scotland (ELC Inclusion Fund).

We look forward to working to deliver these exciting new projects. The full financial statements of Midlothian Sure Start are available upon request.
We Are All Connected

A collaborative poem created by roughly 40 participants at Midlothian Sure Start’s Share the Journey event at St John’s King’s Park Church, in celebration of World Mental Health Day, 2019.

Compiled by Rebecca McKinney

We come to share the things inside us.
We shine light into the darkness, to chase away ghosts
and nurture dreams.

Right now, we feel so many things, like
colours swirled together to make something new:

Hopeful.
Thankful. Positive and happy.
Frazzled, stressed and a little bit shy,
but connected and confident and giving
BRILLIANT AMAZING CHAMPION!
Knackered, tired and rushed.
But being good. And helpful and encouraged and ENTHUSED.

Among like-minded folk. Grateful,
and blessed and inspired,
and much BETTER.

With good people: this is togetherness.

Sure, we have regrets. Who doesn’t?
If we could go back, we might tell our younger selves:

Eighties haircuts were bad news.
DO NOT start smoking.
You take on too much.
I SHOULD HAVE SPOKEN UP.
Don’t worry so much about what other people think.
Don’t be scared to be yourself. Don’t try to fit in.
Learn to say NO.

Try not to be nervous. You are enough.
Listen. Don’t stress.
Just be confident, just talk, think positive, everything will be OKAY.

Life is short. It’s all a phase. Give yourself some time. Chill out. LOVE yourself.
Shine.
You are worthy. You deserve better.
FORGIVE.

Anything worthwhile will be difficult, but you CAN do it. Knowledge will always help you:
invest in it.
Learn what you can, don’t stress about what you’re missing out.
Remember the important people; COMMUNITY is everything.

Don’t give up; these feelings will pass.
You are STRONGER THAN YOU KNOW.
It’s done. Well done.

We are holding onto what we’ve learned.
What’s done is done,
but we can change what’s to come.
To the people we are yet to be, we say:

JUST BEGIN!
You can do it.
Enjoy yourself, keep talking, go to college, be smart,
look to the future, be better than before, keep moving forward. Embrace the weird in you.
I thought of you.

Just keep doing your best. Keep talking, stay strong,
Be grateful for what you have.
Keep believing, be thankful, STICK IN. Stay happy.
Keep believing in yourself.
Forgive yourself.
You are good; remember that.
You have been fabulous.

But pace yourself. Delegate.
Live for today, in the moment, for the moment.
Be here now and KEEP BREATHING. Slow down and remember. Life is for living. Life is good.
Enjoy yourself.

Don’t forget. WE ARE ALL CONNECTED.

I’m looking forward to meeting you.