



Midlothian Sure Start



Annual Report

1st April 2023 to the 31st March 2024

A word of welcome

It is with great pleasure we present our annual review for the period of 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

The year started with Midlothian Sure Start experiencing a significant cut (35%) to our local authority family learning funding. This led to restructuring which unfortunately has resulted in a reduction in our counselling service provision by 90%. It also led to a lack of capacity to offer the free “core” childcare places that we normally offer to families engaging in our family learning programme and to families who have been referred as needing additional support. Health Visitors and families have reported on the impact that this has had over the past year. It certainly is a miss at a time when concerns for children and families are on the rise with families increasingly struggling with the impact of the cost of living. We know that parental stress and mental health problems pose risks to children’s later development, affecting their language and cognitive development and their emotional wellbeing. We believe that decreasing funding to support early intervention and prevention support at such a formative stage of children’s development risks ensuring the very best beginnings for our children.

Thanks to further funding from Inspiring Scotland/Scottish Government Perinatal Mental Health funding and the trustees of the Charles Gordon Foundation we are delighted to say that the important work done by our perinatal team in support of parents/carers, babies and young infants has continued. We have also received funding to offer mindfulness and storytelling classes in primary schools. Going forward into the next financial year, we will also be in the position to work with Parenting Across Scotland, the Open University and Children in Scotland to demonstrate the benefit of the Open Kindergarten approach in Scotland.

We at Midlothian Sure Start were also pleased to be able to offer some direct support to families struggling with the impact of the cost of living through our partnership working the Penicuik CABx and through our involvement in the trusted provider scheme, which we believe has made a real difference to families. Midlothian Sure Start and Midlothian Council will be working together during the next financial year to support families with lived experience to research the local impact of this crisis on families and to work with Midlothian Council in the form of a lived experience panel to influence local strategies and practice.

As with all early years providers within the state, third and private sectors continued to be impacted by the challenges of attracting and retaining qualified early years staff. High levels of staff attrition has an impact on the organisation as we try to maintain our ambition to have well qualified staff, but also our very youngest children who are best served by secure attachments with key workers. We at Midlothian Sure Start are navigating this complex situation, continuing to work hard to upskill staff through a range of training programmes to achieve a good mix of skills across our organisation. We are also working hard to build a more sustainable funding model into the future.

We look forward to 2025 and continuing our work to ensure that every infant, child and family in our community thrives.

Arlene Stokes (Chair) and Cheryl Brown (CEO)



APRIL 2023
-
MARCH 2024
in Midlothian

Midlothian Sure
Start supported
573 families



We worked with
436 children

188 families
stayed in the most
deprived areas of
Midlothian (SIMD 1,2
and 3)



256 families
actively engaged in
family learning
intitatives



- **Supporting 436 children, 83 male carers (an increase of 14%) and 490 (1.4% decrease) female carers over the last year.**
- Provided services to those that needed them with 33 % of the overall number of families coming from areas of deprivation zones 1-3.
- **Providing counselling to 75 people.**
- Presenting on FAN at the World Congress of the Association of Infant Mental Health.
- **FUN summer programme for families across our centres.**
- Storytelling in local primary schools.
- **Provided a range of family learning activities such as Big Bed-time read, PEEP, HENRY, Stay and play or Open Kindergarten, Bookbug and A Good Start. To 256 (73% increase).**
- 19 parents were provided with 1-1 parenting support (80% decrease). This service ended due to the cuts.
- **20% increase in uptake of services in our perinatal service in Mid and East Lothian. Trained nursery nurses in the health team in A Good Start**
- Continued to work in partnership with Penicuik CABx to enable families to benefit from financial advice which led to financial gains.
- **Worked in partnership with JP Morgans Force for Good project to develop our website, introduced a new database (Charitylog) and are now working to digitise our AGS Instructor Training course.**
- Delivered parental employability support through early confidence building courses - "Steps to Excel" course and SQA accredited IT and Problem solving skills module.

Duty of Candour Statement

Midlothian Sure Start published our duty of candour report for the period 1st April 2023 to the 31 March 2024 (available)

How many incidents happened to which the duty of candour applies?

In the last year, there have been no incidents to which the duty of candour applied.

Our duty of candour report is published on our website

Vision

To support every infant, child and family in our community to thrive.

Mission

To help each child achieve their full potential by having valued, confident and collaborative staff who will work with each other and other agencies to provide best quality services to children and their families.





Strategic Priorities 2025-2030

Secure attachment

We will focus on supporting positive attachments by:

Child poverty

We will work to address child poverty by:

Trauma informed

We will support children and families adversely impacted through:

Family learning

We will value parents as the greatest educators of their children by:

Resilience

We will develop organisational and community resilience by:

Continue to develop our perinatal provision in partnership with local and national stakeholders.

Continue to deliver a range of evidence-based programmes and/or services to meet local need.

Provide therapeutic services to families affected by peri-natal issues and/or birth trauma.

Support families to engage with the systems around them and access the support available

Support families to engage in volunteering, training and employment opportunities.

Provide high quality, affordable childcare to support families re-engage with employment, training and other development opportunities.

Provide training and support to staff to create therapeutic environments to help children to self-regulate.

Delivering therapeutic services to children and families affected by adversity.

Providing services that are based on children's Rights and enable them to advocate for themselves.

Continuing to develop our partnership relationships to ensure that all children and families get the support they need, when they need it.

Providing family support and family learning opportunities to enable families to be connected, resilient and able to support their children.

Working with families and Health Visiting teams to ensure children meet their developmental milestones and get the support they need to thrive.

Supporting the development of resilient children, families and communities who have agency, through listening to their voice and helping them be heard.

Developing a resilient workforce through promoting self-care and a range of learning opportunities.

Continue to work towards diversifying our income to ensure the long term Sustainability of the organisation.

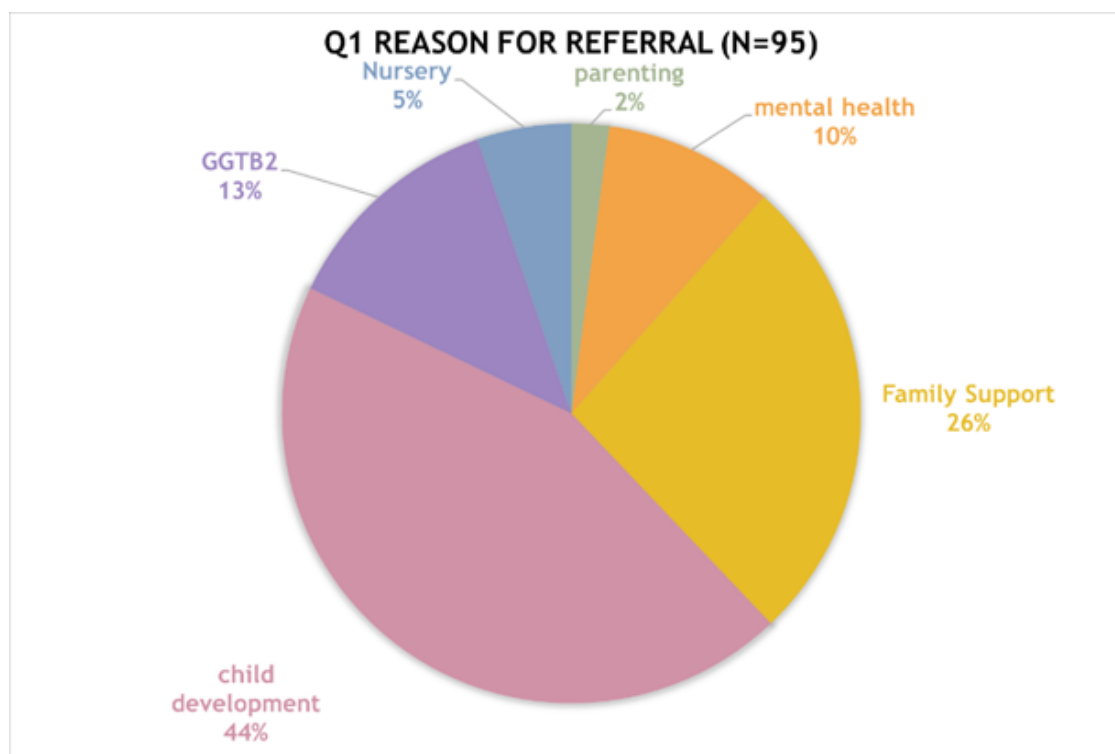
Impact on children and families

Referrals

Midlothian Sure Start received a substantial decrease in referrals (30%) from the previous year. This was caused by the removal of key services (respite care and therapeutic services) and referrers unsure about service availability at the time of cuts.

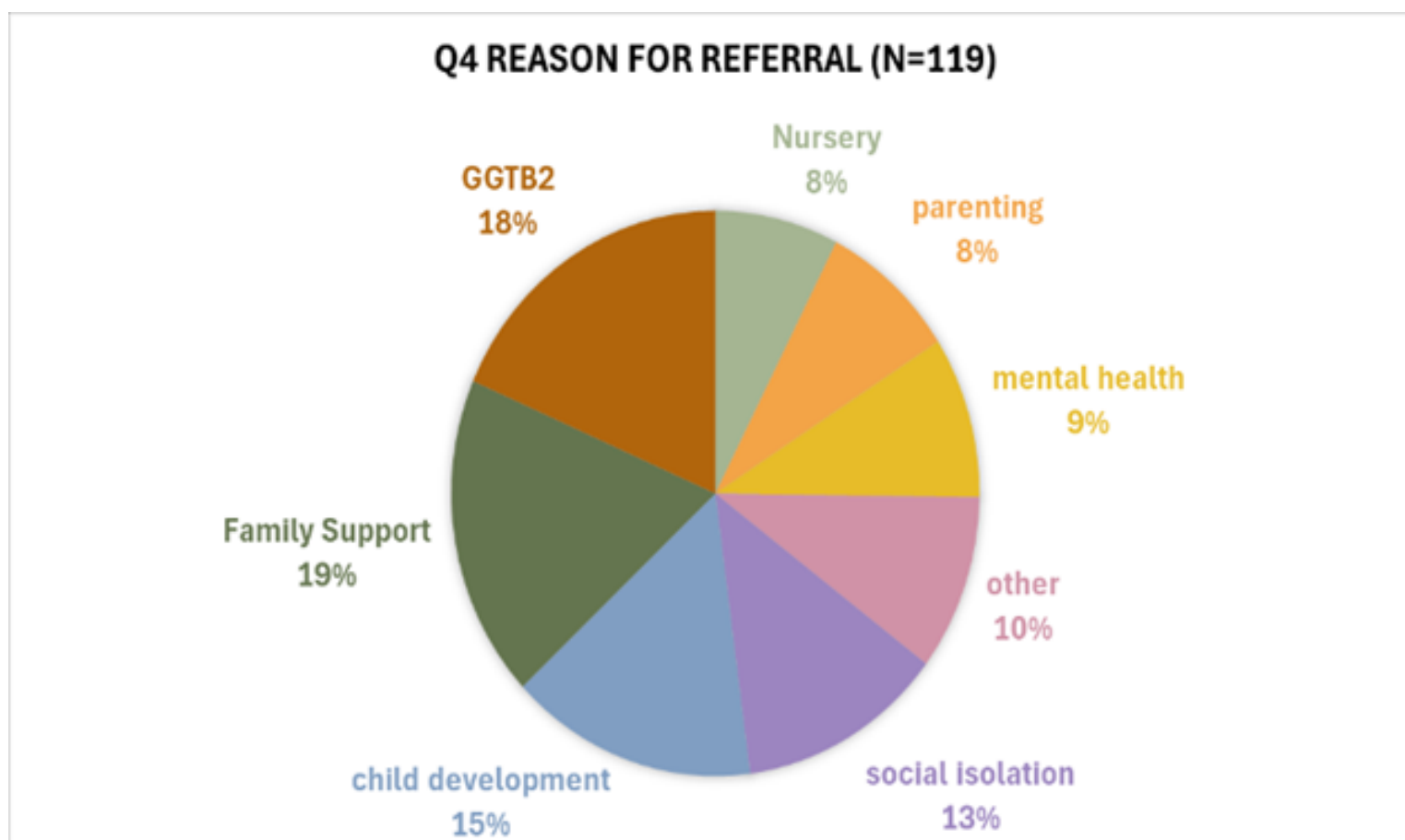
Referrals increased (as per diagrams from quarter 1 to quarter 4.)

The reason for referral has changed over the year with a marked decrease in the number referred for “child development”. See the attached graphs adjacent and below for a breakdown of the reason for referral in quarter 1 and quarter 4.



Wellbeing concerns

71 children with wellbeing needs were supported over the year. 13 children were on the child protection register.



"I have two families with lots of complex social and health needs. We have excellent support and communication with two staff in particular from MSS and without their support, knowledge and expertise the outcomes for the families would most likely have been different e.g. long-term foster care, Child Protection Register (CPR). From a health visitor perspective, we liaise with Surestart frequently and find their services, including the Good start programme really effective." G McKeesick Health Visitor

Poverty

The past year continued to be an economically challenging time for families. Midlothian Sure Start was fortunate to continue to be chosen as a “trusted provider” by Midlothian Council and supported by STV. This allowed us to be able to provide direct financial support in addition to support from the centres and from a welfare rights advisor from Citizens Advice Bureau Penicuik who has worked in partnership with Midlothian Sure Start. This support has been invaluable to families.

Thanks to funding from the Parent Employability support fund, we were able to offer a “Steps to Excel” course to 9 Parents either in groups or 1:1 sessions. 6 people achieved SQA accreditation for IT and Problem-solving skills module. 16 parents signed up to the Azilo training platform. 2 parents were supported into volunteering, 8 signed up to other courses like HENRY and Circle of Security, 3 were signposted to employability drop ins for CV support and 8 parents expressed readiness to engage with more adult learning.



Midlothian Sure Start has been successful in gaining funding from the Scottish Government through the Child Poverty Accelerator funding. Working with Midlothian Council, Midlothian Sure Start have recruited 15 peer researchers who have been trained to undertake peer research on the lived experience of poverty. 100 members of the community will be recruited to be interviewed and all participating will have the chance to help Midlothian Council form a lived experience panel to inform decision making in relation to measures the local authority implement to mitigate the impacts of child poverty.

Perinatal services

249 parent/carers (20% increase) were provided with a perinatal service in Mid and East Lothian. 78% of parent/carers reported an increase in knowledge and 70% stated that they felt they had grown in their skills to respond to their baby. 72% reported an increase in confidence to use community services. 78% of parents/carers reported that they had experienced a growth in their personal networks. 96% of carers reported that they feel less isolated and 93% of parents/carers reported feeling better able to meet the needs of their infants and children.

Started first Circle of Security parenting courses and co-delivered them with the PAIRS team.

Team started to use Video Interactive Guidance (VIG) to support parents. Trained nursery nurses in the health team in A Good Start

"Nice to make Mum friends" "The group has definitely helped me with my mental health" "Loved meeting others in my area and will definitely keep in touch". "I would like to thank you for the dad's to be group It helped me a lot and knowing I had a support group was amazing"

Family learning
We value parents as the greatest educators of their child.

Event Name	Location
Seep Advice	MeFLC
I-I support/ Drop in support groups	FLC and Perinatal
Big bedtime read, Up, Up and away and Bookbug	FLC
HENRY	FLC
Counselling	Online and FLC
Welfare advice – with Penicuik CAB	Across centres
PICL	Embedded in all work
Early Learning and Childcare	FLC
Family Friends- peer befriending	Across Midlothian
A Good Start Programme - Infant Massage, Infant Weaning, Baby Brain & Play	Loanhead Library
Dads2b - Midlothian	PeFLc
Dynamic Dads 0-2	PeFLc
Good Start Programme - Infant Massage, Infant Weaning, Baby Brain & Play	PeFLc
Good Start Programme - Infant Massage, Infant Weaning, Baby Brain & Play	MaFLC
Good Start Programme - Infant Massage, Infant Weaning, Baby Brain & Play	Dalkeith MP
Open Kindergarten for under 3's	Penicuik Town Hall
PEEP Babies with Midlothian Sure Start - 1-2 Year olds	PeFLc
A Good Start Programme - Infant Massage, Infant Weaning, Baby Brain & Play	GFLC
Dads2b - Midlothian	MaFLc
Dynamic Dads 0-2	PeFLc
Open Kindergarten	MaFLC
Open Kindergarten for under 3's	Bonnyrigg Guide Hall
PEEP 1 -2 Year olds	MaFLC
PEEP Babies with Midlothian Sure Start - 0 -1 Year olds	Loanhead Library
Stay and Play	MEFLC
A Good Start Programme - Infant Massage, Infant Weaning, Baby Brain & Play	HO
A Good Start Programme - Infant Massage, Infant Weaning, Baby Brain & Play	GFLC
DAD'S A Good Start Programme	PeFLc
Dads2b - Midlothian	HO
Raising Children with Confidence	MaFLC
Circle of Security, VIG and Enjoy baby enjoy you	Various
Counselling	Centres and
Mindfulness	In primary sc

Midlothian Sure Start continued to offer a range of family learning activities such as Big Bedtime read, PEEP, HENRY, Stay and play or Open Kindergarten, Bookbug and A Good Start.

256 (73% increase) families engaged in one of these family learning activities.

19 parents were provided with 1-1 parenting support (80% decrease). This service ended due to the cuts

Raising Children with Confidence courses were delivered.

2 ASN support groups were on offer to families with children with a child 0-5 in Mayfield and Penicuik Family Learning centres.

Family Friends

We recruited more Family Friends to support their peers.

Summer holidays

The Summer holiday programme provided a local opportunity for families to enjoy time with their child attending performances and outings that are not easily accessible from a cost and family capacity to participate perspective.



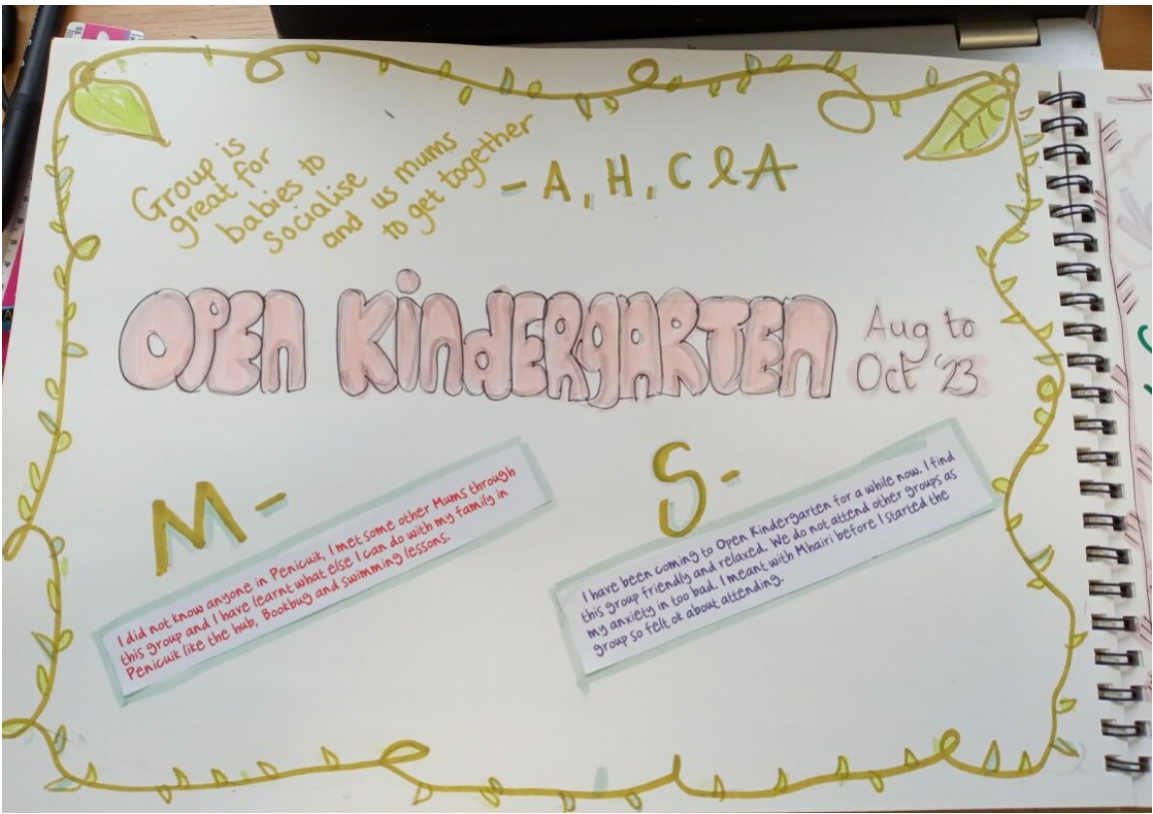
"We joined Ruth's playgroup (OK) on a Wednesday morning a few months ago. This was my first time attending any groups with my baby, Ruth made us both feel comfortable, meeting us alone beforehand and gave me confidence to attend this and other groups with Midlothian sure start. My baby loves meeting with her friends on a Wednesday morning. I also have met other young mums which I did not have the confidence to do before. We attended baby massage for 6 weeks which gave me more knowledge about how babies bodies work and how we can help through massage. We also attended enjoy baby enjoy you (CBT) with like minded mums and were all given the opportunity to talk about any worries or problems we were having. I believe attending these groups have also given my baby confidence."

Open Kindergarten/Stay and Play/Baby Group

A mixture of Open Kindergarten or Stay and Play groups were on offer across Midlothian. Groups were run at the Bonnyrigg Brownie Hall, Penicuik, Woodburn and Mayfield. Stay and Play sessions in Woodburn averaged 4 to 6 parents/carers and 7 to 8 children. Families were referred, dropped in or came through Woodburn Primary Nursery. Bonnyrigg OK has 13 people attending regularly including a granny, a single mum and a family with ASN. Penicuik OK meets at the town hall and has 9 parent/carers and children including one dad, one family referred through social work and 5 young mums.



A DADS Open kindergarten was on offer at Penicuik Family Learning Centre on a Saturday morning.



Parents/Carers fed back that the groups made a difference to them and their child.

PEEP

PEEP continued to operate in the Mayfield, Woodburn, Penicuik, Loanhead and Gorebridge Family Learning Centres.

HENRY

Activity: Henry Group
Duration: 24th Aug – 7 September
Number of Attendees: 4 families



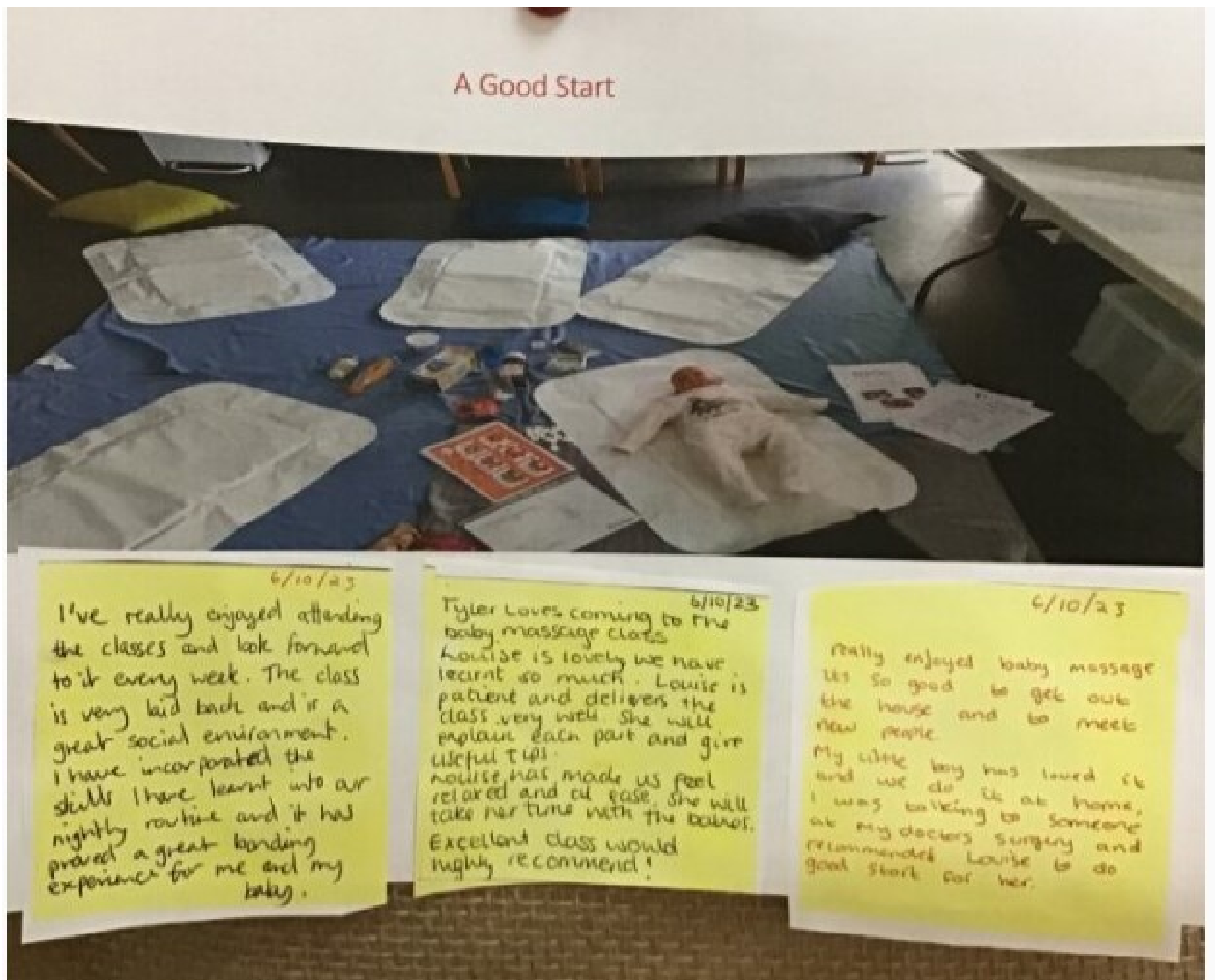
- How was the activity received: were there key messages or themes raised by participants?

Abbie run a short henry block, the families really engaged well, all 4 families whose children had just started engaged in the group from the start, they made real good conversations about behavior's linked to foods, they took slow cookers away and worked on meal planning and low-cost meal to make and shared this with the Centre through home observations that are linked into folder.

“It’s good to learn different ideas for messy play and to come and talk to other parents”
Woodburn Family Learning Centre PEEP

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Started first Circle of Security parenting courses and co-delivered them with the PAIRS team.

Team started to use Video Interactive Guidance (VIG) to support parents. Trained nursery nurses in the health team in A Good Start



Therapeutic Services

The therapeutic team worked with 75 adults. MSS have evaluated the impact of counselling in Midlothian using CORE 10 and have found:

- ♦ 38% of respondents had attended counselling due to experiencing low mood to mild distress.
- ♦ 58% presented with moderate to severe distress while 4% presented with severe distress.
- ♦ On average 88% of those attending counselling and who completed an evaluation, reported an improvement in their levels of distress.
- ♦ 62% reported a reliable level of improvement as evidenced on CORE 10.
- ♦ On completion of counselling 85% reported that they were functioning at a healthy level of wellbeing (27%) to mild level of distress.

'I just wanted to say how grateful I am for being able to use the Sure Start services after I had my baby girl last year. I had postnatal depression and the services were a massive help to me. I was referred by my health visitor. Being able to go to classes was great for my mental health and for bonding with my daughter. Classes were relaxed and welcoming. I also had counselling sessions with K. who offered great support and someone to talk to about how I was feeling each week. I hope Sure Start continues to be able to provide services to new mums and families who need help.'

All attending counselling are provided with tools to help them manage their emotions and signposted as required.

Mindfulness

Appointed a Mindfulness Practitioner.

Worked with Educational Psychologist and the Inclusion and Wellbeing service to identify children who would best benefit. Agreed to focus on children attending this service.

Art Therapy

Appointed a sessional Art therapist.



Story Telling

Tim completed his storytelling in schools at Lawfield, Woodburn, Mayfield Primary Schools and Newbattle High School.

Staff training

Staff members of the perinatal team trained in VIG and Parent Infant Interaction Observation Scale (PIIOS). Staff attended the NHS Vulnerability of Babies Training and First Aid. 2 all staff training days were held which covered strategic Planning/ Consultation, GDPR and the annual organisational Child Protection refresher training. Continued to train staff in Facilitating Attuned Networks (FAN) and Early years staff and Centre Managers completed degree level courses and other required.

Sustainability

Worked in partnership with JP Morgans Force for Good project to develop our website, introduced a new database (Charitylog) and are now working to digitise our A Good Start Instructor Training course training.

Income and Expenditure

for the Year Ending 31st March 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (incorporating Income & Expenditure Account)

Year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Income from:							
Donations		1,125	-	1,125	1,291	401	1,692
Charitable activities	3	856,071	685,201	1,541,272	543,167	1,230,510	1,773,677
Other trading activities	4	54,505	-	54,505	-	31,949	31,949
Investments							
- bank interest	5	10,347	-	10,347	3,046	-	3,046
Other income		5,500	-	5,500	30,314	19,468	49,782
Total income		927,548	685,201	1,612,749	577,818	1,282,328	1,860,146
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	6	1,020,361	675,014	1,695,375	549,911	1,363,927	1,913,838
Fundraising		(776)	-	(776)	145	77	222
Total Expenditure		1,019,585	675,014	1,694,599	550,056	1,364,004	1,914,060
Net (expenditure) / income		(92,037)	10,187	(81,850)	27,762	(81,676)	(53,914)
Transfers:							
Gross transfers between funds	11	(4,746)	4,746	-	(84,037)	84,037	-
Net movement in funds		(96,783)	14,933	(81,850)	(56,275)	2,361	(53,914)
Reconciliation of Funds:							
Total funds brought forward	11	622,988	278,349	901,337	679,263	275,988	955,251
Total funds carried forward	11	526,205	293,282	819,487	622,988	278,349	901,337

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses arising in the year.

All activities are classed as continuing.

The full financial statements of Midlothian Sure Start are available on Midlothian Sure Start's website or are available on request from admin@midlothiansurestart.org.uk

Thanks to our supporters:

Midlothian Sure Start would like to express a grateful thank you to the following supporters and funders for their support in 2023/204 Your support has helped us build “best beginnings” for children in Midlothian.

Funders and sponsors

Midlothian Council
NHS Lothian
Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Third Sector Funding
Inspiring Scotland
Prism Trust/Charles Gordon Foundation
Robertson Foundation
Amazon Smile
Midlothian Early Action Project/Big Lottery
Tyne Esk Rural Development
Community Mental Health Framework funding
STV children's Appeal
Supporters through Charities Trust/Just giving
Parent Donations and Fundraising
Winston Churchill Foundation
Midlothian Voluntary Action
Royal Botanic Gardens
Edinburgh Castle
Morrisons Dalkeith

Your support is most appreciated!

The year started with concerns in relation to funding of the Family Learning Centres with cuts to funding from Midlothian Council as a result of decreasing funding from the Scottish Government.





www.midlothiansurestart.org.uk



@MidSureStart



Midlothian Sure Start

Scottish Registered Charity Number
SCO031038

Company Number 215330