



Regional Community Daycare Network
Sinéad McConnell

Brief history of the Community Daycare Network



- **The Community Daycare Network** - Not for Profit was established to provide a voice for those in the community providing high quality affordable daycare and wraparound services to local children and parents in areas of disadvantage
- We are providers committed to high quality early years, family and community services enhancing outcomes for children and families in areas of deprivation.
- The community daycare sector was built from the bottom up in communities of need. These services developed where no provision existed to support the holistic needs of families in poverty.
- We continue to adapt services in response to local need.



- Community based not for profit daycare services operate in areas of high-deprivation
- Services embedded in community organisations that also provide wrap-around support including family intervention services, adult education, SEN support and increasingly poverty support such as food parcels, clothing drives, social supermarket etc
- Most are reliant on a cocktail of non-recurrent funds such Pathway, City Council, Small grant schemes.
- Many families using services rely on universal credit and will be living in food and fuel poverty
- Creating equitable chances-Provision for vulnerable children and families (non-fee paying)
- Sustainability is therefore a major concern in the community-based social enterprise sector

Community family approach- Early intervention for the Child. Family. Community.

Childcare/early education is a regenerative strategy

Case study A

- Mum C is a single Mum, her husband has recently taken his own life. She came to the community organisation with her 2 youngest children (4 children in total), her benefits had stopped and she had found herself in a situation where she could not pay for gas or electricity to heat her house and was generally struggling with managing what little finance she had left after paying her bills.
- Mum was considering going to a doorstep lender to borrow some money. Mum had explained that she always worked but after her husband took his life she just couldn't seem to motivate herself to do anything and was struggling with the grief she was experiencing. She adored her children and continually spoke about wanting to do the best for them.

The Community Organisation organised;

- An immediate meeting with a Benefit Adviser – (Universal Credit reinstated)
- Gas and Electricity Vouchers,
- Talking Therapies for Mum,
- Referred mum to their Social Supermarket for 12 weeks so she could get food and one-to-one support from the dedicated Co-ordinator,
- Provided Childcare for the children so mum could attend her Talking Therapies,
- After engaging with the services for 4 months, Mum asked about getting back into training, was referred to training and employment services, completed Health and Social Care training with childcare provided, and has now found employment.
- Mum's children are still in the Community Daycare, Mum is now paying for the service through support from Universal Credit and states that the interventions that were given to her by the one organisation within her own community have changed her life.



Case study B

Mum has 1 child. She is a care leaver. She has a history of substance use and is a domestic abuse survivor.

Child is 6mths old and in kinship care since birth when they begin with the community daycare setting. Mum is allowed significant supervised contact with child but her relationship with statutory services is strained due to her life experiences.

The community group develops an agreed relationship with Mum as part of Child Safety plan. Mum begins to attend Parent and Toddler group as part of supervised contact. Mum is supported to see the impact of interaction on her child. She feels respected. She begins to attend more parenting classes and family events. She complies with all aspects of her safety plan and over time is allowed unsupervised contact leading to the child being returned to her care. Child remains in community daycare setting as part of safety plan and is thriving. They have supported Mum to register child for preschool next year. Mum is engaging with second chance education classes herself and plans to look for work in the future.





Key asks

- Investment in areas of disadvantage to enhance outcomes for children living in poverty.
- Focus must be on the unique needs of the child, family, community. Investment must not be solely directed at those in work. Respite/community placements are therefore key, tackling educational inequality and disadvantage.
- Support and fund effective community-based interventions that reflect the positive community attributes of each area.
- No displacement of services-build on existing community daycare and community-based family services
- Workforce strategy is key is supporting these outcomes. A plan must be developed to recruit, upskill and retain staff. Fair pay awards and working conditions must be prioritised and supported with investment. Recognition of experience and further development of vocational and degree level pathways must sit alongside ongoing continuing professional development.

Invest in the child
Invest in the family
Invest in the
community



Long-term funding and investment
Build on existing infrastructure and workforce
Children, family, community at the heart of any
development.