

Ballysally Community Centre	14th June 2016
To: Leisure & Development Committee For Information	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, healthy & engaged communities
Outcome	
Lead Officer	Wendy McCullough – Head of Sport & Wellbeing
Cost: (If applicable)	Potential redundancy cost for one member of staff

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the change in the childcare provision within Ballysally Community Centre.

Background

A Community Playgroup has operated in Ballysally Community Centre for over 20 years, operational costs for the service have evolved over time with funding currently being provided by Coleraine Sure Start for one of the two members of Play Group staff. The Play Group Leader is employed by Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council.

Current situation

The Childcare Partnership and Department of Education have advised that they will not continue to provide funding for the Childcare Assistant post beyond the short term as this is not part of Sure Start's role, and is an anomaly in the provision of Sure Start across Northern Ireland.

In order to secure childcare provision for the Ballysally community, Coleraine Sure Start Partnership will assume responsibility for the running of an early years programme at the centre. As this cannot be a playgroup service, it is proposed to deliver two daily sessions on three days per week of the Sure Start Developmental Programme for Two to Three Year Olds. This will provide a programme for children in their pre-pre-school year and activities and support for the whole family.

Coleraine Sure Start Partnership currently offer the Programme in three different settings in the Sure Start area; Harper's Hill Children and Family Centre, Focus on Family and West Bann Development Group. The addition of the programme into Ballysally Community Centre will result in an increase in child spaces from 48 to 60 over the yearly programme. Children requiring Play group (pre-school) spaces no longer available in the Community Centre can be accommodated in the adjacent Ballysally Nursery School.

As a consequence of Sure Start taking responsibility for the provision of this service there will be no requirement for a Play Group Leader to be employed by Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council. The individual currently employed in this post will be safeguarded by Employment Legislation and has been consulted to date on the planned changes. The opportunity does exist for a transfer across into the Two to Three Year programme and employment by Sure Start.

The Two to Three Year Programme will commence in September 2017.

Further detail on the content of the programme is available in Annex A.



Sure Start Developmental Programme for 2 to 3 Year Olds

Background:

The programme was developed on the back of “The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EEPE)” study (Sylvia et al 2003) on pre-school children. This showed that although pre-school experience at ages three and four enhances the all-round development of children, an earlier start (under three) is related to better intellectual development. Research also indicated that children from vulnerable backgrounds benefit from more than one year’s high quality pre-school education and care.

In recognition of the research findings the Department of Education developed the Programme for 2 to 3 year Olds for children in their penultimate pre-school year. It focuses on constructive play in group settings to enhance children’s social and emotional development, builds on their language and communication skills and encourages imagination through play. There is a strong emphasis on engaging with parents, providing a joint care and learning environment and supporting a seamless transition from home.

The Programme has been aligned within Sure Start as one of the range of core services offered to children and their parents in the most disadvantaged areas. It is aimed at providing support to those children and their families who would be considered to benefit most from this provision.

The Programme:

- Recognises each child is an individual
- Values the role of the parent as the first educator
- Actively encourages the participation of the family in learning and development opportunities

The Programme focuses on three key areas:

- Children’s physical, social, emotional and cognitive development with a focus on age appropriate play based learning and enjoyment.
- Supporting a partnership with parents that builds on the knowledge and skills of parents in relation to their own children and focuses on positive play and learning, speech and language development, behaviour management support, child development, emotional well-being and dispositions for learning.
- Ongoing support and development for practitioners, in relation to emerging research findings and best practice in supporting the development and learning of young children.

Aims of the Programme:

- Develop improved language skills
- Improve their physical development
- Improve their social and emotional skills to enable their interactions with peers and adults
- Foster greater independence
- Increase their levels of attention and concentration
- Enable them to settle in quickly to their pre-school setting

ANNEX A

Essential Requirements for Participation:

- The child is in his/her “pre” pre-school year and therefore should have reached their 2nd birthday on or before 1st July prior to the September start.
- The child and parent must reside within the Sure Start catchment area and be registered with SureStart at the time of taking up a place on the Programme.

All parents will be encouraged to fulfil the following requirements:

- To commit to ensuring that their child will regularly attend the Programme.
- To agree to be an essential part of the Programme and commit to sessions/workshops/ home visits as required.

(Parents are encouraged to participate in stay and play sessions within the setting. Attend parent workshops and commit to having a home visit at least once a term)

Planning for Children’s play is based around four key areas:

- Physical Development
- Personal Social & Emotional Development
- Language and Communication
- Exploring and Thinking

The Programme takes a child led approach and planning is based around observations being made on each individual child to meet their developmental needs.

Coleraine Sure Start Partnership currently offer the Programme for Two Year Olds in three different settings in the Sure Start area. At Harpur’s Hill Children and Family Centre, Focus on Family and West Bann Development Group, two to three year olds in the area have lots of fun exploring and playing! Families **must** live in the Sure Start catchment area of the following wards: Ballysally, Cross Glebe, Churchlands, Central, Royal Portrush and the housing estates of Windy Hall and Millburn and adhere to the other requirements of the programme as set down by the Department of Education.

