



ARDMONAGH FAMILY CENTRE

MISSION STATEMENT

“To enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Belfast area through the provision of relevant, accessible, affordable and well managed childcare and supported family services.”

The Ardmongagh Family & Community Group was founded as an unincorporated organisation in 1993. It was established by a group of local women who were concerned about the lack of childcare and family support within the Turf Lodge area of Belfast and as was the norm in these times, they decided to do something about it.

The organisation took its name after the street within the greater Turf Lodge area where a Save the Children centre was situated; Turf Lodge is an area which is identified as having high levels of multi-deprivation.

In 1997 the organisation negotiated a three year exit strategy with Save the Children which involved the transfer of ownership of the centre, financial support and assistance with developing strategic direction. The organisation became incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and it immediately commissioned a Needs Survey into Childcare and Youth Provision within the greater Turf Lodge area from which it developed its strategy in response to the identified needs.

The organisation had a sound business idea: it was one of the first providers in North and West Belfast to run a community based childcare centre as a social enterprise. It generated social capital through developing additional Family Support services and it developed at a time when Government policy introduced the Working Family Credit Tax which subsidized childcare for working parents by up to 70% of the cost. The organisation regarded itself as having a competitive advantage over other providers who were mainly within the private sector and/or others who, whilst being community based, did not operate as a social enterprise.

STRATEGIC AIMS

The strategic aims of the organisation were:

- to assess family support needs of the most vulnerable families in our community and promote change in response to that need,
- to ensure equality of access to the Ardmonagh Family Centre and its services for all the community,
- to maintain a professional, viable and sustainable organization,
- to contribute to the social and economic regeneration of the greater Turf Lodge area,
- to continue to provide high quality integrated childcare and related family support services to the most vulnerable families in our community,
- to lobby for the investment of adequate resources to meet the health and social care needs of the most vulnerable in our community by supporting co-operative partnerships between community and statutory organizations.

CURRENT SERVICES AND SOCIAL VALUE

Ardmonagh Family & Community Group has continued over the years to deliver its services to the most vulnerable children and families within the greater Belfast area. We have not strayed from trying to meet our strategic aims and from working towards the Mission Statement.

We have grown our business to a high level of quality provision; we currently employ 85 people and we have an approximate financial turnover £1.2million per annum. This is money that goes into the local economy and which is part of sustaining other community activities such as Summer Schemes, Elderly Services and Community Safety.

The services that we now deliver are:

- Daycare for 0 to 12 year olds (including After-schools care)

- Self-Directed Support for children and adults with complex medical needs
- Family Support
- Family Contact and
- Good Morning West Belfast Service (Elderly service)

At the beginning of this year, we conducted a root and branch review into the organisation and our services; this involved consultation with all stakeholders and it resulted in the development of the following priorities and objectives.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & OBJECTIVES 2016/2020

1. Build a strong, sustainable organisation

Objective 1: Eradicate dependency throughout the organisation.

Objective 2: Improve Financial Management & Financial Position.

Objective 3: Develop a strong Board.

Objective 4: Build financial reserves.

Objective 5: Prepare the organisation for procurement process.

2. Deliver Quality Services

Objective 1: Understand the needs of our users.

Objective 2: Inspire a strong and committed staff team

Objective 3: Establish Effective Partnerships

3. Improve Visibility of Organisation

Objective 1: Share our Mission Statement

Objective 2: Engage and influence Key Stakeholders

Objective 3: Develop effective internal and external communication

KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS

In developing these strategic priorities and objectives we were very conscious of a challenging and rapidly changing external environment. Some of these challenges include the following:

- Brexit: this will have an impact on the future of our organisation alongside all others. Whilst the fallout from the result is anything from gloomy to encouraging, depending upon your perspective, we believe that for third sector organisations it will have a massive negative impact.
- Severe constraints on public finances leading to reduced public services; cuts to the funding of third sector organisations; while, at the same time, there are increasing demands for these very services
- The transition from public sector grant funding to the commissioning/tendering of services and the change in skills that this transition requires
- Restructuring of both local government as a result of RPA and of government departments, with resulting changes of strategies, policies, personnel, as well as geographical boundaries
- Increased legal compliance requirements on third sector organisations including by the Charity Commission which is systematically registering all charities in Northern Ireland
- Introduction of increase to the minimum wage to £7.20 per hour for person over 25 years, increasing to £9.00 by 2020
- A reduction in trust, and increased public scrutiny, of third sector organisations and their leaders
- Rapid changes in technologies including mobile technologies and social media, bringing both opportunities and challenges
- Changes in demography, including the increasing number of older people and increases in BME communities, asylum-seekers and refugees.
- Perception of the organisation within the community.