



# Quarriers Ruchazie Family Resource Centre Evaluation

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## Executive Summary

*From 2015-2018 the University of Stirling was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the extent to which the services of the Ruchazie Family Centre extended the support available to families in need. The primary purpose of this evaluation was to determine to what extent the service has achieved its aims to:*

- *work with families to overcome their barriers and achieve a more balanced family life and to:*
- *'...prevent renewed cycles of deprivation and neglect in the North East Glasgow by providing a holistic childcare and parenting service to ...disadvantaged families that improves health, wellbeing, development and thus life chances'*

*Quarriers is a Scottish charity that provide support and care for children, adults and families throughout the United Kingdom. Quarriers Ruchazie Family Resource Centre established in 2001 combines an Early Years Nursery and Intensive Family Support service, delivered by a multidisciplinary team. The Family Centre is located in the North East of Glasgow and is mostly used by families identified to have additional needs. North East Glasgow is one of the most deprived areas of Scotland (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006), meaning that there is greater child poverty and income deprivation and lower than average life expectancy.*

*This report builds on the interim evaluation reports (Lucas & Gadda, 2017; Westwood, Mirza, Lucas, 2016). We present and discuss data in relation to processes used to identify children's developments and achievements, interviews with people who use the Family Centre and Nursery as well as observations and interviews with Early Years and Family practitioners; we also focus on children's transitions to mainstream nursery. We present research data to explore the extent to which the family support service has made a difference to children and their families. We focus on the preventative nature of the service and provide comment on the extent to which the service supports children to achieve their developmental milestones; improves children's physical and emotional well-being; builds parenting skills and improves parents' relationships with children and builds parent's resilience to manage adversity.*

*The staff team promoted an enabling environment which encouraged parents to identify and build on their strengths, recognising that whole family interventions impact on children's overall wellbeing in line with the principles of GIRFEC, keeping the child at the centre of their work. We found that parents were overall very grateful for the services available at the Centre. A recurring theme across this three year evaluation was the notion of community, as service users indicate that the Centre offers a welcoming and accessible space for the whole family. The Centre provided opportunities for families to access support, seek advice and gain skills and confidence in their parenting as well as providing a social opportunity to combat isolation. Practitioners were described as person-centred, inclusive, non-judgemental and responsive to the family's changing needs. Practitioners' warmth and expertise were identified as traits that encouraged engagement in both the Nursery and Family Centre.*

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to all those who took part in this project. Thanks to the children for allowing the researchers to come into their nursery during drop off and collection times.

**All names and identifiable details have been altered to protect participants' identities.**

## Introduction

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to determine to what extent the service has achieved its aim to 'work with families to overcome their difficulties, and achieve a more balanced family life' (Quarriers, 2017). The evaluation aimed to:

- 1) ascertain the views and experiences of families, practitioners about the nursery provision and family support services offered at the Centre; how well it works and the challenges associated;
- 2) explore the extent to which the Ruchazie Project's family support has made a difference to children, parents and caregivers;
- 3) focus on the preventative nature of the service and provide comment on the extent to which the service supports children to achieve their developmental milestones; improves children's physical and emotional well-being; builds parenting skills and improving parents' relationships with children; builds parent/carer's resilience to manage adversity;
- 4) consider children's transitions from the Ruchazie nursery to a 'mainstream' nursery provision.

## Nursery provision

Quarriers, Ruchazie was awarded funding from the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) in 2014 to extend the nursery provision and develop wider family support activities. The nursery provision was extended to provide twelve full time equivalent places for children up to the age of three. Referrals come from health, social work, the Family Centre and parents themselves.

The nursery offers twenty seven places and parents/carers pay a nominal contribution fee for snacks. Practice within the nursery focuses on child development, play, communication and nurturing activities as well as supporting parents to manage their children's behaviour and developmental needs. In this respect, parents are provided with strategies to meet their children's needs. Parents are encouraged to access the wider family support activities available in the Centre.

Practitioners have various lengths of work experience at the nursery, there are longer term members of staff, new staffs, and relief staff. The demographic profile of the Ruchazie area has changed in recent years as there are more minority ethnic families living in the area. This change is reflected in the multi-ethnic profile of children who attend the nursery. Given the likelihood of further ethnic diversity, it will be important for the staff group to assess whether they are effectively meeting children and family's ethnic and cultural needs, and there are plans to setup a group

for minority ethnic parents and carers, some of whom may be refugees or asylum seekers. There are welcome signs in different languages and cultural events and learning opportunities at the Funday Monday session, the nursery offer activities linked to festivals and religious events, such as Diwali and the Moon Festival. Staff have worked with interpreters and use 'google translate' to support interactions with families who have limited English language proficiency.

## Family Resource Centre

The Centre offer a service for families with children under 12 who live in North East Glasgow and meet the eligibility criteria for individual services, for example, perinatal mental health up until the age of two. Families can also access other services and groups up until the youngest child reaches 12 years of age. North East Glasgow is a large area, with a population of over 177,000. Families are from different ethnic groups, speak languages other than English and may be in work or unemployed and or on maternity leave. Therefore the service offers support to people who live in various concentrations of multiple deprivation<sup>i</sup>.

The Centre's work is underpinned by the GIRFEC framework and staff have awareness of Glasgow City Council's priorities and the Health Equalities strategy. Families can access a variety of support from the Centre; intense family support, including nursery provision, and a range of group work activities tailored to meet family's needs. Support includes health and wellbeing support, training and group work such as Solihull or baby massage as well as one-to-one work.

## Research methodology

This report presents interview and observation data collected in year 3 (2017-18) with a focus on the four aims. Reference is also made to findings from the first and second year reports. The first part of this report focuses on the nursery provision, with reference to interviews with service users, staff and observations, there is also reference to the wider family support services offered in the Centre, as often parents use both parts of the service. We also present findings relating to children's transitions from Quarriers nursery at the age of three to a mainstream nursery. The second part of the report focuses on the Family Centre and draws on interview and observation data. A range of practitioner voices are included in the report to provide comment on their work with children and families including development and training opportunities. In the final section of the report we make a number of recommendations for service developments and improvements based on the findings. Throughout the report we use a selection of quotations from participants.

An easy-read report summarising the key findings be distributed at the Centre.

## Research Methods

In order to evaluate the provision of service offered to children and families at Quarriers, Ruchazie we used mixed methods including: the review of processes and outcome data, observation, focus groups and interviews with service users and staff. A range of voices and perspectives are included in this report, we also include the views of a practitioner from a local authority feeder nursery to gain an understanding about partnership working. Posters explaining the purpose of the project and ways for centre users to get involved were displayed at the Centre. Participants were recruited by both purposive and opportunistic means; meeting service users and staff in the social area or during centre activities and inviting them to participate and by way of introductions from the Centre staff to group members, professionals and service users. All members age 18 and above who used the centre were able to participate.

In order to better understand Nursery processes and recording mechanisms, we reviewed six children's 'Learning Stories' and in the findings section, we present an overview of two case studies. The Learning Stories are completed by the child's Key Worker and provide details about children's settling in period and monthly observations (writing and photos) about their development in the following areas: movement and coordination; curiosity; communication; relationships and emotional wellbeing; and observation of movement and coordination. The case studies provided insight to real-life phenomena from the Nursery setting to identify children's development and the way this is recorded by staff and carers. This method offered rich research data, otherwise impossible for the research team to collect (Yin 2009).

Individual and focus group interviews were semi-structured, this allowed the researchers to ask questions aimed at the objectives of the project while providing an opportunity to ask specific questions linked to an earlier observation and to allow the participants to raise issues that had not previously been considered (Mason 2018). We had conversations with educators from the 0-2 (ladybird) room and 2-3 (busybee) room, the Manager and an External Nursery Practitioner whose nursery takes children from Quarriers. We also spoke with caregivers whose children currently or previously used the nursery. Caregivers spoke about positive aspects of the service as well as identifying areas for development. In all interviews, care was taken to ensure that the questions asked were understandable and no jargon or technical language was used in the service user interviews. All interview schedules can be found in the appendices.

We carried out a focus groups at the Dad's group with members (n=6) and practitioners (n=3). The interview was structured by starting with questions about their present experiences, their past experiences and their future aspirations. We explored the men's perspectives about wellbeing, and the benefit they get from attending the group and the Centre, including guidance and peer support. We used an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner 1979, Maslow 1943) to understand dimensions of needs for the men and their engagement with the wider community, exploring barriers as well as their 'constructive engagement strategies' (Daniel et al., 1999; Gilligan, 2001), what helps them to cope with adversity and difficulty.

The observations enabled the researchers to learn about the life of the Centre and the people involved through observing and participating in activities, this included the 'drop off' and 'collection' time at the nursery. The observations enabled the researchers to grasp how professionals and service users communicate with each other and to observe situations that had been described in interviews. It can be argued that the observations enhanced the study as they provided the researchers with a better understanding of the context and phenomenon under study (Jorgensen 2015).

Using a thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clark, 2006), we analysed the data collected and integrated the findings with themes from research and policy. An external transcriber was used to transcribe the interview data.

<b>Interview data</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Case Study</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents &amp; carers who use the nursery (n=4)</li> <li>• Parents whose children left the nursery (n=2)</li> <li>• Nursery Manager (n=1)</li> <li>• Early Years Educators (n=2)</li> <li>• External Nursery practitioner (n=1)</li> <li>• Focus group with service users (n=6)</li> <li>• Interview with service user (n=1)</li> <li>• Centre Manager (n=1)</li> <li>• Family Centre Staff (n=4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre activities</li> <li>• Nursery drop offs and collection periods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's Learning Stories (n=6)</li> </ul>

### Ethical Considerations

The research team took appropriate steps to ensure that child protection and safeguarding, as well as the safety of research participants were embedded in all aspects of the project. Ethical approval was granted by the University of Stirling's General University Ethics Committee on two occasions (October 2015 and November 2017), the second application related to the request to focus on nursery transitions.

Quarriers acted as the gatekeeper and liaised with the parents to help us set up interviews with parents. The interviews took place at the Centre and over the telephone. Throughout the duration of research, posters were displayed to tell service users about the research and how they could take part. The research team ensured that informed consent was secured from all participants and care was taken to ensure that all participants understand the purpose of the research and what



participation would involve. Information sheets were provided to all participants, this information was explained orally with the support of practitioners on some occasions. Participants were given an opportunity to ask questions and to decide whether they want to take part in the research or not. Care was taken to ensure that the research participants did not feel obliged to participate. Service users were reassured that access to services would not be affected by non-participation. Personal data and research data was treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation policies and procedures and information and data was anonymized, stored securely and destroyed appropriately. The review of learning stories took place at the Nursery and the records did not leave the service, the researchers have removed any identifiable details so that the children cannot be identified.

### Limitations

We carried out interviews with a range of people (service users and staff), observations within the nursery and Family Centre and secondary analysis of children's Learning Stories. It is important to acknowledge that the findings do not reflect the views of all practitioners and service users. We acknowledge that we did not include children's voices in this report and this is a significant weakness of the research. Not all interviews were audio recorded and the researchers used field notes when it was not appropriate to audio record. Some of the service users were identified by Quarriers staff, it is possible that they may portray an overly positive picture of the service. To counter this possibility, the research team spoke with additional participants who were recruited based on availability. Two parents who used the nursery were interviewed and recruited via the Nursery Manager although no additional participation was sought from service users who had left the Centre or dropped out. The discussion with two parent groups provided a useful way for the researcher to identify similarities, group consensus and divergence, however it is possible that participant's individual feelings were not accurately represented due to peer pressure. The Dad's Group interview was attended by practitioners (after the men were given the choice) and this may have affected what the men felt able to say. The observations of the children's drop off and collection times was explained to staff and parents, and the researcher did not interrupt this dialogue, however the researcher's presence may have affected the staff member's usual engagement (Payne and Payne 2004). We were unable to attend the staff development day, this may have provided a useful opportunity to comment on the integration of the Nursery and Family Centre services.

## Findings from the Nursery

### Children's 'Learning Stories'

Since children's voices were not captured in this research and by way of addressing this imbalance we begin with a review of two children's Learning Stories: Declan' and 'Naomi', before presenting observations from the nursery, this leads to interview data from caregivers and practitioners.

The Learning Stories are written in the first person to the child. From the six books we looked at it was clear that the amount of content varies; one reason for this is the number of days the child attends the nursery. While there is evidence (photos) of children involved in different activities, there is not always explanation or detail about how staff support children's development.

The Learning Stories may include a 'My Wellbeing Next Steps' document for children moving into the 2-3 (busybee) room. This document asks the child's caregiver to provide comment:

*"I have had the opportunity to: \_\_\_\_\_"*  
*"My parents/carers have observed: \_\_\_\_\_"*  
*My parents /carers would like my keyworker to assist me with the following: \_\_\_\_\_"*  
*My Key Worker will now support me by: \_\_\_\_\_"*

The Learning Stories include a transition record for the child's next nursery establishment and provide a space for parent/carers to comment on the transition plan, a sample is included in 'Naomi's' report. The transition report asks the following questions:

*"Are you happy with the plan to help with your child's transition into the busybee room?" Yes/no/maybe*  
*"Do you feel you have been involved in the transition process? Yes/no/maybe options" with space to comment.*

#### 'Declan's' Learning Story

The first observation about Declan's settling session states that he is quite active in his play and his mum struggles with this and is looking for support. By the end of the settling period the observation is made that he has settled really well at the nursery; he enjoys independent play, and staff note an improvement in his behaviour.

Month	Summary of record
<b>September</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of my relationships and emotional wellbeing sheet – blank.</li> <li>• Observations of my movement and coordination – very positive observations about him being physically confident and having good hand-eye coordination and gross-motor skills. There are several observations made in this section, accompanied by pictures.</li> <li>• Observations of my communication – blank.</li> <li>• Observations of my curiosity – several observations made about him exploring the garden and other craft materials such as paint.</li> </ul>
<b>My Wellbeing – next steps (Oct – Nov)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notes that he has had the opportunity to explore different messy and sensory activities and that he is keen to take part and enjoys the outdoors.</li> <li>• Parents note that he is very active. Since joining this nursery his behaviour has improved and he is not screaming anymore. They would like assistance to support the development of his language and communication skills.</li> <li>• The Key Worker will 'encourage Declan to use words he already knows more</li> </ul>

	<i>often and doing lots of singing/language activities.'</i>
<b>October</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of my relationships - he has bonded with the staff.</li> <li>• Observations of my movement and co-ordination – blank.</li> <li>• Observations of my communication – he is developing the ability to communicate his needs and emotions to staff and other children. He uses sounds and hand gestures. He enjoys song time more now. <i>There is no indication as to how staff support him in developing his communication skills.</i></li> <li>• Observations of my curiosity – observations made about a couple of sensory activities that he enjoyed.</li> </ul>
<b>November</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of my relationships - staff note that he has been upset when mum leaves but that he's been able to seek comfort from a member of staff showing that they have a good bond.</li> <li>• Observations of my movement and co-ordination – one observation made about an activity where he again shows good gross-motor skills and coordination.</li> <li>• Observations of my communication – blank (<i>this is the one area for development identified</i>).</li> <li>• Observations of my curiosity – blank</li> </ul>
<b>December</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of my relationships - staff note how his enjoyment of an activity shows 'great emotional wellbeing'.</li> <li>• Observations of my movement and co-ordination – as November.</li> <li>• Observations of my curiosity – more observations about his interaction with a couple of sensory/creative activities he enjoyed.</li> <li>• Observations about my communication – blank.</li> </ul>
<b>My wellbeing next steps (Jan-Feb)</b>	<p>A staff member has completed the form, there are no observations made by parents. It notes that Declan had the opportunity to engage in lots of new sensory activities and develop his confidence, and that he enjoys the more physical activities and exploring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No observations made about his communication and how staff are supporting him.</li> <li>• Observations made in the various sections do not differ much from previous comments. Noting that he is finding separation from his mum difficult, but that he can come to staff for comfort.</li> <li>• Nothing added to the 'Observations of my communication' sheet.</li> </ul>
<b>February</b>	<p>He is still finding separation from mum difficult but settles in quite quickly after. It notes that he is starting to play alongside some of his friends and he enjoys this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No detail about how staff will further support this relationship building.</i></li> <li>• <i>No observations made of his communication.</i></li> </ul>
<b>My Wellbeing Next Steps March – April</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declan's Key Worker notes that he has been showing more interest in books, independently choosing books and bringing them to staff to read.</li> <li>• He enjoys outdoor activities and mum has observed that he plays well with other children.</li> <li>• Parents are still looking for support in developing his language and communication.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of my relationships and emotional wellbeing – notes that he is no longer having separation issues and mum reports that he is very sociable when out and about with her (so developing emotional confidence – <i>how are staff supporting this area is not clear</i>).</li> <li>• Observations of my communication – repeats that he’s more interested in books – <i>nothing said about how this is being encouraged, and how can nursery support parents to ensure that is nurtured at home</i>.</li> <li>• Various observations made about his movement and coordination; how he is very confident and curious.</li> </ul>
<b>April</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of my relationships - note that he has been seeking more physical contact with staff, this is interpreted as a sign of good emotional wellbeing.</li> <li>• He is now in the process of moving to the busybee room – he is doing his settling in sessions and it is noted that he has adapted well to the new environment and routines.</li> <li>• A couple of observations made about his curiosity – as previously, he is curious and interacts well with activities. It is noted that he was able to focus on one activity for 30 minutes.</li> <li>• Nothing written about his communication</li> </ul>

The overview of Declan’s Learning Story shows how valuable the combination of observation, writing and pictures and input from parents contributes to an understanding about his learning needs and development. As the overview shows there are a number of sections that had not been completed, there is also a need for staff to more assertively provide comment on their direct input and to directly respond to parents’ observation and assessment of need. For example, it is unclear whether Declan’s interest in books is an indication of his developing interest in language, or whether this has been a result of staff or parents input, his own volition or a combination of these.

#### ‘Naomi’s’ Learning Story

This book has a sheet at the start which explains the purpose of the Learning Story and how caregivers can contribute to it. It also details staff’s responsibilities in terms of completing the book. This information was not in any of the other books we looked at. This book did not state when Naomi started the nursery.

The transition record notes that Naomi has built good relationships with children and staff at the nursery. She is independent and able to make her own choices. Her communication skills are developing well; she is able to ask questions, follow instructions and express her needs. She likes listening to stories and songs, she has good listening skills, show good concentration and is able to follow instructions. She is active, physically confident and likes exploring.

Date	Record
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations made about Naomi's communication – she is quiet around staff but more vocal with other children. She likes to sing. A comment notes that Naomi and a friend read stories to each other but that when an adult approaches Naomi lowers her voice.</li> <li>• Relationships – as she transitions from the 'ladybird' to the 'busybee' room she is spending time still with her friends in the 'ladybird' room. She is developing new friendships.</li> <li>• Observations made about her motor-skills and how she is able to use a pincer grip. She has good hand-eye coordination.</li> <li>• Observations made about her curiosity and willingness to explore various activities - also show good concentration.</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various observations made about her curiosity, movement and co-ordination, communication, and relationships – <i>nothing about how staff might support her in further developing any of these areas.</i></li> <li>• Notes that she is more confident in the busybee room and happier to come to nursery. She is also more confident in saying what she wants and letting staff and other children know.</li> </ul>
July	<p>Note that she has a new Key Worker</p> <p>Similar observations from before about her engagement with various activities and her enjoyment and mastering of these.</p> <p>After July, recordings are made without date but the observations continue to be very similar to previous ones.</p>
<b>Transition record to another nursery establishment</b>	
<b>Relationship and emotional wellbeing</b>	Says she is pleasant and sociable, has built good bonds with staff and peers, is fully toilet trained and is very independent in this development area. She can express her needs well and has good personal hygiene. She is happy on her own and likes others company. She is helpful and caring.
<b>Communication</b>	Naomi has a wide vocabulary and uses full sentences in her communication with others. She likes books, and interacts with stories, and is able to re-tell some of these. She can count and recognises numbers...she can talk about the past present and future. She is good at listening to information and following instructions.
<b>Curiosity</b>	Naomi likes exploring the nursery, she has a variety of interests – such as looking at books, painting pictures, playing outdoors, experimenting with different textures, doing puzzles, singing and dancing, looking at flash cards and playing in the house corner. She is aware of nursery routines.
<b>Movement and coordination</b>	<p>Naomi is extremely confident and energetic and has good spatial awareness. Her fine motor skills have developed well, she can use brushes, crayons and scissors with ease.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sections on parent and child's comments are blank.</i></li> <li>• <i>There is nothing on the form that asks for suggestions of how progress in any of these areas can be further supported.</i></li> </ul>

In Naomi's Learning Story there are various observations about her curiosity, movement and co-ordination, communication, and relationships, but nothing about how staff might support her in further developing any of these areas. The observation about Naomi speaking less to staff was not explored more fully or referred back to in future records. The sections on parent and child's comments are blank, it would be useful to find ways to incorporate parent and children's views.

### Summary of Learning Stories

There are many positive aspects about Learning Stories and there is scope to build upon this resource to better evidence children's development and the extent to which the service supports children to achieve their developmental milestones.

The Learning Stories could include more detail about how children are supported to prepare for the transition from Quarriers nursery to another 'nursery provider and there could be more linking and reference to children's ongoing development with reference to previous observation. It would be useful to explore ways to better incorporate children and caregivers' perspectives and to identify any behaviour/activities that take place in the home to think about the continuation of care of children and their lives within the home and at the nursery.

In the Learning Stories we reviewed, the content of the observations are generally about activities and the child's interaction, as well as (although to a lesser extent) the child's interactions with peers and staff. There is little or nothing about developing language and communication (other than observations about a child's enjoyment of story time or music time) and little about how they are progressing and how this is being supported by the nursery.

One Learning Story indicates that the child's mother is no longer around, but there is no further comment about the child's relationship and emotional wellbeing. Another child's Learning Story indicates that the child is preparing to move to another nursery but there are no notes about what preparation might entail.

There is varying content about development milestones and some children's Learning Stories contain more pictures than others. There is a suggestion for a front sheet to be added to each Learning Story to include the following details:

- when the 'Home to Nursery' form was completed;
- whether the child stays half-day or full days;
- the child's attendance.

In one Learning Story there are lots of pictures and detailed observations about the child's time at nursery, and the reading they do together, then the amount of pictures and observations reduce in synch with the change of Key Worker. It may be worth exploring whether there is a link between the child and Key Worker's relationship and whether or not this may impact on the types of interactions and relationships they experience at nursery, as well as the quality of information recorded.

In all of the Stories we reviewed there could be clearer information about how staff will support children in their development and what could be done to encourage further development, and comment about the specific actions taken. It may be useful to include a direct question that asks staff to record and indicate how progress in any of the development areas can be further supported.

## Observations at the Nursery

This section refers to field note observation of the nursery drop off and collection times. The purpose of the observations was to observe the contact between staff, carers and children.

What we observed:

- There was a clear process for sharing information with families e.g. a handout about an outbreak of tonsillitis was given on one occasion.
- There was a range of interaction between staff, parents and children, with some parents receiving less attention than others.
- The content and amount of information given to carers at collection time about the child's day varied.

The practice of peer to peer observations could aid reflections and enhance practice and identify areas for development.

## Interview with parents whose children previously attended the Nursery

Two parents were interviewed separately about their experience of the nursery and the transition to the follow on nursery after leaving Quarriers. Both parents interviewed talked very positively about their children's experience at the nursery as well as their own experience of using the Family Centre and how the services helped them cope with adversity. A few areas for development were identified.

### The need for support

Parent A came to the Centre for the first time for support after the birth of her first child, she was referred by her Health Visitor. She was allocated a worker and then a nursery place was offered. Her child went to the nursery for 2.5 years and left on her third birthday.

Parent B was also told about the Centre by her Health Visitor, her child started the nursery at 2 years old and left on her third birthday. This parent explained that her child was put on a waiting list but the nursery lost the enrollment form which contributed to the delayed start, she also said that the initial home visit did not take place. While waiting for a nursery place the family attended groups and went on Quarriers' trips with her child, these activities were said to be useful as her child

became familiar with the building and staff. This parent was very understanding about the delayed start and spoke highly about the staff team.

*'[Quarriers] was a positive experience for our whole family' (Parent B)*

Both participants talked about how beneficial the Nursery and Family Centre were to their families, as it provided essential *'respite'* and *'support'*. They were aware that there was more opportunities for family support through Nursery than at other services. Both participants thought that there was not enough awareness in the community about services available at the Centre.

*'There's a bit of an impression that [the Centre] is only available to people who are really struggling, whereas some of the groups are open to all....if it's your first child you don't really know' (Parent A)*

The participants described the nursery positively and said that the staff were *'fantastic, all the girls in the nursery are so helpful, so informative' (Parent B)*. Parent A described the Centre as her *'saving grace'*. She made reference to her prior education and secure *'professional'* employment to explain how the service caters for people from all backgrounds as anyone can struggle after the birth of a child. She talked about coming to the Centre when she was at her *'absolute wits end'*. She went to groups which she initially found intimidating, but her confidence built as she became familiar with the surroundings and group structure. While her child accessed support in the nursery she received support from a practitioner, who helped her to realise that she was *'not alone'* in how she felt. The parent described there being an *'instant bond'* with the practitioner which helped her feel comfortable and safe. The practitioner supported her for the duration of time her child attended nursery, and also helped her to apply for a nursery place at a 3+ nursery. The practitioner is still in touch and available even though her child has left nursery.

*'It was really useful to have one: someone who understood and two: someone who had experience of dealing with someone like me and could give me some reassurance and guidance.'* (Parent A)

Parent B did not receive one-to-one support from a family worker but said she would have benefitted from this support. She described sitting in tears in the social area and said that she tried to access support but got the impression that the Centre were focusing on families who had ongoing social work input. She would have liked more support and advice about applying for the next nursery place.

*'Even though I kept putting myself out there, it wasn't being seen' (Parent B)*

*'It was quite hard because I was quite open and honest on the nursery forms because I had a lot going on with my mental health and [other child's needs] and I think some more regular support would have been useful. Because we were just about managing I got the impression that the Centre was focusing*



*on families who really weren't managing. On the surface we look we're holding it together' (Parent B)*

During the settling period both women used the Family Centre social area. The drop in room was useful to be able to see the interaction between the staff and children through the window. Parent B appreciated being able to use the social space with her older child where he did his support the wider family. As well as appreciating the convenience of the adjoining Family Centre and Nursery, the parents found it helpful that the Nursery runs all year round.

#### Support from staff

Both participants said they had a good relationship with all of the staff and could speak to any of them about their child. Staff were described to be welcoming to all members of the family, including children who did not attend the Nursery.

At the end of the Nursery session, staff were said to provide a brief overview of the child's day; but not a lot of content about their day; what they'd done or eaten, or if they had tried a new food. **Therefore, a more detailed verbal account of children's days by staff is something that could be useful to other parents.**

Parents attended parent meetings, they were sent newsletters and emails which gave an overview of the focus for the term, and they were given the opportunity to offer suggestions about topics to cover. The participants talked about the gradual settling in period, they said that their children developed a 'bond' with the staff. Parent B described how she **trusted** the staff; said that she was pleased that the Nursery would contact her appropriately if she was needed.

*'...you could tell that [the Early Years Educator] had a wealth of experience, she really cared about 'Michael' and 'Michael' really trusted her, he had a great bond with her.' (Parent A)*

*'The staff were amazing...I felt safe, I trusted the staff. I knew that they wouldn't leave her to cry. There were a couple of times that she really didn't settle and they came to get me right away...I knew....it wasn't just a job....they did care for the kids. And I saw that they'd walk around with the children on their hip if needed, help distract them, the way children ran up to all the staff for cuddles' (Parent B)*

In contrast, Parent A recalled how staff asked her to pick up her child promptly when he had a temperature. The parent described that she felt '*panicked*' as she was asked to be at the nursery within 20 minutes.

Parent A reported mixed experience about communication with nursery staff, she said that she had to repeat instructions relating to her child's health issues, dietary requirements and allergies and indicated that not all staff were knowledgeable about

'toddler diarrhea'. Despite this experience she said that she was satisfied with the quality of care provided.

Staff were said to be quick to pick up on children's needs. They were reported to be nurturing, for example, a parent recalled how she saw a staff member cradling her child as she slept, which she valued. Staff were described to share observations verbally and give updates about children's developments such as 'colour sorting' or progress with sentence construction. Staff were said to support children's development and made suggestions about what the parents could do to create a link between the home and nursery. For example, a practitioner suggested that they got a pram at home to help with the child's movement and coordination.

### Learning Stories

*'[The Learning Story] is really good, because I was quite distressed and sometimes I thought oh god, I've missed his early years, so it's good to have like that memory book to look back on and to say how she developed and to kind of bring back memories' (Parent A).*

Children's Learning Stories were talked about positively, the parents liked that staff use the first person and that the book '*speaks to the child*'. Both parents knew that they could look at the document but did not think that the document was used to guide their children's development or learning. When the child leaves nursery they take the Learning Story and the transition report. A parent said that she showed the Learning Story to the new nursery who were impressed with it and had taken some ideas from it. She said that the book helped the new nursery to get to know the child, their needs, likes and dislikes.

### Leaving Quarriers Nursery

Both parents said they were aware of children who did not have a nursery place after leaving Quarriers. Parent A wished that her child could stay at the nursery until he was 5. The thought of leaving the nursery was quite difficult and she had been thinking about her son leaving the nursery for years. Her Family Support Worker helped her apply for a nursery place and the Nursery Manager told her when the allocation meetings took place and the websites that listed nursery places. This input was said to be useful. There had been some delays in getting a space at the council nursery after leaving Quarriers nursery at three years old, a place had been offered but it was unsuitable. Parent B said that her family did not receive any support or advice about finding another nursery, she looked online for advice. **Parent B said that information about dates for nursery applications and more liaison with other nurseries to support the transition would have been useful.**

The participants were not sure whether the staff offered any preparation to children about leaving and moving to another nursery. The parents helped their children by talking to them about the impending transition. Parent A said that 'Michael' was

aware that other children had left the nursery and she made reference to this as a way to explain that he'd be leaving on his third birthday.

### Focus group with caregivers whose children attend the Nursery

The researcher spoke with female caregivers (n=4) whose children were in the nursery that day, they were all using the social area, having a cup of tea and chat. The researcher gave information sheets to the women and gained their consent to take notes about their experience of Quarriers Nursery. The women's children were in the baby room and toddler room and some had older children who had been to the nursery.

#### Peer support

There was discussion about the children's behaviour and development such as tongue tie, using a dummy and communication and language delay and examples of women giving advice to each other. Peer support, encouragement and reassurance could be seen as a reflection of some of the interactions observed between family support practitioners and service users.

*...it's normal, that's what happened to my 'Dean' (service user)*

*'...the Health Visitor told me that children can't do everything at once', they may be really quick to walk and slower to talk' (service user)*

When talking about the Family Centre, a woman said *'I feel comfy here'*, she appreciated there always being somebody in the drop in room, usually another parent/carer to talk with to *'...have a blether and give each other tit bits'*. There was agreement that what was said in the rooms stays in the room and that it was a safe space, for people to share concerns, feelings and experiences.

#### Caregiver's interaction with staff

Caregivers said they were given a slip of paper with information about the children's days – how many nappy changes they've had, whether they'd eaten their snack and basic information about the day. The women said that they would check how many nappies were left in the child's bag to verify the number of nappy changes. *There was a suggestion for staff to ask parents key information every morning: when was the nappy changed? Have they been offered breakfast and did they eat it?*

There was a sense of understanding displayed towards the staff e.g. *'I know they are busy'*, however the women said that staff did not always greet them at the start and end of the nursery session (e.g. say good morning/afternoon) and they were not

always made to feel welcome. The women did not always feel welcomed by staff at pick up time, particularly if the child had been upset during the day.

A woman talked about her child's experience of settling into the nursery. She said that her child had started hitting her and other family members at home and she had asked staff to tell her if this behaviour goes on in the nursery.

#### Staff interaction with children

The women explained that they could see the children from the social area and they shared examples of seeing the staff interacting with one another in the garden with minimal attention given to the children. A parent described feeling '*disheartened*' as she observed staff sitting around the table talking to each other and not engaging with her child who was sat by himself, looking upset. She explained that he had struggled to settle and was aware that he could be '*hard work*', she felt that staff may be inconvenienced when he was upset and she queried the strategies they used to settle him and whether they were doing enough. In response to these concerns, another woman said that the staff '*...want all the wains to be the same*'.

The women explained that when their children were unsettled they may be asked to stay in the waiting area or to collect the child early if necessary. While they were prepared to do this there was consensus that staff could try alternative strategies and there was recognition that they may not always be able to collect their children early. Concern was expressed that their children may be asked to leave the nursery due to behaviour issues or them being continually unsettled.

During the discussion, a nursery practitioner came into the room to talk with a carer who had been asked to wait while she settled. She asked her to collect the child earlier and said that she '*always goes bananas*' during collection time. The woman who received the information was quite surprised, she said that she didn't know this was what happened and she did not want her child to become distressed so she would make sure that she collected her early. She was grateful for this information but concerned that it had not been shared before. It is unclear whether staff had more recently observed this behaviour.

#### Recommendations

To build on the experiences discussed from the interviews with caregivers, there are a number of recommendations.

It appears that caregivers need reassurance from staff, particularly if their child is distressed and or struggling to settle, while trying to collectively identify solutions to overcome difficulties. The management team said that parents or carers are asked to wait in the social area during the settling in period or if the child were particularly upset, the staff team would come to the social area to give information about how their child was and suggest whether they could leave the building.

- Standardized questions to caregivers at drop off time to establish: whether the child has eaten, has a dry nappy, has had less sleep than usual.
- Support from nursery staff to offer advice around transitions and nursery information, this could be offered regardless of whether the family have an allocated family support worker.
- To ensure that families are familiar with the Nursery Handbook, which details procedures around picking children up early due to illness.
- Continued development and refresher knowledge about children's allergies and health needs.
- To make the self-referral process clear for people who need support.
- More detailed verbal information about children's day upon collection.
- Extended opening hours (8-6PM) to support working parents.
- Alumni newsletter or emails to keep families aware of events and activities at the Centre. The nursery newsletter could be added to the Facebook page.
- Making the visibility of support available, with posters in the social area, helplines and what to do if they are feeling distressed. A resource folder that details local support agencies could be left in the social area.
- To continue participating in multiagency forums and to ensure that promotion activities and information sessions continue to maximize referral possibilities.
- The issue of childcare places after the child leaving the nursery is outwith Quarriers' control. However, there may be value in exploring whether families can access community childminding services if no nursery spaces are available.

### Interview with External Nursery Practitioner

We carried out a telephone interview with an external nursery practitioner whose nursery receives children from Quarriers nursery. The interview schedule can be found in appendix 4.

#### Working in partnership

The practitioner described a positive relationship with Quarriers; her engagement related to children who had transitioned from the nursery, she may also make referrals for families who need support. It was apparent that the agencies have a positive and supportive relationship. There is trust between the two organisations and mutual understanding about the respective service.

*'X may call and say 'there's a family here that really needs a place' or that there is child ready to move – and we do our best to ensure that that child will have a place' (External Nursery Practitioner).*

In regards to outcomes, the practitioner said that she could identify the children who had been to Quarriers as their support needs had already been identified. The participant said that children from Quarriers nursery often have a lot of '*support needs*' and Key Workers from both nurseries work together to ensure that the needs of the child are met and the transition is managed in the best possible way. There

was a strong sense of partnership between the two organisations – both could count on each other to ensure that children and their families were well supported.

The practitioner talked about an ongoing development between the two nurseries that resulted from a field trip to an outdoor forest nursery. Since then the nurseries have been talking about how they could adopt some of the ideas for more outdoor sessions. They are currently working on developing a project together along with the primary school to seek funding to develop an outdoor play area. One of the aims is for the space to be accessible for all members of the community groups and an opportunity for children to socialise with children from other nurseries/primary schools, thus enhancing a sense of community as people are *'gelling together'*.

### Sharing Information

Information was shared between the two organisations so that the right support could be put in place and/or the best approach to dealing with an issue could be identified in the best interests of the child.

The manager explained that when a child moves from Quarriers the nursery is sent a transition report that provides information about the child's: *'interests, likes and dislikes and achievements, their language and communication, overall development, health and wellbeing'*. The report is used to look at the next steps for that child to support the child in the new nursery environment. Exchange and quality of information from Quarriers had been very helpful as this supported the nursery in identifying the best way in which to work with families. The manager was confident that she could count on Quarriers to provide the support that families required if and when issues arose.

### Preparing for the transition

It was not clear how much parents are consulted about the transitions from Quarriers to the feeder nursery. The manager stated that Quarriers' staff sometimes accompanies the family for an introductory visit and this happens more often if a child from a 'vulnerable' family are moving to the nursery so that staff from both organisations can visit the nursery together, to help parents to build confidence in the new setting.

*'It can be daunting for parents to move from one organisation where they have built trust with the staff to another where they don't know anyone.'*  
(External Nursery Practitioner)

The manager indicated that the package of support for children and their families available at Quarriers is vital. She recognised that moving to a different nursery setting where there is only support for the child can be difficult for some families.

Staff from both organisations have carried out joint home visits as a way to explore what support they could offer collectively e.g. nursery provision for the child and ongoing support from Quarriers for the parent. The manager explained that her Nursery alone would not be able to instigate a visit to the family home, but Quarriers could make this possible given their established relationship with the family. The manager said that it was positive that the nursery and Quarriers were able to work together to support families within the community.

The only issue identified by the practitioner was the possibility of a long wait for a child to access a place. She explained that children have to leave Quarriers nursery as soon as they turn three, even if no place has been identified at another nursery. For some children there may be a long period without provision. The manager was concerned about the impact that this could have on the child and family.

### Interview with Quarriers Nursery Staff

This section draws upon an interview with Early Years Educators and the Nursery Manager, the interview schedule can be found in appendix 1. Reference was made to the interview from 2017 found in the year 2 report (Lucas and Gadda 2017) which provided an overview about the service, the ways that the nursery share information with families and plans about developing more outdoor space.

#### Values and approaches to practice

The nursery use a 'Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy' this means that staff should not shout at children, they should go down on one knee at the child's level and say "*no thank you*". Children sometimes get 'time out' and are asked to sit down until they calm down. This means that staff should never shout at children or simply say 'no' but instead act as good role models giving an explanation of why they are being instructed in a particular way or asked not to do something.

Practitioners indicated that work at Quarriers nursery is distinct from other nursery settings as it involves more interaction with parents and carers, particularly families who are experiencing difficulty. In order to support families, practitioners engage in multi-agency work, liaising with Family Centre staff as well as feeder nurseries, social workers, health visitors and speech and language therapists.

The manager said that there are enough staff and relief workers in post providing a good continuation of care for children. When asked about the values of the nursery, the manager said that the team seek to create a welcoming, friendly and respectful environment for everyone; as staff learn from parents about the child's likes and the children learn and play with new toys and have new experience and where staff have an understanding about parents' needs and circumstances.

Practitioners were described by the manager to work well as a team and would communicate if there were any problems. While no specific threats from caregivers

were referred to, the manager indicated that there was a clear plan to deal with challenging behaviour and a risk assessment to ensure that staff feel safe. The manager indicated that she has a positive relationship with staff and is told if there are any concerns, and they would seek advice or support from another member of staff if she was not in the building.

#### Cross- working: nursery and family centre

One of the recommendations in the first year report (Westwood, Mirza and Lucas 2016) was for the nursery to capture the impact that they have on parenting capacity. The Nursery Manager said that cross-working and integration amongst the nursery and support Centre staff is an area for ongoing development. Nursery practitioners were reported to have more interaction with parents and family support practitioners and as a result they are more aware about the broader issues that affect family's lives and how such issues intersect with children's development.

The manager said that staff may actively invite parents to sit in the area during the settling in period so that they can see what's going on, however she realised that this arrangement was not always appropriate particularly if parents try to interact with their child through the glass, which can lead to the child becoming unsettled. She acknowledged that for staff the layout can feel like staff are *'in a fish bowl'*.

The manager explained that the location of the nursery attached to the Family Centre means that nursery staff's work goes beyond working directly with children to work with their parents which would not necessarily happen if they worked in another nursery setting. She indicated that it can be helpful to have an understanding of what parents have experienced or continue to experience as this helps their understanding of how to best understand and interact with the children. There was a sense of empathy for parents as the manager acknowledge that:

*'...you need to be...respectful of the fact that these parents have got so much going on in their wee lives that they've actually got up in the morning and came here, you know, and it's good that ... they've managed to get themselves together and out the door and here, even though they've got so much going on in their own lives'* (Nursery Manager)

Practitioners indicated that integration between the nursery and Family Centre had recently improved. Nursery staff are encouraged to deliver group work in the Family Centre e.g. Bookbugs/baby massage/music for children who have autism and the Nursery Manager was said to give updates about Centre business during team meeting. A practitioner said that integration between the Nursery and Family Centre could be better, she said that updates and information was exchanged by email from the Centre but there was not always time to read emails and therefore she felt disconnected with activities or business in the Centre.



- While Early Years practitioners facilitate groups in partnerships with Family Centre staff, it remains important to identify ways to share information between the two teams and to review the effectiveness of email communication.

In response to the need for more cross-working identified in the previous evaluation reports, a Family Engagement Worker was appointed who works between the nursery and family Centre; this was to find ways to engage with parents who don't use the Centre. The Family Engagement Worker is funded for two years; this will involve work with existing parents within the nursery, but also parents on the waiting list, exploring how to engage with parents who are waiting for a nursery place, encouraging them to become more involved with the Centre in the interim.

*'...obviously we get to know the parents well, but a designated person for them to have that they could go and talk to on their own and say if they've got any problems with housing benefit, anything at all, somebody that's there, designated just for them to discuss how they're feeling now their wee one's settling in nursery, or how they're feeling now their wee one's leaving nursery' (Nursery Manager)*

The practitioner indicated that she was unsure about the eligibility criteria for parents and carers interested in joining groups. She talked of a parent who expressed interest in joining the 'Dad's group' but wasn't given the opportunity to join. She compared this with another man who she described as louder, more visible and perhaps more confident who had been invited to join the group. She raised the question about parents and carers' visibility and whether more could be done to support more withdrawn or quiet people to engage in activities in the Centre. Parallels can be drawn to Parent B (p15) and continued awareness of support needs, including those who appear to be 'coping'.

*'...a lot of the focus is on the noticeable vulnerable families, but until something occurs [parents/carers] might not speak about how vulnerable they're feeling, or something that hasn't been disclosed' (Early Years Educator)*

- There is therefore the potential for Early Years Practitioners to act as 'ambassadors' and to promote Family Centre activities while balancing this with the need to be aware of resistance and ways to maintain positive relationships.
- It is important that practitioners have an understanding about Centre events and groups, including the option for parents to use the social area while their child is at nursery.

## Children's settling and transition

Children's settling and transition period was described as a major part of practitioner's work. A practitioner indicated that there is always some form of settling taking place as children join the nursery, move rooms when they turn 2 and move to the next nursery when they turn 3. Practitioners talked about the need to support the child and family during transition period.

*'...the settling in process can be quite difficult – for both parents and children – so I suppose [I've gained] lots of experience in ways to work with different families with settling in and making sure that everyone feels secure, not just the kid, but the parent as well'* (Early Years Educator)

The manager acknowledged that there could be a gap in nursery provision for children leaving the nursery age three if their birthday falls after the start of term. The Centre try to alleviate this with the summer programme, there are also ongoing activities in the Centre as well as range of activities offered within the North East Glasgow area. Some families look for a nursery place before their child turns three to avoid the gap in provision. The manager explained that there are more providers that offer places for 52 weeks but not enough.

A transition report is sent to the nursery that gives an indication of their likes and dislikes and information about their development milestones. Parents may ask for more support during the transition and the child's key worker might help to settle the child in their next nursery.

## Children's development

A practitioner talked about how her input with parents can result in benefits for children. She said that many children who come to the nursery age 2 have limited vocabularies and her engagement with parents through group work helped her to realise that there may be related to their parent's limited confidence and literary skills. Following the completion of community Bookbugs training<sup>1</sup>, she co-led Bookbugs sessions; stories, songs and rhymes for children and their carers which were open to all parents in the Centre. As the sessions developed it became evident that some of the adults did not know the words to nursery rhymes. In response, they provided a printed songs booklet. While there is no data to measure the impact these sessions had on the children and parents, there is wider evidence to suggest that parent and child interaction through song, rhyme and reading can contribute to improve child: parent relationships and improve children's language and communication skills as a result of the 'non-threatening approach' of Bookbugs (Scottish Government 2018:7). The Bookbugs example therefore highlights practitioners' awareness of the link between children's development with regards to language and communication skills and children and carers' relationships and the support that can be offered.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/bookbug>

When asked how staff know whether supporting children's development and wellbeing, the manager said that developments can be observed with reference to the Learning Stories but can also be 'seen' in the people.

*'...because you get to know the families and then you get to, you just get to know their background and you see the children growing in confidence and going for a wee kid that's been shy to come in to enjoying nursery...it's good as well if you've had a child that's been on a Child Protection Register and they come off due to the work that we've done, like the partnership working, you know, you've kept a child safe' (Nursery Manager)*

The manager explained that the Learning Stories emerged from a former 'Milestones' record, which was largely based on the child's acquisition of developmental milestones. The Learning Stories provide a record of children's learning and development and they are accompanied by a 'Next Steps' document completed by the child's Key Worker which draws upon staff and parent observation and comments, for example:

*'...if somebody likes toddling along with a wee trike in the garden and their parents are like ooh, I'd like you to support them with their walking, so we're like, we'll put lots of toys out that support this walking. Or...the parent in the house is like [gasps] they keep throwing toys everywhere, so we're like no, that's the scattering schema, we'll help support that in the nursery by putting out lots of toys and you could maybe do a bit in the house by giving them the washing basket at the washing machine, and just let them put their toys out; so it's the 'next steps'' (Nursery Manager).*

The Learning Stories are shared at parent's evenings and are available if parents want to look at them. The books are given to parents to keep when they leave the nursery:

*'...we thought that a picture paints a thousand words so you can see a child actually playing with something or enjoying climbing or ... so you've got that actual evidence there with the observation next to it ... because we could write somebody really likes climbing this, or doing that, and ... well how do I actually know that... sometimes parents will drop their kids off and they don't really want to talk that much, but when they sit at parents' night and they look at the folders they can see [gasps], oh look... it lets them see what their child's day at nursery's been like' (Nursery Manager).*

### Cultural sensitivity

The nursery support children and families from different ethnic, cultural and religious groups. The manager indicated that there was ongoing learning to meet children and family's cultural needs, for example reminding staff of issues relating to cultural sensitivity and safety; that all children need to wear sun cream regardless of their skin colour and if parents decline they need to recommend that the child's

body is covered. The manager also gave the example of learning that some families object to the concept of Halloween and how the child's nursery days were changed during this period to accommodate their needs.

#### Relationship based practice

A practitioner explained that relationships with parents and carers take time to develop and staff work hard to maintain positive relationships and diffuse suspicion, because some parents may not feel comfortable with professionals. She said that home visits are a useful way to start relationship building and trust:

*'...you go out and visit the family and see them in their home environment, which can build relationships, because ...it can be quite daunting [for someone walking into the Centre]. So going out and seeing them where they feel comfortable and seeing if they've got any questions and finding out a bit more about the family and what their life's like, and then inviting them to come along to do some settling' (Early Years Educator).*

At the initial home visit practitioners tell parents that they are available if they need support. However, the practitioner explained that she would be cautious about recommending or suggesting that a parent seeks support from a Family Support worker in recognition that some parents may be suspicious of authority figures. She would be careful about the way certain questions or concern was expressed to minimise parents feeling they are being *'victimised or scapegoated'*. However, the practitioner said that the team has always managed to develop positive relationship with caregivers.

*'...I don't think there's been anyone that has been in a care plan that once we build relationships and see that we're just here to provide education and care for the children they see that we're not as bad as what they think we are and they actually then start to attend' (Early Years Educator)*

While caution was linked to the need to promote relationships with families, it was clear that the practitioner was attentive to child protection policies and safeguarding procedures. She recognised that the nursery staff's regular interaction with parents and carers at drop off and collection time meant that they are more likely than family support workers, to observe if families may be experiencing difficulties, through parent and child interactions and recurring or escalating patterns of behaviour, or a change in the child's behaviour or presentation.

- **The findings in this section highlight that Early Years Educators are therefore in a valuable position to identify parents and carers' needs and when appropriate signpost people for support. However, they may not be familiar with eligibility criteria and the availability of resources. It is important that staff remain attentive to families' needs and that processes for self-referral are displayed in social areas.**

## Training and Development

Training and learning needs were linked to practitioner's work with parents and carers as well as children. There appeared to be a culture of ongoing learning and development amongst the staff group and the development opportunities provided by Quarriers were reported to be useful and effective for the development of practitioner's skillset and knowledge base. For example, a practitioner who had worked at Quarriers for over ten years talked about her continuing interest and curiosity to find ways to improve her practice and better understand and support children. She had recently sought guidance from the Health Visitor and Speech and Language therapist about ways to better support a child who had some learning delays. She was involved in trying out play based approaches and being led by the child's interests. She recognised a gap in her knowledge about autism and appropriate training had been identified.

Practitioners valued that Quarriers paid attention to individual's strengths and gave them the opportunity to move rooms (under 2 or 2+ room), unlike other organisations that may rotate staff without consultation. They indicated that their opinions and ideas were valued by the manager and taken on board.

Ruchazie Nursery is the only nursery provision within Quarriers and this provides unique opportunities for families and staff. The development opportunities were evaluated positively, however perhaps due to there being just one nursery within Quarriers, it was reported that the training does not always reflect the zero to three age group. Recent training has included 'postnatal depression' and this has given staff more awareness about the difficulties that parents may experience during the settling in period. The manager made reference to the maternal mental wellbeing programme in the Centre which staff were familiar with. There is a request from staff to learn more about autism as staff have been querying traits displayed by children which could link to the possibility of autism.

Development opportunities and support for new staff enables the staff group to work with children with various need and backgrounds. Tasks and responsibilities are allocated in accordance with staff's competence and experience, for example, where there were ongoing child protection concerns, an experienced Key Worker would be allocated to the child.

## Ongoing developments

At the 2018 development day, the staff group looked back at the plans and actions from the year before and were asked to look forward and to define the aims, identifying ways to build upon the progress made, and this is mapped against the SHANARRI indicators and shared with the council.

The nursery garden had been renovated, which was reported to have been a positive development and there are plans to work with the council and a local nursery to extend the nursery onto a piece of unused land.

*‘...the garden’s made an awful difference because ... it just lets the kids just have that place to theirselves, and it also lets the parents have a place to theirselves as well, having the seating area out the back as well, they can just kinda come out and have a wee cup of tea and watch their children settle in, it’s been really good having that.’ (Nursery Manager)*

Another development was more community outings, visits to play areas and team learning about outdoor play. The minibus and new Family Engagement Worker made the community outings easier. The manager explained that parents may be ‘socially-isolated’ and might not know about local facilities, therefore the outings:

*‘...show parents what is in their community, and also it’s peer support; they can meet other parents and discuss – do you want to meet up one day and we can all go to the loch’ (Nursery Manager).*

There are plans to take ‘Bookbugs’ out into the nurseries that children are transitioning to; this will provide a way to introduce (some of) the children to their future nursery and help build their familiarity of the space and staff. The nursery also plans to setup a Facebook page.

The manager said that some parents engage in more conversation than others with staff about the child’s development at collection time and parent’s evenings. Therefore they were reviewing the ways that parents and carers feed into children’s development plans to try to encourage involvement. Although parents are given the ‘Next Steps’ document to complete, the manager said they don’t always get completed and therefore the process was under review, in recognition that some parents may not understand the task or have poor literacy skills.

## Findings from The Family Centre

The Family Resource Centre work with families who live in North East Glasgow who have child under the age of 12. This section refers to observations and interviews with people who use the Centre as well as practitioners.

### Observations

The inclusive culture of the Family Centre was reflected in an on-site observation, whereby values of inclusion, participation and positive relationships between service users and practitioners was demonstrated. The researcher attended a summer garden event, this involved planting sunflower seeds and decorating the plant pot. The families were encouraged to take the sunflower home and to water it. In the year 2 report (Lucas and Gadda 2017), a service user talked fondly about this activity and how she enjoyed watching and making the seed grow with her child.

The parents were invited outside where a child sung a song. Parents and staff gave lots of praise to the child and seemed to be engaged with the activity. Everyone was given a ribbon and was invited to tie it onto a tree and to think of important people and people they have lost, including pets. When introducing this activity, a practitioner poignantly said:

*'At Quarriers we are a family, we look after each other'* (Practitioner)

There were attempts to include all people, the staff knew people's names and injected dialogue with humour and warmth. Some parents commented on needing to get out of the house during the summer holiday as one parent said he was *'feeling demented'*, and that this activity was a good way to break up the day.

## Dad's Group

We carried out a focus groups at the Dad's group with members (n=6) and practitioners (n=3). The researcher structured the interviews by starting with questions about their present experiences, their past experiences and their future aspirations. We explored the men's perspectives about wellbeing, and the benefit they get from attending the group and the Centre, including guidance and peer support.

### Group membership

The Dad's group has been established for around 10 years. There is a core of 10 members; there are three men who have been involved with the group for over 5 years as well as newer members. The men were found to attend the group for similar reasons: *'to have my own space'*; *'to unload'* and because it offered *'me time'*. A member made arrangements to have his day off on a Wednesday so that he could attend the group. Some of the men's children were using the nursery and found the coordinated time of the group and nursery useful.

The men indicated they were proud of the group as one man claimed: *'We're the only successful dad's group in Britain.'* There was recognition of some of the changes that the group had been through in terms of staff change and group format. The men appreciated the structure of the group and the staff facilitation. Staff were commended for being trustworthy, a man said:

*'...we trust them, we have confidence in them, we get on with them. They'll say if it's a bit much, tell us to call down'* (service user)

*'We want the three staff to sign a contract to say they won't leave for at least thirty years'* (service user)

The facilitators explained that not all men will become long term members. For example, they anticipated that a man would be involved with the group on a short

term basis because of the likelihood that he would get a job. The facilitators explained that not all dads are suitable and interested in group work. There was a thought that not all external professionals understood what the group and may not have considered whether the man could cope with group work.

*‘Sometimes I feel that health visitors and social workers are like palming [prospective dad group members] off and don’t really tell them the whole truth about what the group’s about so they’ve got a different idea about what the group’s about... That’s why we go out together and say this is what’s happening, this is what we’d expect you to give to the group and this is what we’ll give you and sometimes they’ll say no, absolutely not.’ (Practitioner).*

The men said that they were open for others to join the group but they emphasised that prospective members should be able to contribute to all parts of the group ‘not just the good bits’, such as the community activities. A member thought that some men would likely be put off by the amount of discussion based activity that goes on.

Some of the newer group members said that starting the group was difficult to begin with and one man said that he had started the group before but left as he was not ready for it. He said that he felt nervous during the first few weeks and another man kept talking to him to try to make him feel comfortable. A man explained how he tried to ease the transition for the newer members:

*‘...[I tried] to get a laugh out of [Sam], we went on the go karts and boom; he came out of his shell.’ (service user)*

### **Peer support**

Peer support was a recurring theme from the focus group. The men live in different parts of Glasgow and their involvement with the group means that they interact with people from different areas. A man said that before coming to Quarriers, he would not have left his area.

*‘If you walk into a different area, if your face doesn’t fit you’re done in’ (service user)*

*‘We all come from different areas, places where people get murdered but there’s no fighting between different communities [at Quarriers]’(service user)*

### **Planning for the group work**

Group members contribute to the planning and make suggestions for inputs, guest speakers, topics and activities. The involvement of dad’s in this planning process has been found to be useful way to create genuine partnership opportunities. A practitioner said that in the first year of inviting dad’s to participate they proposed



*'unrealistic suggestions, like Amsterdam'* but subsequently proposed more realistic input in line with the budget. A practitioner said that members were aware of the limited budget and would be careful about spending money when out in the community. The men and staff agreed that a set budget would be useful to enable the men to take more ownership, and there could be scope to consider whether they become a constituted group. One of the men said that the members want to raise and contribute to their own funds for the group throughout the year to allow them to host an end of the year activity. They wanted help from Quarriers to store the funds safely.

### **Activities**

The group involves a combination of structured and unstructured group based discussion, educational input from Quarriers practitioners, external contributors and activities in and outwith the Centre, designed to enhance parenting skills and support families and individual wellbeing. Themes for the sessions included: mental health, sexual health, physical health. Activities in the Centre included pampering and making bath bombs which gave ideas about how to relax and a 'Ready Steady Cook' challenge. The men said that they had created t-shirt prints for their children and learnt to bake bread and cakes. They visited places in the community they had never been to before. These activities and outings gave the men ideas of places to take their children and activities to use in the family home. A man said that after going to the group:

*'You go back and have a good day with the wee one after having a good time at the dad's group' (service user)*

### **Community focus**

A sense of community came across as the men talked about the contributions the group had previously made or intended to make within the local community, for example, a tea and coffee morning at the local church and clearing the land by the nursery to extend the outdoor area. The men were aware that they could be perceived as a *'big heavy men'* and said that they were eager to challenge stereotypes by being active and helpful in the community.

### **Parenting**

The group was asked about the barriers that affect their parenting. A man said that some of the barriers he had faced included *'murders, overdoses, lots of deaths'*. Another man said that both he and his son who attended the nursery had developed confidence in different ways since they came to Quarriers after he successfully completed a drug rehabilitation programme, another man talked about being in an intensive parent and child unit and the strength it had taken him to do this. Some of the comments about the way that Quarriers builds parent/carer's resilience to manage adversity are included below:

*'I couldn't talk to people face-to-face, I've built up my confidence and my son benefits; he's come right out his shell since coming to the nursery' (service user)*

*'I did have a problem bonding with my child, the Centre helped with bonding and my stress management' (service user)*

*'...other dad's reassured that me she is my daughter, that I shouldn't be worried about things like...changing her nappy' (service user)*

*'Coming here opened my eyes. I spoke to dad's, they gave me ideas, it helped, I could speak to dad's [about] what they've already been through, what they did it helped, if other dads come in with the same problems I can help them'(service user)*

*'....if it wasn't for [Quarriers], I probably wouldn't be able to cope with any of this...coming here once a week I get to release some of that stress'(service user)*

### **Areas for development**

When asked about areas for development. They indicated that they were pleased with the group and hoped it would continue in the same way. One man said it would be good if the 'dad's and children's group' started again. He said that this gave useful ideas about how to interact and play with your child, he talked about how busy life at home can be and that children might watch TV so that adults can get on with the housework. He said that the time at Quarriers meant that *'you have to play with your wain, and that's a good thing'*.

There was agreement from the members that there should be *'a better wage for staff'* and for the group to run over the holidays. One man said that the only improvement he wanted was there to be *'less cheese in the sandwiches!'* There was also the suggestion for a smoking bin and shelter.

The men expressed interest in sharing their knowledge, to promote their group as well as drawing upon their knowledge to contribute to the design of other dad's groups.

To summarise, the men are pleased with the dad's group as it offers formal and informal support which helps their parenting skills and wellbeing. The men would like to have more ownership of the project and to be involved with managing the group budget. They also wanted to privately fundraise between them to contribute to the sustainability of the group. There could be opportunities for Quarriers to promote the dad's group to make it clearer to other professionals and services and to use the expertise within the group to contribute to the formation of new Dad's groups.

## Dad's Group Facilitators

In this section we present data from the Dad's group facilitators followed by a summary of key findings about the Dad's group.

### **Group membership**

The facilitators said that one of the aims of the group is to reduce social isolation and to encourage the men to get involved in other activities within the Centre and the mini bus is an important enabler.

The facilitators said that the group numbers work well with around ten members. The group is not restricted to men with children under 12 and they would never ask a member to leave in recognition of the importance that the group has on the men's lives: *'this is all he's got' (Facilitator)*. When considering new members staff have to think about men's need and emotional capacity as well as their language proficiency as a member having limited English would affect the group dynamic. The facilitators verified that the group *'try really hard'* to make new members feel comfortable and welcome.

As mentioned earlier, the mini bus is an important enabler for the Dad's group. The driver explained that he listens to what is said in the mini bus while and engages the men in conversation:

*'...the rubbish I throw away, but the things I need to keep, I let people know anything that has happened during the journey' (Minibus driver)*

Childcare can affect group attendance, particularly for single parents, a practitioner explained that they were looking into the possibility of using a childminding service as there are not enough spaces at Quarriers Nursery.

The staff team know the men well and the men were reported to know each other well too. The men were said to respond to each other and might notice other member's symptoms, problematic habits and patterns of behaviours. The group have established rules drawn at the start of the group work and remind one another of the rules e.g. no swearing or colours.

### **Planning and Preparation**

The men decide on the themes and activities and the list is typed out and posted to the men, so they can see what they're doing. A practitioner explained that the purpose of posting the schedule to the men is in recognition that not many people receive uplifting or encouraging post through the door. This is an example of the personal touch of the project and the care demonstrated by staff. There is a varied schedule to keep the men interested. For example the group expressed interest in visiting a prison, to see what the environment is like.

*'One of the issue we done was gang warfare and there's quite a lot of the guys who have had bereavement of young people through suicide and murder, so we done a couple of weeks about talking about gang warfare and criminal justice.'* (Practitioner)

## **Communication**

The men are reported to cover up their feelings with their banter and staff have to listen carefully to what they might be trying to say or express their feeling. There can be arguments and disagreements which can have a profound effect on the group. The men were described as protectors to each other, for example teaching and supporting members with new skills and emotional support and encouragement and facilitators try to make sure that everyone feels safe. The men were said to be better at self-regulating and can resolve disagreements between them, they will not come to the group if they are having a 'bad day'.

*'They're very caring, I know they have rough backgrounds and there are gangland fights and everything else, but I don't see that. When I walk in the room they're very respectful of me and of each other'* (Practitioner)

*'You hear some of them have got the reputations of like saying 'kill or be killed', from their upbringings...for them to be caring and so gentle and committed was a real eye opener for me...these are big gentle giants'* (Practitioner)

## **Structural issues**

The practitioners said they have seen an increase of referrals to charities, welfare rights and the use of food banks which has become normalized as it is necessary for many families. There has been an increase in parents taking clothes that are on offer in reception.

*'Dads have been taking more out, before they wouldn't have liked to do that. One does that and another sees and does the same.'* (Practitioner)

*'There's an increase in people really struggling with daily living, women having no nappies, stock of sanitary, school uniforms. Folk will say they got £110 allowance for their uniform but if you don't have food you're going to use it to feed your kids.'* (Practitioner)

*'I remember the very very first time I took a woman to use the food bank and she cried all the way down in the car, because how humiliating this is, course she's crying and I'm crying, cos I'm crying for her that she's got in this state and then crying out of sheer anger, cos how dare this country end up like this.'* (Practitioner)

## Other developments

The group stops over the holiday, but the men reportedly found this difficult. A practitioner said that she took two dads and their children out one day over the summer because they were 'struggling'. The team is looking at introducing more summer activities in the Centre to overcome these difficulties.

*'The dad's may never had been played with they weren't necessarily 'brought up' they were 'raised up', they may have had an authoritarian figure telling them what to do and what not to do. They provided a space with toys, sand and told the dad's to be kids, they absolutely loved it and it was revealed that some of them had never had the opportunity to be kids before and were told off for getting messy.'* (Facilitator)

## Key findings from the Dad's Group

- The group is well attended and held in positive regard by the men.
- The group is keen to make contributions to the community and to help establish other dad's groups.

## Interview with Centre Staff

This section refers to an interview with the Centre Manager and two Centre workers, including the caretaker who also drives the minibuss and co-facilitates the Dad's group. The interview schedule can be found in appendix 2.

## Roles and responsibilities

The manager, also referred to as the Services Co-ordinator came into post in 2018, although she was already familiar with the service. She has sole responsibility for the management of services and staff and the development of the Children and Family Services across Ruchazie Family Centre and Barlanark Family Support Service. The Services Co-ordinator has the support of a Nursery Manager, Depute Manager, Team Leader and two Senior practitioners. The management team provide regular support and supervision to staff. At the time of the interview Quarriers were recruiting for a project worker and were looking to appoint another peri-natal worker. Full time project workers have a caseload of up to fifteen families, but work may be reduced if there are child protection issues and every worker facilitates a group.

## Working Together

The manager spoke highly of the staff team and described them as '...experts in their own right'. She said that staff wellbeing is as important as service users.

*'I've...been welcomed in with open arms, which is quite nice... there's been no heavy-handedness, I've come in and I've said I am here but I'm not looking to change anything, I'm looking to work with you guys as a staff team to look at gaps and develop other services if it's appropriate to what we need for the Centre, so I suppose for me the Centre's at the heart, and it'll grow organically and we will look at other things that we think might work within the Centre, and we'll try out things and we'll get it wrong sometimes, but that's OK, as long as we're standing here.'* (Centre Manager)

Partnership working was reported by the manager, as an important part of the work, the Family Resource Centre are part of a consortium bid with Social Work and five other third sector agencies and have been successful in getting money from the Big Lottery to look at the 'Social Statutory Duty System' to use the expertise of third sector organisations to support families that come to the attention of duty social work. This forms part of the Early Intervention Framework (Scottish Government 2009).

When asked what makes the Centre work, the manager said it is the staff team and that the service is established and has a good reputation in the community and health and social care sector.

### **Promoting the Centre**

The Centre attracts new families and there is a waiting list for the peri-natal service. The service reaches out to people in the community by word-of-mouth, from parents who attend and from professionals within the Health and Social Care partnership who make referrals. Advertisements go out in local housing newsletters and a local Health Improvement newsletter which goes out to all third sector agencies. An advert is displayed on televisions within the Health Centres as well as on the Quarriers website. There are also monthly information sessions for external professionals to learn about what goes on in the Centre. The manager said that the Centre continues to maintain existing relationship and establish new relationships with external agencies.

### **Family Support**

The caretaker said that conversations with parents can vary enormously, but the focus will always come back to the children and their wellbeing. While he was not employed as a practitioner he had been on various training programmes and recognised the importance of creating and maintaining a welcoming space and being available to service users. He also remained clear about the boundaries of his involvement.

A practitioner talked about the variety of parenting work that she carries out and recognised that the work includes issues such as parent's mental health issues, financial difficulty, rent arrears, child not sleeping in own bed, child tantrums, health concerns and poor diet. She talked about the work that she carries out with parenting, including makes referrals for financial and welfare rights, writing letters of

appeal to a school, which resulted in a positive outcome as the parent was able to get a place at the school that her older child attended. She also supports parents with managing their own emotional needs. For example, a parent acknowledged her anger and communication skills she said that wasn't able to speak out during meetings.

*'...gradually over time, I have seen and I don't take any credit for it, it's really nice, she was crying, she got really emotional but she said, you know: "I feel great, I feel dead confident, I'm able to go in [to a meeting with social work], I can say what I want to say now, but I can say it in a more positive way". The relationship is that good that I can say to her: "I used to want to hide under the desk when you came in." And we laugh about it now; she now manages her own behaviour' (Practitioner)*

Social outings and Centre Activities are another form of support for families. There have been a range of summer activities including two barbeques and beach trips that were reported to be well attended by families. The manager said that the holiday outings offered a way to combat social isolation, to increase engagement with services, improve physical activity, interaction thorough play, relationship building, healthy eating and role modelling behaviour. However, she said that there needs to be some activities taking place in the Centre and there would be a trial in the October holiday with a view to introduce more activities in Easter and summer 2019.

## **Food**

The caretaker explained that food is a big part of the Centre, it provides a social element and there is no thought of charging people for food. He linked this to the founder of Quarriers, William Quarrier and his belief that the giving of food is a key part of the approach which continues today. He believes there is a sense of warmth at the Centre and the staff are non-judgmental.

*'The Centre is so good at being welcoming and helping people... lots of people say when they walk through the door there's not that fear factor...we don't seem to have that here. I think it's people at reception who [are welcoming] and as they walk through there's people who say, how you doing, can we help you, do you want a cup of tea. That is the reason why the Centre works; if we didn't have that I think the Centre would collapse.'* (Caretaker)

## **Relationship based practice**

A practitioner indicated that relational practice is an essential part of the work as she gets to know families well and needs a positive relationship in order to make appropriate challenges. She said that she has completed a number of useful training courses and her reflective practice skills have improved.

The caretaker described himself as the *'father'* of the Centre, he carries out maintenance work in the Centre, drives the minibus and helps staff to facilitate activities. He has worked at the Centre for 17 years.

*'I will give fatherly advice... I've been there, this is how I've resolved it, while acknowledging I'm not a family worker. I've got a good rapport with the guys.'*(Caretaker)

The caretaker said that a lot of the parents trust and respect him and part of this comes from him being open with them about his opinions, sharing his experiences about some of the difficulties he faced in his life and how he overcame these. He enjoys interacting with the families and will actively participate in competitions as a way to encourage people to join in.

*'The wains love...to see an older man get involved, I get the respect from the children and parents, because I get involved'* (Caretaker).

### **Areas for development**

In terms of developments, the manager has asked staff look at the length and focus of their involvement and to consider if the work has completed and or whether the family need support from another organisation instead or as well as from Quarriers. The manager explained that the service should not feel they are working in isolation and they should be working with other services. Although there are limited activities in the Centre over summer, the North East of Glasgow have a range of free activities for families that they can access. A leaflet with information about the activities is left on the nursery table outside at reception and put on the noticeboard.

The manager explained that the 'Voices for Change' group (where service users directly feed into the design of the service) had stopped recently, but there were plans to restart the group. The manager indicated that she hoped that the group would be more representative of the people who use the Centre and would be considering ways to achieve this.

### **Key Findings**

- **There is a variety of high quality support available for families.**
- **The Centre is well connected and involved with statutory and third sector agencies.**
- **Values of belief, acceptance and good communication skills are crucial to practitioners' engagement with families.**



## Key Findings from across the study

The Family Resource Centre is providing quality support to children and families. The Centre employs a range of preventative measures to avoid and reduce the possibility of statutory involvement. The focus of work appears to be offering supporting, averting crisis while gaining a deeper, comprehensive understanding of situations and relationships and the impact of structural issues such as poverty.

The child and family centred work is taking place in a context of unrelenting challenges as local authority budgets decrease while demand for services increases. There is persistent food insecurity and in work poverty and the roll out of universal credit is predicted to result in disastrous consequences for people's wellbeing. For example, research indicates a correlation between high levels of local area deprivation and child protection proceedings. Children from the most deprived neighbourhoods are around 20 times more likely to be subject to child welfare interventions (Hooper, Shapira, Daniel 2017). It is hoped that the range of poverty reduction initiatives, such as the income maximisation programme, Fairer Scotland Plan, The Child Poverty Strategy and Child Poverty Bill will eventually impact on child welfare interventions.

Families in need have diverse and multiple needs (social, legal, economic, educational, psychological and health). Multiple studies point to the resilience of people in overcoming adversities, in particular, service user's resilience. From this evaluation we have evidenced how staff support families to overcome and avoid difficulty and how peer support opportunities plays an important factor in achieving working with families to overcome their barriers and achieve a more balanced family life.

One of the ways that the Centre achieves the above aim is through the skills and expertise of the staff group and the structured activities and groups available. In this report service users highlighted the importance of staff listening to them and the importance of staff engaging and interacting with children. We know from research that practitioners who spend time listening to children and their families, who respect their views and rights can help to bring about substantive change (Clarke and Moss 2011; Buckley, Carr and Whelan, 2011).

Service users appreciate the approachability and reliability of staff and the social area was found to be an important space for parents and carers to exchange knowledge, to use the space for essential 'family work' (e.g. homework) and a space to relax. Reception staff and caretaker carry out through their day-to-day work and observations. Their expertise provides another source of support for families and the possibility of new knowledge and insight which may contribute to practitioner's assessments of families. It can be argued therefore that the family support works starts as soon as the person enters the Centre or walks onto the mini bus.

There are clear examples of effective partnership working, including team work, as staff step in to cover the reception desk and to work to better support children and their families. There is a strong sense of a community support model at the Centre. The service users we spoke with were proud of the Centre, they want to be involved

in activities and decisions and to know whether for example, there has been a staff change. Similarly, there is a sense of ownership, belonging and care for the Centre as well as for the wider community. For example, as the men in the dad's group talked about clearing the land to improve the nursery space.

While there may be a waiting list for certain projects (e.g. peri-natal support and nursery) the Centre do a good job to provide support in the interim. This 'containment' provide a way for families to familiarise themselves with the services, build relationships with other parents and to access peer support before accessing specialist support or a nursery place. This reinforces the idea that the Centre is available to everyone.

## Recommendations

Throughout the report we have identified suggestions and areas for development. This section summarises some of these.

### Identifying need

- In this report, there were two examples of service users who seemingly were not offered support. A practitioner talked of a man who expressed interest in joining the dad's group but wasn't given the opportunity to attend. 'Parent B' said she was in need of one-to-one family support but didn't get it. These two examples suggest that there may be parents and carers' whose needs are not being met, it also suggests that there could be clearer ways for people to access support, as well as clarity about thresholds for support to explain why services may not be suitable for some people.
- There are parents who use the Centre with children who are older than twelve. While there is awareness about the over-dependence of services, the involvement of longer term users overall suggests that the Centre is doing a good job to retain family's involvement, it also suggests a gap in broader social care provision for parents with older children. Therefore, long term involvement is something that the team should explore further with clear measurements to comment on the longer term benefit and outcomes Centre's.
- There could be greater promotion of the group and opportunities for the group to share the experiential knowledge about how to set up a dad's group.
- There are concern about the availability and timeliness of nursery places after leaving Quarriers, and there is a need for Quarriers to support families in preparation for this transition and applying for nursery places.

### Working Together

- The newly appointed Family Engagement Worker, linked to the nursery should be able to help bridge the gap and allow for more seamless support for families

accessing both the nursery and the Centre. It is important to continue to identify ways for staff in the nursery and Centre to feel connected. Is there a possibility for team members to shadow other sections of the Centre to learn about practice difference and similarities as well as opportunities for knowledge exchange? The 'skill share' sessions at the development days seem like useful opportunities for staff's learning and development.

- Anonymised Learning Stories could be used for staff to present case studies about their work, outlining developmental theories, research and the methods and approaches they use with children. This knowledge and reflective practice could be used to make clearer links to the contributions that staff are making, consolidating their practice knowledge. This exercise could contribute to a culture of knowledge and information exchange and used in supervision.
- Leading from this is the possibility of identifying boundaries of ownership and for example, as well as exploring the possibility of introducing co-chairing, allowing dad's to gain skills in managing the group.
- The Voices for Change group will re-start in December, this provides a useful forum to facilitate ongoing feedback. There may be benefit in exploring if service users can meaningfully feed into the recruitment process.
- It is important to incorporate children and young people's voices into the review and design of the service.
- It is important to look at the mechanisms for parent and carer feedback available e.g. posters on the wall with space for comments.
- In the spirit of inclusivity, it may be worthwhile extending the idea of skill sharing, by inviting parents to talk about areas of interest/expertise/to give insight to cultural aspects of life as well as minority languages.
- In consideration of the Dad's group and their seeming push for greater independence, it may be worth considering the idea of co-chairing meetings and groups with service user representatives and exploring the notion of co-production.

## Conclusion

The funding from the BLF is also being used to develop and deliver a wide range of family and parenting support activities. The location of the nursery within the Family Centre provides a unique opportunity for families and staff and undoubtedly changes the focus of work, as Early Years Educators have more awareness about family's circumstances, the structural and environmental factors to affect parenting. There are exceptional retention levels and several staff members have worked at the Centre for long periods of time, this can be attributed to their satisfaction in the work and the support and development opportunities available.

We have provided evidence to show the processes used to identify outcomes e.g. Learning Stories. The Learning Stories provide a way for the nursery to demonstrate how they support children to achieve their developmental milestones and there is scope for staff to be more confident and detailed about their input. We can therefore conclude that the Family Resource Centre is making a positive difference to children, parents and caregivers. In the second year report (Lucas and Gadda 2017), we discussed in more detail the data capture mechanisms and their use. We have provided comment on children's transitions from the Ruchazie nursery to a 'mainstream' nursery provision, but cannot with certainty say that they are better equipped than children who have not attended Quarriers.

This report has provided findings in relation to all four aims by including the views and experiences of families, practitioners about the nursery provision and family support services offered at the Centre; how well it works and the challenges associated. We have some evidence to suggest that the service is making a positive difference to children and their families; through better child: parent/carer interactions, stress and emotional management, peer support and support to return to employment. There is evidence of support for parents to build skills and improve relationships and find ways to build parent/carer's resilience to manage adversity.

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## Appendices

### **Appendix 1: Questions for Nursery Manager**

1. Any changes to note?
2. The impact of change in management
3. What is your strategy?
4. Are the values visibly lived?
5. What do staff do to support children to gain skills?
6. What approaches to caregiving do your staff take?
7. What is the rationale for the learning story approach?
8. Planned and unplanned activities
9. Children's outcomes measured.
10. How do you know you are making a difference?
11. Does staff training reflect and support the changing needs of population and staff?
12. What do you do tackle inequality

Areas for development?

## **Appendix 2: Questions for Centre Manager**

1. It is a complex intervention can't be measured, how do they engage and why do they engage
2. What is your identity? Who do you appeal to?
3. Would you say the values are visibly lived or spoken/written about?
4. How do you explain your strategy to families?
5. What assessment tools and data recording methods inform your approach?
6. Your work with partner organisations
7. What is the ethos of the Centre, what changes are occurring, demographics, characterising?
8. Staff team, reflection and supervision
9. How do you know you are making a difference?
10. How do you reach/target everyone who could benefit from the service?
11. What do you do to facilitate access?
12. How do you prioritise need?
13. Staff training and development days
14. What works well & less well?
15. The parent nursery liaison worker
16. How are parents views fed into the plan?

### **Appendix 3: Questions for parents whose children have left Quarriers**

1. How would you describe your experience of using Quarriers nursery?
2. What made you choose Quarriers?
3. Thinking back to your child joining the nursery, can you tell me about the settling in period?
4. How were your child's individual needs understood?
5. How did the key worker support you?
6. How did the nursery share information with you? (procedural information, your child's development, their time at nursery?)
  - What worked well for you?
  - What worked well for your child?
  - Did you feel that you had the opportunity to comment on your child's learning plan/transition plan?
  - Did Quarriers share information about your child's developmental needs/milestones? (learning story with photos and comments)
7. Can you describe the process from when children transfer from Ruchazie to xxx?
  - When did you apply?
  - Was the enrolment process clear?
  - How well did staff from both nurseries share information?
8. Did staff from Ruchazie support you and your child with the transition to xxx/ another nursery?

What worked well? For children? For you as parent?  
What could be better?  
What impact, does support around transitions have on you and your child?
9. How did xxx get to know about your child, their likes and dislikes/ the skills they have developed/ are in the process of acquiring?
10. In your view what have been the main differences in the care and approach given at Quarriers and Nursery?
11. Is there a 'seamless' service between the nurseries?

Any other comments?



#### **Appendix 4: Questions for external nursery practitioner**

We are interested in learning more about children's transitions from Ruchazie nursery to 3+ nursery.

**Could you describe the process normally followed when children transfer from Ruchazie to XXX?**

When do families need to apply?

Are there any criteria for enrolment? Are some families prioritised over others?

Is the process clear to families? To professionals?

How effective is communication between professionals? Between professionals and families?

**Could you give examples of how staff from Ruchazie have supported children and their parents in their transition to XXX?**

What worked well? For children? For families? For professionals?

What could be better?

What impact, if any, does this have on children and families?

What impact, if any, does this have on professionals/practice at XXX?

**Generally speaking, how do children coming from the Ruchazie nursery compare with similar children who have not accessed the service?**

General development?

Social development?

Readiness to learn?

## **Appendix 5: General question for parents/carers using the Centre**

1. What brought you to the Centre?
2. How has the Centre helped you, your children, and your family?
3. How did you find out about the Centre?
4. What do you like/not like about the Centre?
5. What difference has the Centre made to your community?
6. How long have you been using the Centre?
7. How would you like to see the Centre develop in the future?

## **Appendix 6: Questions for Dad's group focus group**

1. How did you find about the service?
2. Why do you go to the group?
3. Do peers/partners influence your attendance?
4. Does the group work? Why?
5. What factors might prevent people from attending the group?
6. What do you appreciate about the service?
7. How could the Centre/group be improved?
8. Do you engage with other parent groups/dad's groups?
9. What does good fatherhood mean to you?
10. What are the most important aspects of parenting?
11. What are the barriers to being a 'good' parent?
12. What advice would you give to other dads in terms of parenting?
13. For longer term members:
  - What keeps you coming back?
  - What has changed about the Centre during your involvement?

### **Appendix 7: Interview guide for Dad's group facilitators**

How do you recruit, actively engage and retain fathers' participation at the group?

Is work with fathers different from work with mothers?

How is the dad's group distinct from other groups in the Centre?

Why does the group work?

What are the challenges of working with fathers?

What strategies, techniques & methods do you use?

What type of content/approach/focus have you found to appeal to fathers?

How does this contribute to individuals, the group as a whole, children, the community?

What impact has the intervention had on children's outcomes?

What do 'longer term' users get from their involvement?

### **Footnotes**

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<sup>i</sup> According to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation indicators