Parenting NI
Supporting families
Annual Report
2018 - 2019
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I would like to thank our funders for their continued support, which allows the organisation to provide a wide range of parenting services. Parenting NI is committed to ensuring all funding received is allocated directly to specific services. The increased competition for funding together with the austere market requires a concerted effort to identify, submit and pursue applications. The Board of Directors and staff were deeply disappointed by the loss of the helpline tender from the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) at the end of 2018. Despite the loss of this significant income stream, the organisation has shown resilience and is positively moving forward under the leadership and guidance of the CEO and Senior Management team. New services have been developed. The groundwork to launch the Employee Wellbeing programmes and to establish relationships with corporate organisations continues to grow. Plans are in place to further build and develop these relationships. I was pleased that Parenting NI secured accredited training centre status by the OCN and will be offering accredited training programmes going forward.

Key activity levels for services offered during 2018/19 remained stable. We are committed to grow and diversify these services in line with the needs of parents and families. Parenting NI continues to look outwards and has successfully used social media to promote services and to reach out to parents. The use of digital channels has materially exceeded operational targets.

I would like to thank our CEO Charlene Brooks, for her strong leadership. In particular Charlene has worked tirelessly to raise the profile and promote Parenting NI by developing new and existing relationships and through exploring potential collaboration opportunities.

Charlene and her Senior Management team have managed the organisation to a high standard from a corporate governance perspective. I am pleased to report that Parenting NI was placed first in the medium organisation category of the Voluntary Service Bureau Leadership & Good Governance Awards for 2018.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank the Senior Management team and all the staff for their professionalism, drive and passion. Their focus on delivering the objectives of the organisation and upholding its vision and values is very apparent.

I also want to express my thanks to my Board colleagues for their commitment and support. Also, for the knowledge and expertise they bring from a range of sectors. I want to thank Mr Marc Magill who will be retiring as a Trustee Board member after seven years of outstanding service to Parenting NI.

Michele Hutchinson
Chief Executive's Report

Parenting NI continued to grow and develop services this year, in response to parent and family need. In 2018 Parenting NI pioneered the ‘Big Parenting Survey’ and was delighted to gain the views of 1,191 parents. This survey is the first of its kind in NI, seeking parents views about their hopes for their children, their fears and concerns, their views on society and more. The findings, launched in February 2019 not only give an insight into the realities of modern day parenting in Northern Ireland but helped us as an organisation ensure that the services we grow and develop are indeed what parents need. The majority of respondents (38%) indicated that if they were looking for support they would look online or to on an online app.

Parenting NI has since gone on to develop an innovative Parenting App. The app which is now available for free on Android and iOS offers parenting support at your fingertips. This innovative resource offers tips on topics such as children’s emotional wellbeing and managing behaviour, explores parenting styles and includes an interactive game you can play with your children. We also continued to build on our portfolio of online resources including a diverse range of parenting articles and top tips. Other areas of work also excelled and I am particularly excited to see both the Families Together and Dads Projects go from strength to strength.

Advocacy is an increasingly important part of work for Parenting NI. It is vital, as Northern Ireland’s leading parenting charity, to make sure that the voices of parents are heard at all levels of government. This year we have had more meetings and discussions with MLAs, policy makers and commissioners than ever before - to help ensure the role of parents is recognised - Parents have an incredibly special role to play within our society; they are raising our future generation.

The year also brought a number of considerable challenges, not least the loss of the Regional Parenting Helpline HSCB Contract. Parenting NI identified the need in 1979 for a Parents advice service and established the regional helpline at this time. Although our organisation has been successfully delivering the service for the subsequent 40 years as a result of a procurement process the contract was awarded to a competing organisation. This was a huge shock to the organisation however the staff and Board Members remained steadfast and we were able to use this loss to help us ‘kick start’ the next chapter for Parenting NI. I want to thank our Board of Trustee members and most importantly the Senior Management and each and every one of the wider members of the Parenting NI team. Although the loss of the contract, and not least the 11 staff who were employed by Parenting NI to undertake the work have been hugely missed, the team that remain, are steadfast in our commitment to continuing to fulfil our mission of providing a range of accessible services and support to meet the needs of those in a parenting role.

Charlene Brooks
100% said they feel better able to manage the issues you are facing after speaking to Parenting NI

100% said they would call Parenting NI again if they needed further support

In 2018-2019 we took:
- 7,295 calls
- 129 web chats
- 414 face to face support meetings
- 1,214 referrals

Top 5 presenting issues:
- Child behaviour
- Separation
- Teenage behaviour
- Contact - child visits
- Family tensions
Parenting Education

We delivered 28 programmes and 18 workshops to parents and practitioners across Northern Ireland.

- Odyssey, Parenting Your Teen: 405 parents supported
- Walking on Eggshells: 642 children indirectly benefiting
- Keeping Your Cool
- Parenting Children’s Challenging Behaviour
- Fathers & Families
- Health & Happiness

Total number of parents supported: 405
Total number of children indirectly benefiting: 642
"Life changing. It has brought me closer to my teenager."
Thanks to funding distributed by the Belfast Outcomes Group from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Parenting NI added Home Visiting Family Support to its suite of services this year. In the latter part of this financial year, Parenting NI was successful in gaining the contract to deliver home visiting in Craigavon and Banbridge thanks to funding from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, which will commence April 2019.

30 families were supported as part of the project

100% of families showed some level of improvement particularly with boundaries and behaviour, managing emotions and parents’ wellbeing

242.5 number of hours of support provided to families
In 2018-2019 we delivered 135 workshops. Total participants at the workshops: 200 parents.

3 Parenting Apart programmes

243 Time for children sessions

334 Time for parents sessions

334 Time Together sessions

2 family fun days

131 parents attended

237 children attended

COMMUNITY FUND
"It is nice to get out of the house but also nice just to feel welcome somewhere and not judged which is a big thing for me because as a parent I feel like I’m not good enough to parent my children but when I come to these groups it helps me because I’m made to feel like I am a good enough parent and that I can do this parenting job."
In June 2018 we launched the Dads Project thanks to funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. The project supports dads in Northern Ireland who are separating, separated or currently involved within the courts service.

What was delivered?
- 6 Parenting Apart programmes
- 2 Fathers and Families programmes
- 5 Workshops
- 5 events for dads

322 dads got involved
129 professionals were reached by the project

Dads Talk
70 face to face sessions were facilitated
An external evaluation of the Family Wellness Project was carried out this year, which detailed the huge success of the website. It noted that "Parenting NI has been very successful in creating resources that are attractive to families and in encouraging participation in the annual online survey." The report also noted that "the investment of time and commitment from Parenting NI is paying off in relation to the large numbers of parents and families availing of their online support materials."

"The numbers of parents getting help from the Parenting NI site beggars belief – simply huge numbers."

“Our parents are going on the website all the time – the information is so well laid out and the language is very user friendly.”
Parental Participation

1,028

parents have participated in consultations in the past year

Parents views were sought on the following consultations:

- Department of Education: Parental Engagement (Stage 2)
- Department of Education: 14 - 19 Curriculum Strategy
- Department of Education: Home to School Transport Review
- Education Authority: Transgender Guidance for Schools
- Department of Education: Education Dashboard

84%

Online surveys

16%

Focus Groups
CYPSP Parental Participation Project

The CYPSP Parental Participation project aims to develop relationships and enable engagements with organisations, practitioners and parents through consultation and promotion of best practice.

656 parents consulted with to inform CYPSP practice.

468 parents engaged

393 practitioners engaged

93 organisations engaged

In March the Parental Participation Guide was produced.

Engaging Effectively with Parents training carried out with 33 practitioners.
Policy and Research

24 meetings with policy makers
(including all 6 main political parties)

3 Policy reports produced
2 on separation & 1 on welfare reform

7 Parent articles produced
Phones, Consent, Bedtimes, Video games x2, LGBT, Body Image

5 Responses to external consultations

Big Parenting Survey 2018

1,191 responses

82% of parents report they don’t get enough support

66% more worried and hopeful about bringing their children up in NI
This year Parenting NI delivered 56 Employee Wellbeing Sessions to 23 companies, benefitting 880 parent employees.

The service also ran two very successful events; Making Parenting Work with Josh Levs at the National Stadium looked at equality in the workplace and a celebration event for working mums in the lead up to Mother’s Day at Belfast Castle.

Parenting NI developed the OCN Level 4 Certificate in Working with Parents which was accredited by CEA through OCN. A first cohort of students completed the training and successfully achieved their Level 4 Certificate.
“I really liked how this session made me stop and look at how I am parenting and try to change some things that aren’t working.”
Marketing & Communications

It was another busy year for Parenting NI awareness raising, using multiple channels and events to promote the charity’s work. In 2018/2019 we took part in our final event as one of the Lord Mayor of Belfast’s nominated charities, filmed and aired a BBC Community Appeal, ran the Lisburn 10k, held a pub quiz, climbed a mountain, launched an app, and even had some furry friends help with promotion!

Facebook likes: 5,810
Twitter followers: 3,228
Launched Instagram profile October 2018
PARENTING WEEK 2018
THE POWER OF PARENT CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Parenting NI delivered another successful Parenting Week campaign in 2018 which focused on the Power of Parent Child Relationships.

2018 saw more schools and organisations get involved in the week using the materials within the campaign pack to hold their own events, complete with the families they work with or share on social media.

We were delighted to receive cross party support for the week - all political parties got on board and marked the week via their social media, recognising that parental support ensures the best outcomes for children and young people.

This year we also launched two new social platforms to broaden our reach throughout the week. We launched an Instagram page which gained hundreds of followers over the week and a Spotify account which got parents involved in creating a playlist full of songs that remind them of their children and happy family memories.
Parenting NI has ended this year with a small surplus, which, having started the year with a budget deficit was gratifying in the extreme.

During the year regular budget meetings were held with the Chief Executive and the Directors enabling us to closely monitor spend in our various areas of work against budgets and react in a timely fashion. There was no capital expenditure without specific funding and staff were diligent in making cut backs and savings whenever and wherever possible. This scrutiny and control of costs has helped to enable us to achieve a very positive result while still operating in a climate of political uncertainty and funding cut backs.

Financial stability is essential for voluntary organisations who are custodians of the funds they receive and this surplus has increased our general reserves which continue to give us the financial sustainability necessary to face the uncertainties surrounding future funding.

In December, we suffered a financial blow when we lost the government contract to deliver a helpline service for parents. We have begun to turn this into an opportunity by looking at the societal changes in challenges for parents and developing different approaches to delivering a service to meet these needs. We have provided for a one off dilapidations and this has resulted in a smaller surplus than would otherwise have been achieved.

During the year the Finance Sub Committee met regularly to examine all matters of financial implications for the organisation. The Committee ensures that Finance Policy is kept updated by continuing to make refinements in line with good practice and legislation. The Committee is made up of the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Chief Executive, the Honorary Treasurer, and the Head of Finance and Operations. The Finance Sub Committee reports to the Board of Trustees through the Treasurer. We are extremely grateful to Claire McAleenan who replaced Marc Magill as Honorary Treasurer, and who provided us with invaluable support and enabled us to benefit enormously from her experience, knowledge, and advice throughout the year. Claire’s interest in the organisation and willingness to give her time and expertise has been very much appreciated.

During the year we said farewell to 19 members of staff, a majority of whom were involved in the Helpline TUPE process. We welcomed 8 new members of staff to the team — 3 staff members were recruited for the new Dads Project, 1 joined the Parenting Education team, 1 new member of staff was recruited to a new Helpline post which is part of a project lead by Tiny Life, 2 joined the Training and Development team as Business Development Executive and Parental Participation Officer and 1 joined the Families Together team.
Our Staff
(as of 31st March 2019)

Charlene Brooks  
Chief Executive Officer

Directors
Muriel Bailey  
Director for Family Support Services

Hilary Morrow  
Head of Finance and Operations

Maria Rogan  
Director for Training and Development

Helpline and Face to Face Support Team
Tracey Gillespie  
Parenting Support Officer
Kathy Jan  
Parenting Support Officer

Education Team
Kelly Barbour  
Parenting Education Coordinator
Shirley Millar  
Parenting Education Manager

Families Together
Maria Graham  
Counsellor (Strabane)

Maria Herron  
Families Together Coordinator
Claire McGillion  
Key Worker (Strabane)
Kate Preston  
Counsellor (Antrim)
Sinéad Tumelty  
Key Worker (Antrim)

Dads Project
Paul Kelly  
Key Worker
Cahir Murray  
Dads Project Coordinator

Project Support
Judith Bracken  
Administrator
Michelle Flanagan  
Parenting Education Administrator

Training and Development Team
Maeve Bouvier  
Business Development Executive
Emma Lyttle  
Marketing and Communications Officer

Finance and Operations
Teresa Campton  
Finance and Administration Assistant
Chris Eisenstadt  
Policy and Research Officer
Sharon McWhirter  
Office Manager

Board of Trustees
Michele Hutchinson  
Chairperson
Claire McAleenan  
Treasurer
Maggie Andrews
Sarah Burrows
Dame Judith Hill
Mark Magill
Kerry Murphy
Michelle Napier
Dr Liam O’Hare
Anne Sweeney

Michelle McGlade-Buick  
Parental Participation Officer
Lauren Walls  
Participation Officer