

Six Months



OF THE SUNSHINE CENTRE October 2020-MARCH 2021

**A REPORT TO INFORM AND PROMOTE THE WORK OF THE SUNSHINE
CENTRE**

Welcome to the Sunshine Centre

The Sunshine Centre in Banbury Oxfordshire is a registered charity formed in January 1998. It was born from a community response for a need to support vulnerable families in an area of high deprivation. Although Banbury is a relatively affluent area, the area we serve falls nationally in the top 10% of social and economic deprivation. Many of the children and families in this community live in levels of deprivations normally associated with inner cities.

We support families through a variety of preventative and reactive interventions. These range from groups for pregnant mothers identified as socially vulnerable; parent and baby groups including therapeutic sessions, domestic violence group programmes (we have a track record of working with victims, and have now accessed training to begin working with dads who are perpetrators), one to one outreach support (supporting families through a variety of situations including homelessness, domestic violence, financial difficulties and parenting support), childcare for children aged 3 months – 4years (8am –6pm all year round) practical support such as food parcels, toys and clothing and child care. This list is not exhaustive we adapt to meet the changing needs of individuals and the community. We have community partners and good relationships with other organisations, both statutory and voluntary to which we can signpost families.

Our referrals come from a variety of many sources such as, community members, midwives, health visitors, children's social care workers and local schools as well as self-referrals.

The Sunshine Centre has been a feature in this community for 22years. We are known and trusted, understanding local resources and dynamics. We aim to strengthen our community by guiding and empowering parents to make positive choices for their children providing a foundation for improving their long-term opportunities.

This report reflects the work of The Sunshine Centre from 1st October 2020 to 31st March 2021, the second stage of the Covid-19 pandemic. The report concludes with an insight into the next part of our journey.



*Life throws challenges
and
Every challenge comes
with
Rainbows and Lights to
conquer it*



September 2020 saw us slowly bringing activities and services back into The Sunshine Centre. These were offered both virtually on Zoom and Microsoft Teams and face to face (observing all Covid Restrictions). In November 2020 and in January 2021 we entered further lock downs. The government has announced a “return to normal” roadmap but at the time of writing we find ourselves faced with the uncertainties of the Delta variant.

Everyone has worked incredibly hard to support, provide and address the needs of children, families and the community. Donors, grant givers, volunteers, staff, local people and partners from many agencies have all been an important part of the puzzle. I am grateful to everyone and privileged to be part of the team.



So, what has been happening?

Food Glorious Food

Community Larder.

We opened the Community Larder in September 2020. A grant from Cherwell District Council's Emergency Relief Fund enabled us to buy a chiller unit which we placed next to existing shelving between the two sets of entrance doors. A twice weekly delivery from Banbury Food for Charities stocked the shelves and we opened for two sessions a week. In a very short time, we realised the need for the community larder was greater than anticipated, with more than 20 individuals making use of it. We extended opening times to Monday – Friday 8am-6pm. Supplies are currently received from local churches, Banbury Food Bank, Banbury Food for Charities, Morrisons supermarket and supportive individuals.

Help from our volunteers enables delivery of food parcels to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. We offer home baked cakes twice a week.

Anyone can access the community larder freely. Staff restock the chiller and shelves two to three times a day.



The same funding allowed us to work with one of our mum's, Lucy to design and print the 'COVID-19 Cooking Creations' recipe book. Lucy and her three children discovered their enjoyment of cooking during lockdown and created their own recipes from the food parcels provided by The Sunshine Centre. Lucy is now a valued volunteer and is working with staff making videos demonstrating the recipes. These will be placed on our social media platforms.

We are grateful to Amanda Ponsonby, the High Sherriff of Oxfordshire (at the time) who also provided one of her recipes for the booklet.

From Lucy

I'm a mum of three little ones growing fast and they all love food. When we offered a food box each week during lock down from The Sunshine Centre, I felt it was the perfect chance to teach my children more about healthy eating and how to cook.

The children have loved getting their hands in deep and to feel different textures of food and taste too!

I feel it has given us time t be together as a family, doing something we all enjoy doing and I believe we all now share a passion for cooking.

Lucy



Christmas Hampers

Due to COVID-19 restrictions Banbury Rotary Club was sadly unable to provide the Christmas hampers. However, when one of our volunteers heard this, she sprang into action. She set up a donation scheme in her village to raise funds. People were very generous, and a group of galvanised volunteers carried out the shopping, the packing and delivering! They created and delivered 26 Christmas hampers full of essentials and also containing seasonal luxury goodies and a box of Christmas Crackers.

When children returned to school and were asked, 'What did you enjoy over the holiday?' one child told his teacher:

"We had real Christmas cake!"

The successful project still had some money left which enabled:

25 food parcels with ingredients and recipes to make a family pizza to be distributed at February half term

115 bags including all ingredients and fluffy chicks to make Easter nests' taken home by every childcare attender prior to the Easter holidays.

25 food bags with recipes distributed after Easter. These contained the ingredients for making a frittata, a fruit dip and all the different fruits which *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* ate its way through (this linked to our family day activities)

January can be a very tricky time for many families, and we were grateful for a financial contribution from the Rotary Club to enable us to support families with essential food items for their children.



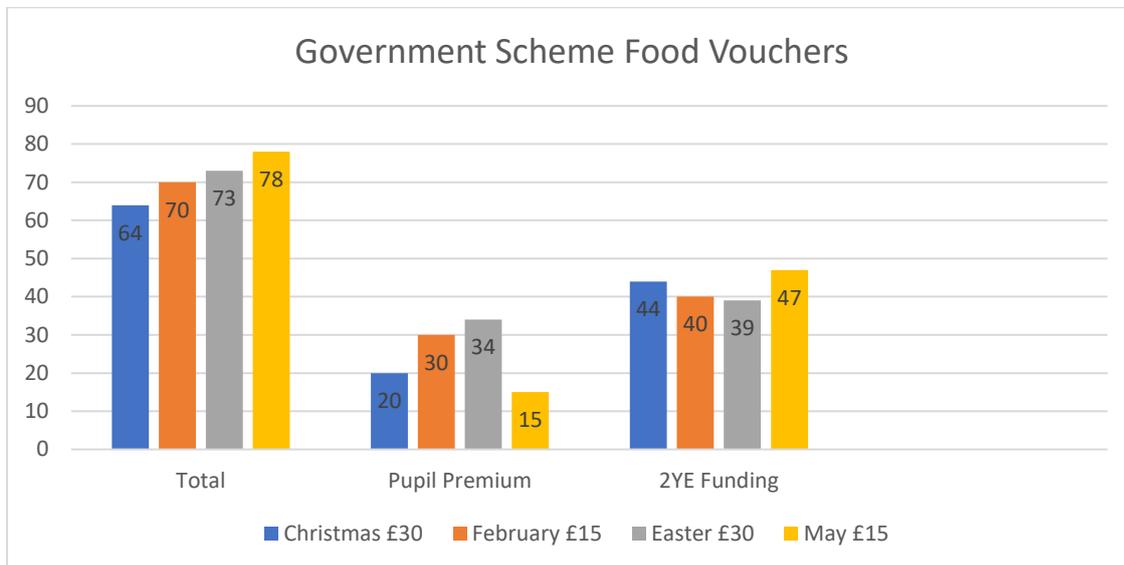
Easy Frittata / Spanish Omelette

Great snack or main meal for the whole family

**Cream Cheese
Fruit Dip**



The government provided a winter support grant for local authorities to help provide food and basic supplies to families at risk of economic hardship. We distributed its vouchers to eligible families whose children attend Sunshine Centre Childcare. We far we have distributed 285 vouchers worth £6330



Family Fun

THE SUNSHINE CENTRE
SPOOKY DAY 2020
REPORT

Dress up and join in our
Family Spooky Treasure Hunt

Win a Prize
£2

Clues available on Princess Diana
Collect your clues from 22nd to 26th Oct. at The Sunshine Centre.
Tues 27th Oct 10am-12noon

Take Home A Goody Bag

Our activities are designed to comply with COVID 19 regulations

HDFI Wills 1965

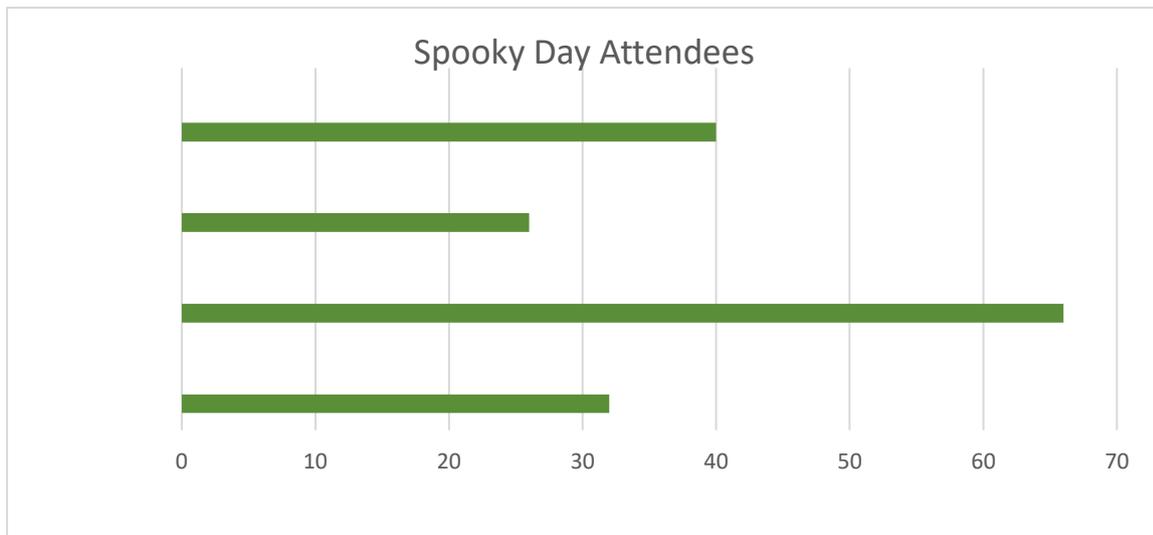
Sanctuary Housing
Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
MILTON KEYNES

As October half term approached, we were acutely aware of how children and families were struggling with the COVID-19 restrictions. We knew it would be crucial to offer a holiday activity during this period so used this opportunity to encourage families in their own 'family bubble' to enjoy being outside in the park, making things, reading together or just enjoying precious family time.



Families collected clues for a treasure hunt around Princess Diana Park. The weather on the day was atrocious but that did not deter witches, goshts, black cats and more coming out and joining in the fun. Having completed the treasure hunt, families posted their answers in the scary box. Now it was time to choose a pumpkin all given names. Which would it be 'Trumpkin', 'Skull', 'Dumbledore' or who?

We provided activities to take home including a 'scary' book and recipes for the pumpkin flesh once carved.



Feedback from participants:



“We had a fab time. Great to have something to do”

Thank you, Sunshine Centre, you are fab!

Well done for keeping us all going’

“This is the best day ever.”

“Thank you all so much for this morning.”

And lots of

“Thank, you we have really enjoyed ourselves 😊”

Winter Wishes

This is always one of our key events during the year providing an opportunity to consult with the community.

The pandemic raised the question of whether an event could take place in December 2020. Mindful of the restrictions we decided to celebrate our annual Winter Wishes in a new format spread over the whole of December. We used the experience and learning from Spooky Funday to plan.



A Christmas Tree over 4 meters high was donated to us by Hadsham Farm, Horley. Complete with lights was erected outside of the centre. This year the community was invited to write their wishes, hopes and aspirations for the community on a bauble and hang it on the tree.

The Baubles told us many things, of course saying goodbye to COVID-19 was on the list. Feeling safe in the local parks, more outside activities, ongoing support, and safe places for children came up time and time again.

'To feel safe in the park'

'More community events'

'Our safe place to meet back at the Sunshine Centre'

'A present for my mum'

'Good- bye to this bug!'

'To be happy'

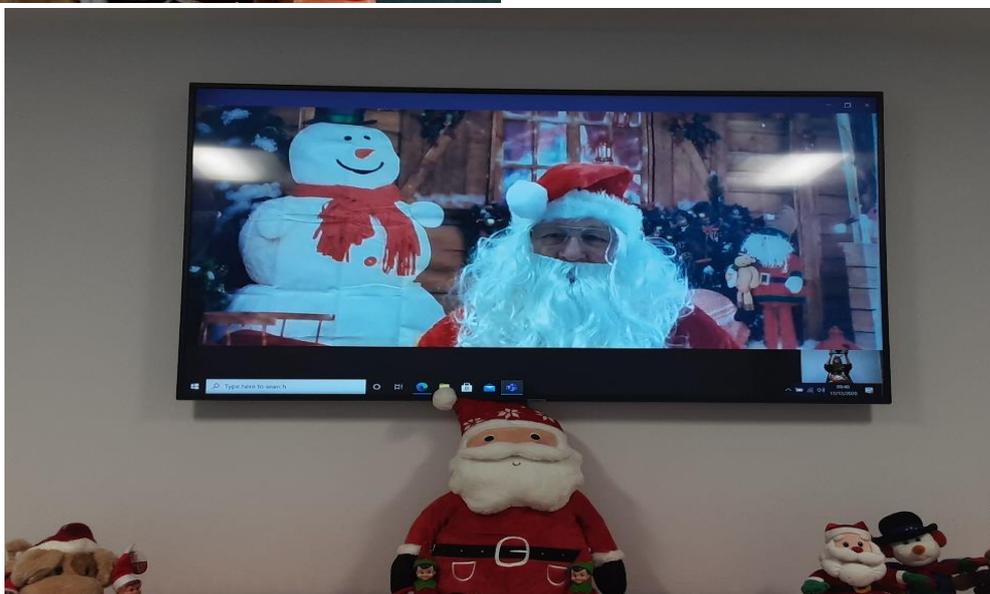


We organised a Christmas Trail around Princess Diana Park: Children and families were challenged to find 24 Advent clues by solving riddles. We arranged two different time slots to ensure that school children could join in the fun. The weather was bitterly cold but that did not stop the fun!



Once the trail was completed, many feeling wet and cold but happy, families returned to the Centre to collect their Family Christmas Stocking. These contained snacks, quizzes, games, a Christmas story book, craft activities and a mischievous Elf on the Shelf!

A virtual visit from Father Christmas 'zoomed' from his home in the North Pole concluded our Winter Wishes activities. Children were able to talk with Father Christmas and when they heard a "jingle bell" it was time to leave. The jingling of the bell was a reindeer leaving them a present and a selection box outside the room! Waiting outside were hot chocolate and marshmallow snowmen



Due to the generosity of our friends and partnership agencies we also distributed 50 toy parcels to families to help make their Christmas Day a happy event. We have heard about the whoops of joy, the laughter, tears of happiness and the noise from so many children as well as their caregivers.

Kindness- February 2021

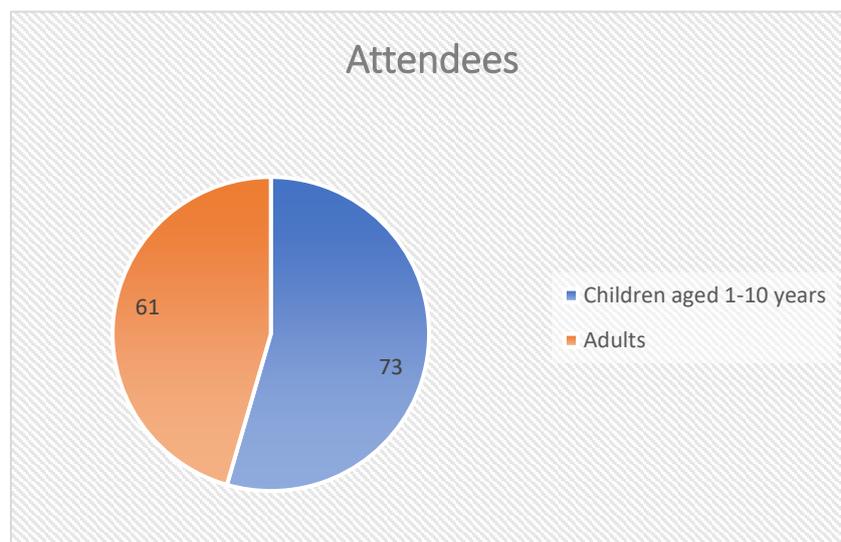


February 2021 saw the UK in a third pandemic lockdown. We wanted to provide families with activities for a day during the February half term but were aware that we could not encourage social mixing indoors or outdoors.

We planned activities which could be facilitated in the home. We linked these to the Sunshine Centre by parents posting on our Facebook page, or via our email their children enjoying the activities.

We chose the theme of Kindness, inspired by evidence that this quality is a vital instrument to improve mental wellbeing. This was particularly poignant as the national media reported a pandemic of poor mental health due to COVID-19 and the restrictions it imposed upon our nation.

We devised a pack for families to collect from the Centre, with a story book about kindness, a recipe and ingredients to make happy flapjacks, resources to make a clay model together about being kind and some treats for the whole family.



Spring 2021 (Easter)

April saw the UK still in lockdown with many restrictions. We wanted to provide the



Tel: 01295 276769

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Family Fun Activities

Friday 9th April 10am

Book by 1st April

Collect packs on 6th, 7th, 8th April

Just £1 a family

Sign up by ringing 01295 276769 or popping in if passing

Our Easter Family Fun activities will be in your own homes via Microsoft Teams

- ⇒ Sign up
- ⇒ Pick up your Pack
- ⇒ Log on at 10am on Fri. 9th April

We will be reading stories
Singing rhymes,
Getting clever with a quiz
Making a caterpillar
Cooking (not caterpillars)

Instructions on how to log on and what to do will be in your pack

Your packs will have everything you need for a Sunshine Centre Family Fun Day:

Recipe cards and ingredients, story book, bug spotting book, magnifying glass, caterpillar craft resources, quiz sheet and more.

Cherwell DISTRICT COUNCIL NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

SOVEREIGN

families with an activity during the Easter school holiday. Regrettably, once again we could not encourage social mixing. Many families have remained isolated throughout the pandemic and missed social interaction. Although we could not offer face to face contacts, we could deliver sessions virtually. We discussed ideas and decided to focus on a popular story with linked activities. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* was chosen which linked with Spring and new growth.

Activities offered:

Story telling – each child received a copy of book '*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*'

Quiz – linked to the theme

Craft activity – making a caterpillar

Cooking activity – making frittata and a dip with fruit

Support for Families.

By September 2020, we felt optimistic that we could slowly re-open the Centre and increase face to face family support. Our optimism was very quickly challenged again by COVID-19. Never a team to be defeated by a challenge, we adapted our working patterns. We moved some services on to a virtual platform, others we delivered by telephone, some we suspended, and some remained faced to face in our specially prepared isolation room. Childcare remained open to all our children. Family support staff worked extremely flexibly from home and the Centre. We ensured that a minimum of one staff member was on duty at the Centre. Work mobiles and laptops became key to how we operated.

Parents are fundamental to their children's development and so successful parenting is a key element in preventing children developing behavioural difficulties (Pugh, De'Arth & Smith, 1994).

Parenting Groups:

Supporting parents to develop effective parenting skills is recognised as an important prevention and intervention strategy. Parents vary in their capabilities and all parents find parenting a challenge at times. Parents differ in the internal and external resources on which they can call; internal resources such as our own mental well-being and resilience and external factors such as poverty, social disadvantage, the absence of supportive families and friends all impact on one's parenting ability.

Love comes naturally to most parents, but everyone faces difficulties at some point or another - from babies who will not sleep at night and toddlers who throw tantrums, to unruly teenagers. Throughout the year we deliver parenting courses which build on parents' individual skills so that they can give their children the best start in life.



Most mothers and fathers look first and foremost to family and friends for advice on parenting issues and then to professionals. Staff at the Centre are trained to deliver a range of evidenced based parenting programmes to meet local need.

We offer a rolling programme and for some parents we deliver it 1:1. In September a new cohort began their 10-week face to face program. However due to a change in COVID-19 restrictions we moved to virtual sessions via Microsoft Teams.

EXAMPLE OF QUALITATIVE COMMENTS:

- I give my children more choices
- My family say I am not stressing or upset if they do things
- Different mindset on how we speak to the children. Using less 'don't' trying to talk and stay positive to create a happy environment
- I am thinking more carefully about how I speak about things to my child
- I have learnt to trust myself more
- Nurturing myself is important. Need to try and make more time for myself to prevent me building up all my emotions
- Loved coming, learnt a lot. Ideas I am putting into practice -family meetings, empathy and listening. Videos were funny

Case Study.

Background:

S was married and has a 7-year-old daughter, S lives in Banbury, his daughter moved to London with her mother when their marriage ended.

S referred himself for the parenting programme in October 2020.

A place was confirmed for S to start in November 2020.

S works full time and had arranged with his employer that he will take annual leave for the days the programme was on, this was also negotiated with starting work a little later in the day.

When the parenting programme moved to virtual sessions for 5 weeks due to the pandemic, S's employer allowed him to access a room on his own at work to join virtually.

Provision accessed: The parenting puzzle November 2020- February 2021

Identification of wider issues:

S was going through the legal route of the divorce with his wife.

S's wife made a Court application regarding contact between S and his daughter, S said that his wife had made lots of allegations.

The Court case was ongoing throughout the parenting programme, starting with supervised contact and moving onto unsupervised contact.

S spoke highly of his daughter and would share what different activities/ conversations him and his daughter had during their contact time.

S hoped that the contact could increase to overnight stays at his home in Banbury, the final hearing was due in March 2021.

The pandemic played a huge part on what/ where S could go with his daughter.

Addressing identified issues/challenges:

S shared that communication between himself and his ex-wife was poor, strategies such as a communication book were discussed.

S continued to work full time, seeing his daughter at weekends.

Fun activities were shared amongst the group such as nature hunt, walks in the park and memory game.

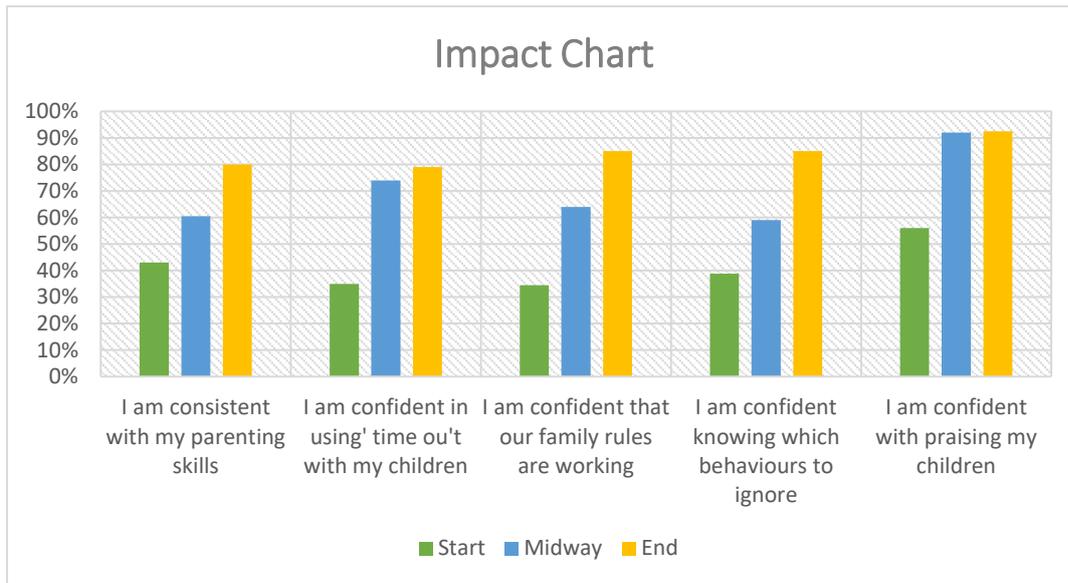
Outcome for children and family to date:

S is continuing to have regular contact with his daughter in the hope that it can increase over time.

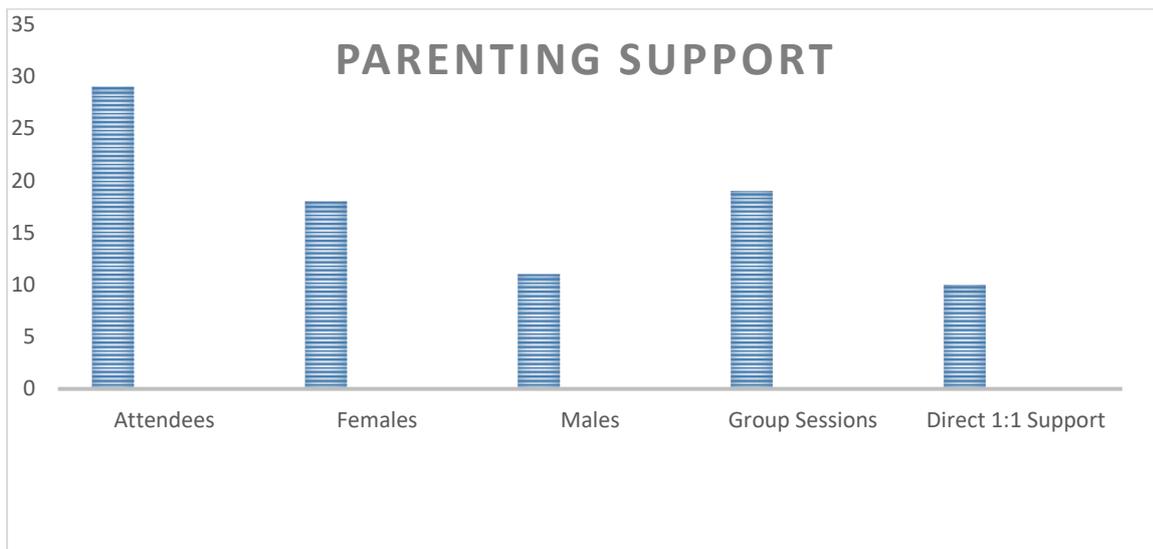
S's attendance was 100% for the parenting programme and all 5 key areas S increased his knowledge.

S voiced on many occasions that not only did the parenting course reiterate that he was doing a good job as a parent, but it helped him to listen and understand his daughter's feelings a little bit more.

An example of the progress made by one group of participants:



Attendees Data:



Sunshine Oxpip Group

Sunshine Oxpip group is a collaborative project between the two organisations. It is a therapeutic parent and baby session which through targeted activities aims to improve the attachment between parent and child and encourages the parent to recognise the way their baby communicates with them.

Referrals to the group are received from our community midwives, health visitors, family nurse partnership workers and our own family support team.

The group was initiated in September 2020 and endured many COVID-19 restrictions. During the second lock down the group was offered to parents through the Zoom conferencing platform.

Domestic Abuse



The pandemic has been challenging for everyone and many families were faced with additional adversity including domestic abuse. Although we were able to move some of our services online and continue the programmes, the risk for our Freedom Course and Support Group too high. Some participants were part way through their course when it was suspended. We discussed how to keep safe with each participant.

We felt it was too dangerous for the women to continue this course online as we would not know if the perpetrator was listening in the background thus potentially endangering survivors. They were all advised how or where to seek help.

In September we received additional funding to support our safely moving groups back into the Centre following all COVID-19 guidance. The two facilitators used a room each, with participants attending in groups of three and four so that social distancing was maintained. The two rooms were connected through Microsoft Teams. Participants were still able to develop their support network, share experiences and learn alongside each other. This group has now completed their Freedom Course, many have now joined the Self-Esteem and Assertiveness Course, the next stage in their development.

We have started to address the waiting list for a new group on the referral database but unfortunately this group too has been interrupted by successive lockdowns.

Two individuals completed the course on an individual basis, one face to face and one using Microsoft Teams as we were confident that she could do this safely.

We have not found a way at present to bring the support group back together although planning is taking place.

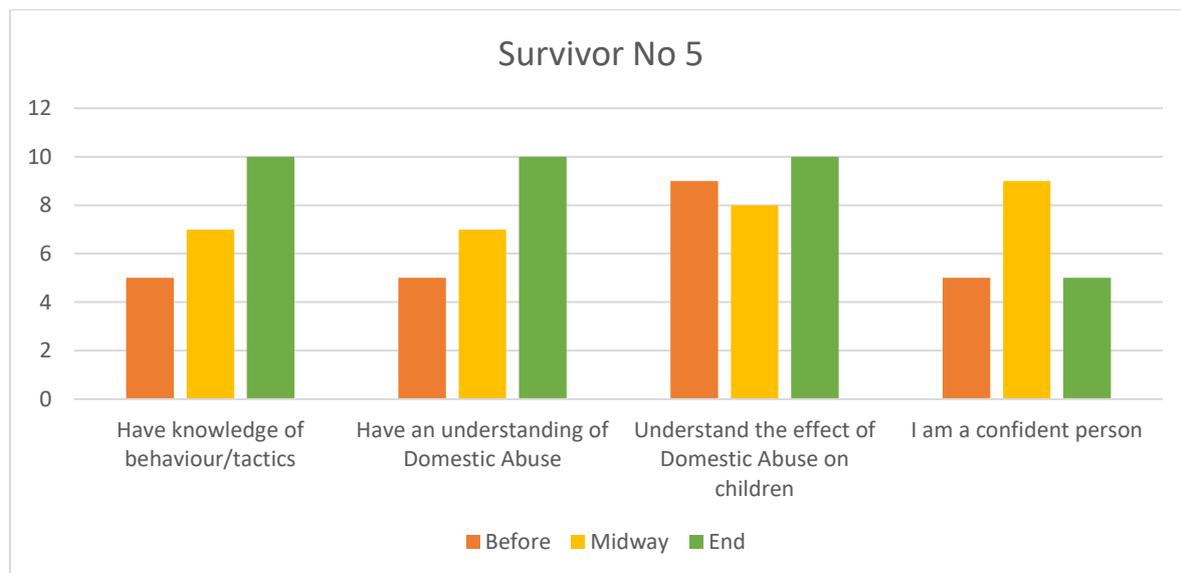
During the pandemic, the Centre has provided help with food. One of the added values to this work was it provided a vehicle for women to come to the Centre and seek support/ help about their situation.

We received a high level of referrals from Turning Point, Health Visitors, Social Workers. During this time, we have been the only local provider for this work.

Data:

37 referrals received. 19 participants enrolled. 9 participants received 1:1 support There are a mixture of reasons for non-enrolment, individual situations changed, moved away, the impact of COVID-19 and courses stop- starting.

Example of one survivor's progress.



Halfway through the course participants are asked what they learnt so far, here are some of the responses:

'What I have been through was not my fault. I did the right thing'

'Children are susceptible to Domestic Abuse and it can affect them just as much as women'

'Headworkers are a piece of rubbish!'

'there are different types of Domestic Abuse'

'I have learnt the signs of Domestic Abuse and the red flags'

'Abusive men think they have rights and women don't'

At the end of a course, the three highest points learnt by participants:

1. That Domestic Abuse is not just physical
2. There are different types of dominators
3. The warning signs

Self Esteem/Power to Change

Women who have attended the Freedom program often move on to the Self Esteem programme. The group have developed a positive relationship and this the latter programme provides opportunities to nurture and praise each other and to recognise their tone another's skills and strength. Throughout the program the women receive 'treats' such as a face pack. The positive thoughts jar is used weekly.

During this programme, the group define different communication styles, for example the difference between being assertive and being aggressive, as well as boundary setting, rights, needs in a relationship, emotions, personal safety and respect. The women learn about and practice three very key assertive techniques; The Broken Record; The 'I' message and Getting out of a situation that is out of control.

Throughout the weeks, safety issues are discussed and it is stressed that the safety of the women is always paramount. The need for extreme caution is necessary before using assertiveness techniques in an abusive or potentially abusive situation.

Communication and Language Support

The experience of a child in his/her early years determines their future.

- Aged one year – the child's brain is already 72% of adult volume on average.
- Age two years – the child's brain has grown to 83% of adult volume on average.
- Aged three years: a child's brain begins 'synaptic pruning' and is estimated to be about twice as active as an adult's brain

Statistically children living in areas of deprivation in Oxfordshire (reflecting our population) are significantly less ready for school.

Using nationally recognised assessment tools many children present as being at risk of communication delay. Our established interventions have been shown to be able to correct this deficit across most aspects of communications.

Our experience has shown that we need to have a multifaceted approach to be effective.

- We have found using a nationally accredited 'Spirals' programme enables us to identify and target interventions in our early year's setting.
- We have established two programmes for parents and children together promoting speech, language, communication and physical development.
- We work with partnership agencies including Speech and Language Therapists.

Children's communication and language skills develop through identifiable stages which can be looked at in three aspects – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking. It is important to stress that not all children will follow the exact same sequence or progress at the same rate. At The Sunshine Centre we work hard to provide activities which positively promote communication and language development and to identify children at risk of delay in this area.

The early development of good language and communication skills is so important in shaping a child's life. It opens the door to all other learning. Babies use their bodies, facial expressions, sounds and movement to seek connection and respond to those around them, all of which is discussed during our program.

The Sunshine Centre currently has 21 different home languages across its work.



TIPS is a six-week program aimed to give parents/carers ideas, resources and strategies to support and celebrate their children's (0-2years) speech and language development through interacting together, playing together, and speaking together.

The four main aims of this program:

1. Gain confidence in singing rhymes with their child.
2. Gain confidence in sharing books with their child.
3. Increase their knowledge of language and communication development.
4. Gain confidence in using puppets and toys to support their child's communication.

Each week participants came together and joined in rhymes, discussions, stories, and activities with their children. At the end of the session participants had a selection of resources to take home to begin to build up a resource box. All participants received the ICAN language development chart which allowed them to see all the different stages and ages of communication and language. Children received age-appropriate story books, song and nursery rhymes resources, art and craft materials and idea sheets.

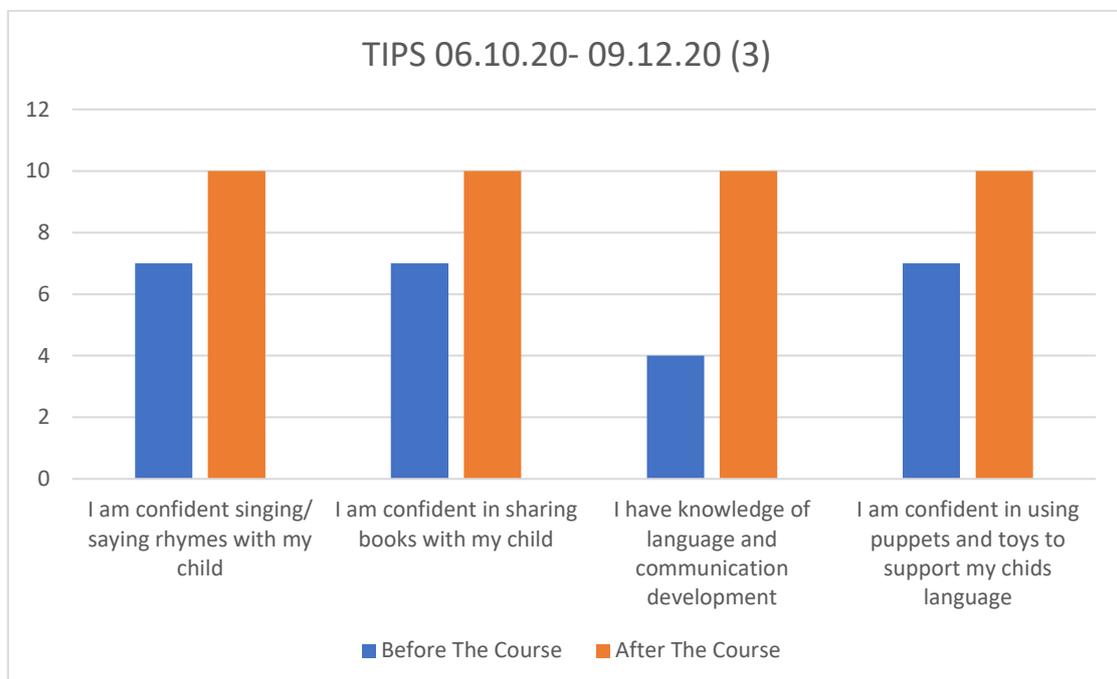
This work had originally been planned to take part in family homes. COVID-19 provided us with a challenge, and we re-designed the work for small groups. Following Covid guidelines we enrolled 3 families per course.

During this period, we have delivered 3 TIPS Programs with 8 mothers, 1 father and 9 under 2-year-olds. Attendees from these sessions have joined other available activities offered by The Sunshine Centre to continue to support their child's communication and language

Comments from attendees:

- ✚ 'Lovely 6-week course, boosted confidence with son bonding with him, enjoying watching him discover new things in a new place. Learnt to go with the flow a bit more. e.g., when he wanders off or takes a book that we are reading you can just make the rest of the story up etc'
- ✚ 'I have learnt new skills in how to communicate with N'
- ✚ 'Built confidence in both myself and M'
- ✚ 'Give them time to answer back. When reading can always make up a story as baby always takes book whilst reading.'

An example of how one parent changed during the six weeks.





Let's Communicate

A six-week programme for parent/carers and their children ages 2 – 4 years. Each week the group leader and the adults discuss a specific topic together such as Listening, Praise, Play. During this time, the children access the activities in the room. A focused activity takes place to enable the parent/carer to put into practice some of the skills and strategies which they have discussed, followed by a story and rhyme time. At the end of the session, we distribute a homework sheet to encourage the parent/carers to practice their new skills during the following week and to record their actions which they are encouraged to share.

One mum shared the following

"I was making chapatis at home. My daughter was playing with the playdough which you had given us in the group last week and she began to copy my actions and made her own chapatis. This provided the perfect opportunities to induce her to words which related to shapes and weights"

Examples of resources taken home includes recipes for playdough or cloud dough information sheets, smiley face stickers and story books. At the beginning of the programme every family receives a folder to keep their resources in, and they add to these each week. At the end of the course, we encourage them to keep this going.

Each week the group leader offers time for questions either individually or as a group.

9 families have taken part in this program which has been offered both virtually and face-to-face. The virtual sessions became 'family communication' sessions following the same format so that all the children could join in. The activities including a scavenger hunt around the home, a quiz for example.

Parent/Carers have told us the following:

“I have learnt how to praise my child”

“I now sing to my child when she is settling down at bedtime and we make up stories”

“We are beginning to make up songs together”

“I now understand my daughter more and listen to her needs”

“I found this course helpful for me and my child. My child now enjoys communication activities”

Virtual participants told us:

The adapted sessions were scored 10/10

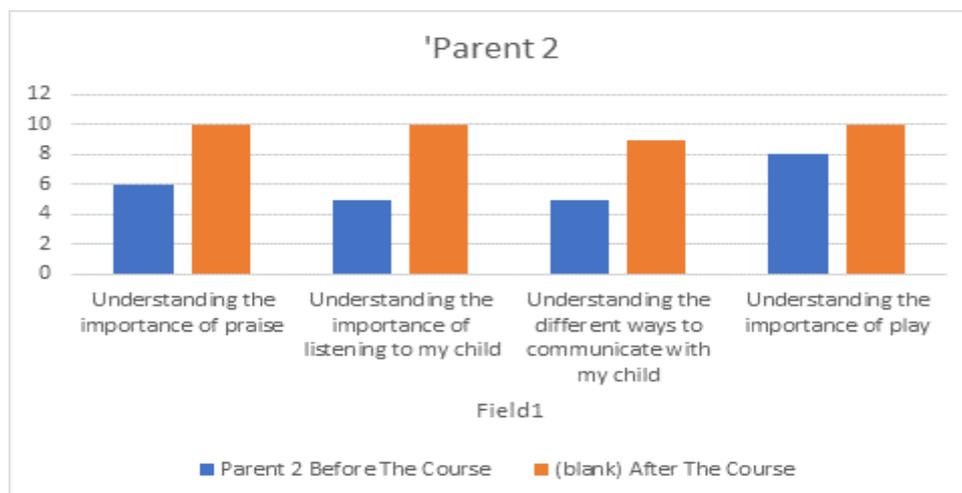
The sessions were enjoyable

We used the activities during sessions as part of her children’s home school learning. She gave the example of using the title of the story book and the author in their home school learning.

Children told us they enjoyed the indoor scavenger hunt and the singing.

An overall comment from parents and children outlined how much they enjoyed the story time as this was interactive, and the group leader involved them by asking questions for example as the story unfolded.

An example of how parents progress through the program.



This work was made possible by grants from:

HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust And



Baby Massage and Movement



Baby Massage is a great way for parent/carers to spend time with their baby, and it can also help to support the attachment between baby and carer. Before babies understand language we often communicate and

comfort baby through touch for example if baby cries, we hold them, stroke them, rock them, cuddle them etc. Baby massage is part of this natural impulse.

Although research evidence is inconclusive, many believe that baby massage can increase a mother's awareness of baby's need and supports early attachment. It may also help to improve the mother's wellbeing if she is suffering with post-natal depression or other mental health challenges.

Baby massage is also an effective way for partners, family members and carers to strengthen attachments with baby. Non fragrant and aromatherapy oil is used to massage baby.

Prior to joining a Baby Massage groups, baby must have had their six-week check so potential developmental issues have been identified.

Baby massage groups have been offered virtually and face to face. We reduced the size of groups (five rather than 10) to allow social distancing.

Aims of Baby Massage and movement:

- *For parents /carers to gain an increased attachment with their baby.*
- *For parents /carers to gain knowledge of massage and yoga techniques which will have a physical benefit for their baby.*
- *For parents/carers to feel less isolated and form friendships with families who have children of a similar age.*



During this period, we have delivered five groups to 17 mothers and their babies. Before starting, mothers were asked to fill out a “wheel” containing a variety of

relevant questions which reflect the course objectives. As part of evaluation, mothers were asked to fill out an additional wheel asking the same questions. Wheels were compared to assess the impact of the course

Examples of what group members told us:

“I’m feeling confident with the routine. Practicing at home helps”

“I have loved the course and confidence it has given me”

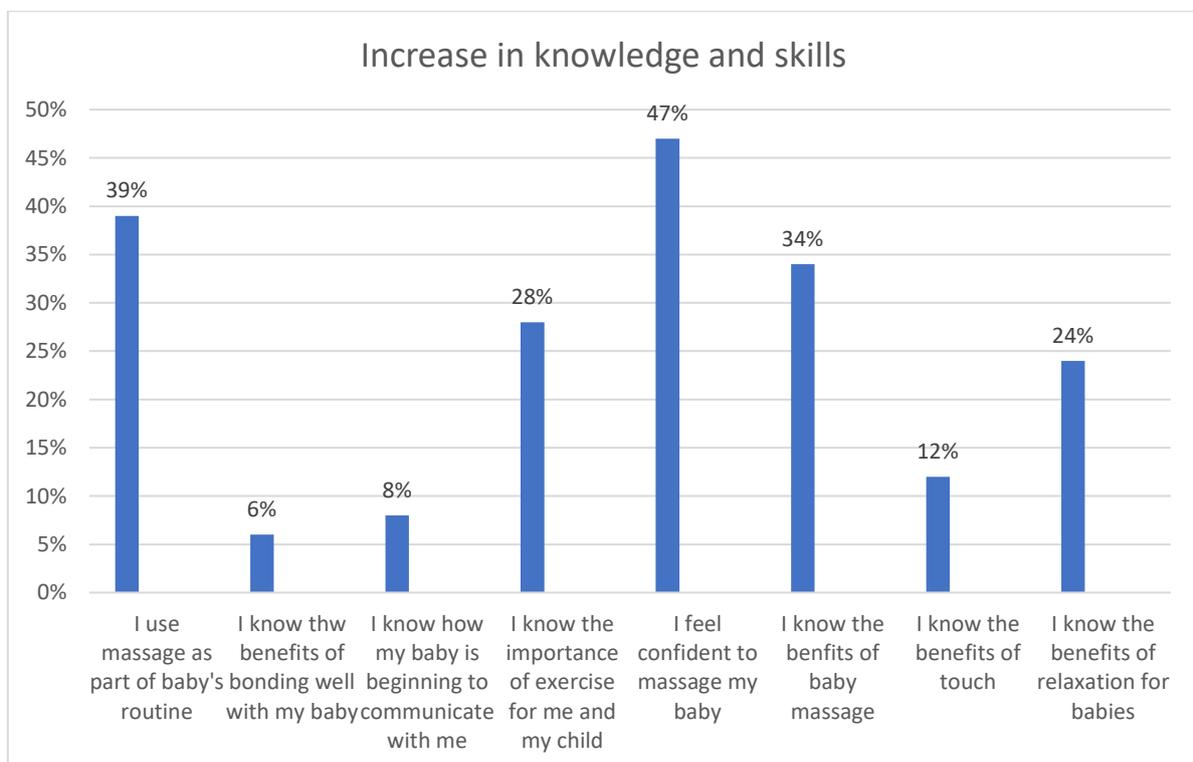
“Really enjoyed learning new areas. My baby loves his tummy, legs and legs massaged”

Case Study

Z the mother of a 3-month-old baby who is being breast fed, reported that her night times were quite disturbed with baby waking regularly. Z said she had accepted that this was part of being a mother of a young baby.

Z began practising massage with her baby before bedtime. Baby accepted the massage well and Z reported that baby now sleeps better and for longer.

The evaluation of this work can be seen in the chart below:



Direct work with individual families.

During the pandemic, this work has taken place by telephone, Microsoft Teams and face-face in our isolation room. The length of work varies greatly depending on the family's needs. Staff aim to support families to develop resilience, skills and knowledge needed to thrive.

Developing trust and mutual respect is critical, at times challenging, where the welfare and safety of children take priority. Using a support-based approach with families we empower them to identify strengths and risk factors and agree a pathway of change.

Working together in multi-agency way we can respond promptly to the diverse and complex needs of families. We start our work by listening to the families and plan together the next steps. We work with families holistically to promote change and achieve outcomes which are positive for all. We do not view children and young people in isolation but wherever appropriate, take action to address issues that affect the family as a whole.

This work involves supporting families with topics such as housing, benefits, budgeting, parenting strategies, domestic abuse, challenging behaviours, assertiveness, childcare, routines.

Referrals are received from local groups, community members, voluntary and statutory agencies as well as those who self-refer.

We have seen an increase in demand for this aspect of work alongside the increasing complexity of the referrals and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) enquiries. We use the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Boards (OSCB) Threshold of Need to guide our work.

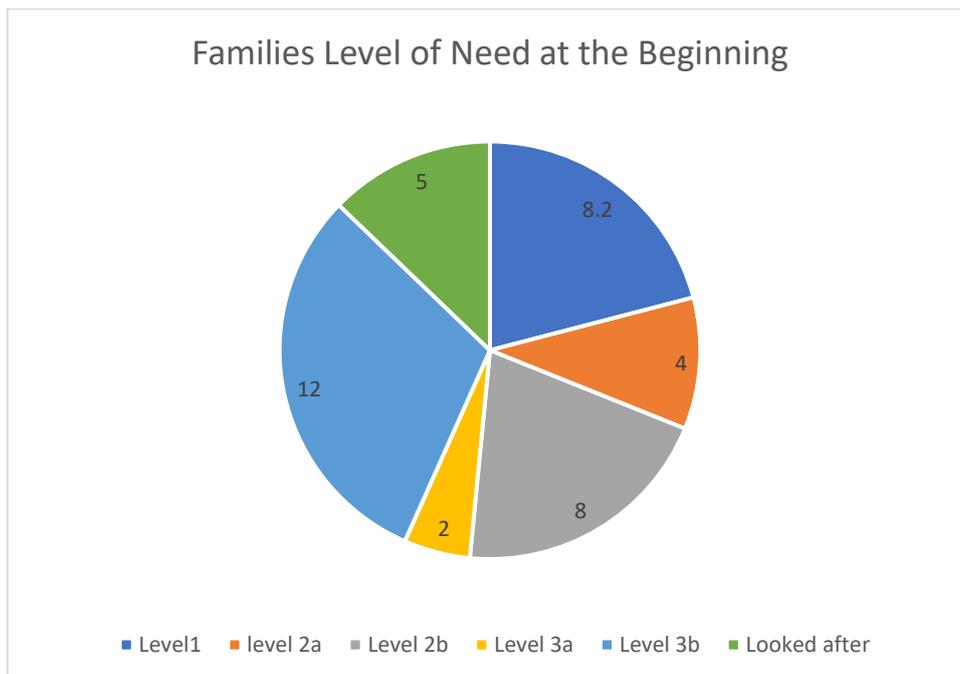




The 'Windscreen' above illustrates the different levels. (Oxfordshire Children's Safeguarding Board)

During this period, we have worked directly with: Number of families	Number of Children	Unborn babies at start of work
53	91	18

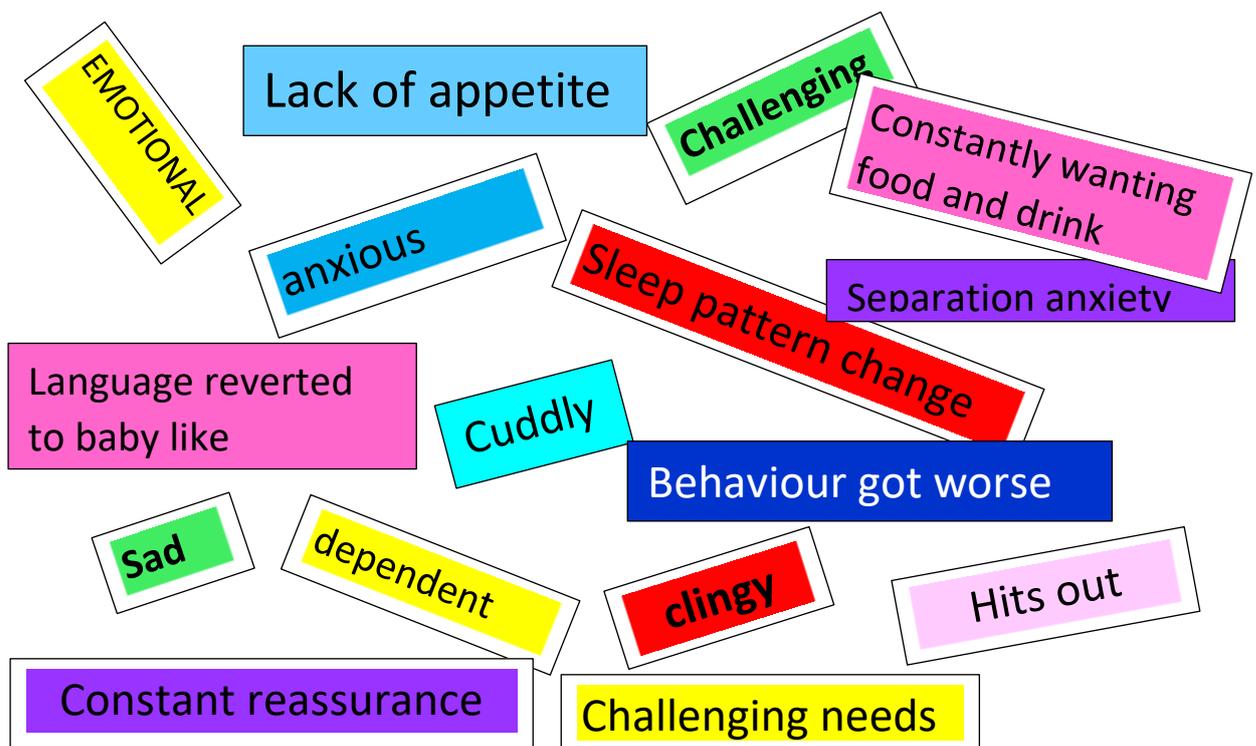
The families and children we have worked with us started their journey at the following levels:



Time for Me Nurture Groups.

From the early stages of the pandemic and the first lock down we observed how the mood change was happening with families, members of the community and children. People struggled with isolation, children missed their friends, extended family members and groups, new-born babies had few opportunities to socialise as they grew and developed. We asked parent/carers if they would answer four questions about how they felt the pandemic had affected their children. There was a strong convergence across all the responses and children's low emotional well-being came through very strongly. Parents reported changes in behaviour, eating habits, mood change and persona. It was clear self-regulation was also an issue which is vital for children's lifelong mental health and well-being.

Words used by parent/carers to describe their children aged under 5 years of age



They told us of how their children would approach other children and try to stroke their face as if to work out who or what they were seeing. They associated this behaviour to lack of socialising. One parent described their child's behaviour and ended by saying 'I think my child hates me'.

We are beginning to address these challenges. We have established two nurture groups a week, with six children and two highly experienced practitioners. The latter are skilled at tuning in to the children's signals and responding sensitively and consistently. These behaviours support the children in feeling relaxed and safe, while

fostering a sense of security and self-confidence. The staffs' roles are as co-regulators in a child's development of their ability to regulate their thoughts, feelings and behaviour. As each child observes and interacts with their peers and the staff, they gradually move from the experience of being supported in managing their feelings, thoughts and behaviour, to developing their ability to regulate these more independently.

The aim of the nurture groups is to provide the time, space and resources to actively promote children's personal, social, and emotional development (PSED) with a specific focus on emotional.

The groups were planned to support emotional well-being by:

- ❖ Being creative – giving the children space to be creative and for the adults to join in the process with them. Giving opportunities to experiment with a wide range of materials and mark making tools. Creativity should be about enjoying the activity and not about having a finished product.
- ❖ Using emotional language with the children.
- ❖ Giving children the time to rest and experience moments of stillness.
- ❖ Support emotional self-regulation (managing feelings), this depends on both nurture and nature, children need positive experiences of care, communication, and play.

Children are tracked and activities are planned to meet the needs of the individual.



Saplings began in March 2014 as a joint project combining the skills of our wonderful community midwives and the Sunshine Centre Community Support team. The model was created by a Consultant midwife for the Oxford University Trust and was being rolled out across the Trust area to support the most vulnerable mothers with an aim of improving long term outcomes for the children.

Our relationship with the midwives has been productive and positive. We have

worked with in the region of 500 families during the 7-year, period with a myriad of challenges and positive outcomes. The Saplings service dovetails perfectly with our outreach support team, domestic abuse programmes, specialist support for parents and babies, and universal provision such as Baby Massage and Sensory Baby. The service is the most successful in the area, and is now a NHS model for success.

During the pandemic, our NHS colleagues valiantly continued with adapted services Regulations meant we could no longer meet women in groups. We established a system for women to have their antenatal clinic visits at The Sunshine Centre and for some additional education to be undertaken one to one.



Our outreach support team have been on hand to identify women in need of specific support, and families have become used to accessing the Centre, using resources such as the Community Larder and soon became aware of our services.

75 families have accessed this support in the past month.

We look forward to restarting Saplings groups as they used to be with the benefit of all we have learned through lockdown.



Early Year's Childcare

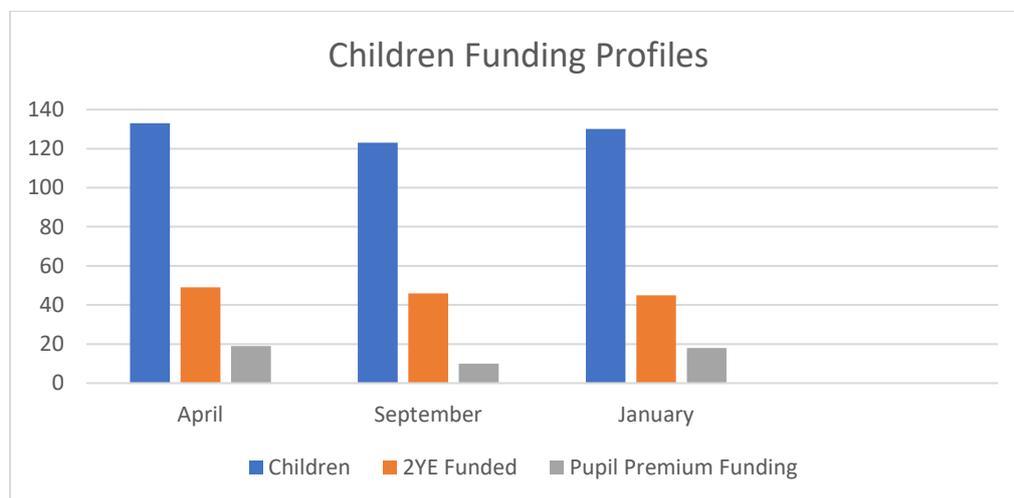
Working closely with parent/carers we have continued to offer flexible, affordable childcare to remove as many barriers as possible including full day care, sessional care and stretched hours. 'Stretched hours' means for example, that children funded for 15 hours a week might attend just 10 hours per week all year round. The remaining five funded hours are banked and used in the school holidays. Children benefit from this approach with consistency in their routine, uninterrupted learning, and support for emotional well-being. This flexibility has helped us to support parents whose working patterns have a varied in response to frequently changing restrictions

The Sunshine Centre is a safe, trusted and secure place for children identified at high risk of or suffering abuse. In collaboration with our partners, we have enabled them to attend childcare at additional times to their allocated hours.

We maintained contact with all the children on our childcare registers through our online interactive learning platform as well as providing childcare for local children whose usual nursery was closed, thus supporting families to deal with the adversities they faced.



Children on roll during this period:



Children with Specific Requirement.

There has been a significant increase in this area of our work and all indicators suggest that will continue. Where a child appears to be behind their expected developmental levels, or where a child's progress gives cause for concern, practitioners gather information about the child's learning and development from formal checks, from their own observations and from any available detailed assessment of the child's needs. Our practitioners check children's progress in communication and language, physical development, and personal, social, and emotional development. Where we have concerns, we determine whether we can identify likely casual factors, whether intrinsic or exacerbated by issues such as housing, family or other domestic circumstances.

Where we have taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the learning differences of the child, but the child has not made expected progress, together with parents we consider applying for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment. This work may include 1:1 support, language programme 'Spirals' or through small group activity.

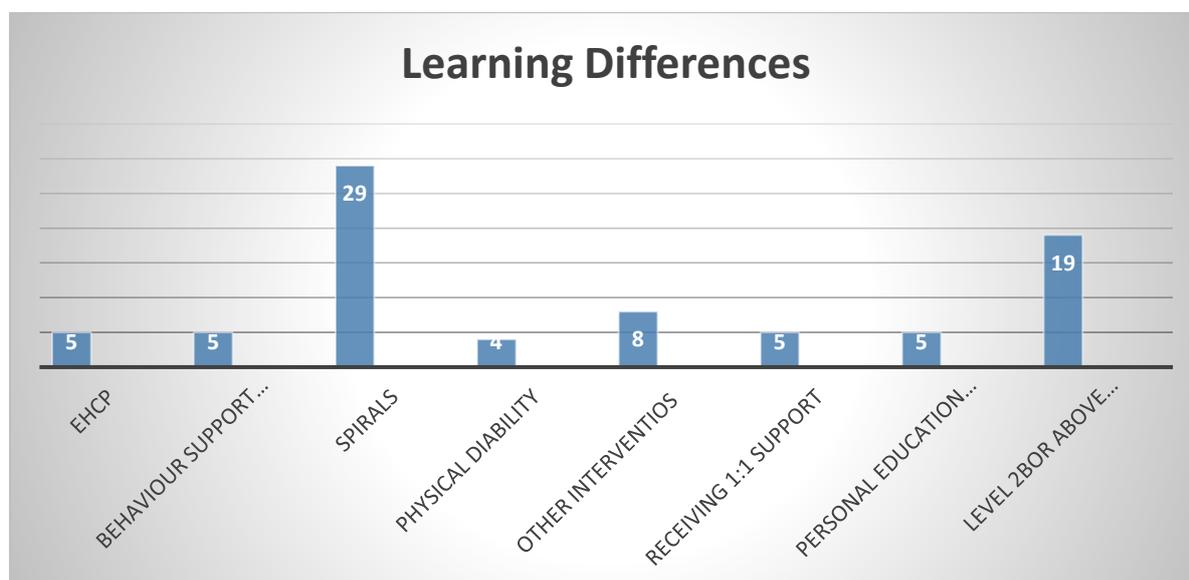
Children with more complex needs may receive a Multi-Disciplinary Assessment (MDA) for which we write reports. Our Specific Requirements Co-Ordinator (SRCo) is highly skilled and trained, she oversees all the intervention work, contributes to and leads on Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), reviews, completes SPORFI forms (Single Point of Request for Involvement), links with speech and language therapists, early years special education needs inclusion teacher (EYSENIT) physiotherapists, community paediatricians, and community children nurses. She also delivers many of the intervention packages and children's 1:1 work.

In all cases, early identification and intervention can significantly reduce the need for more costly interventions at a later stage.

After our SRCo had led a child's review/transition meeting a professional wrote:

So lovely to have a positive meeting – THANK YOU, you were fab!

Children with learning differences data:



Using our learning, what next?

We acknowledge that the community is not a static entity, but it is dynamic, changing as political, demographic, and other contexts evolve. We face huge challenges such as public health emergencies, climate change, sustainability, extremes of economic hardship, the impact of movements such as Black Lives Matter, migration, and the impact of technology on their lives. These all filter into the daily lives of children, families and everyone locally. The Sunshine Centre aims are to support our community as best as we can to build a stronger, inclusive, safe society.

Reducing isolation and increasing socialisation, supporting a stronger and cohesive community, promoting good mental health, building family resilience, supporting positive change to improve lives and reducing adverse family experiences are at the forefront of our endeavours.

Sustaining the work of The Sunshine Centre financially is one of our biggest challenges so we are concentrating on writing grant applications and identifying potential sponsors.



In addition to our current programme, as a result of listening to the voice of children and the community, we will offer the following:

Domestic Abuse

We will continue to develop our domestic abuse pathway in the following ways:



The Sunshine Centre is moving forward with support for fathers who are perpetrators of Domestic Abuse. We will be starting the 'Caring Dads' programme, already used successfully in the North of England. This intervention aims to support fathers in improving relationships with their children and thus enhance children's life chances and stop the cycle of abuse. Working in groups, participants will learn how to spend time with their children in healthy ways and to understand the impact on children of controlling, abusive and neglectful actions, including domestic abuse.

. At the end of the seventeen weeks course, they will:

- Have been introduced to ways to strengthen their father: child relationship.
- Gained an awareness about their behaviours and attitudes and how these are/can be harmful to children
- Understand how their choices and ways of being a dad affects their children
- Learn skills to cope in healthy ways with hard situations.

We have five staff trained, so a huge Thank You to our training sponsors and now we are designing seek funding and safe conditions to run the programme. Once we have run our first programme and completed the four supervision sessions with our trainers, we will be accredited trainers

Power to Change

We will offer the Power to Change course to those women who have completed the Freedom course. This provides education and support within a group to women who are or have been in abusive relationships. Our staff will play a key part in making the sessions safe, supportive, and inclusive. They will use their skills, experience and knowledge of issues such as domestic and gendered violence to assist the participants during and after the sessions and to maintain group cohesion, respect and stability.

Sensory Baby

We will be re-opening Sensory Babies. During the pandemic we have adapted the group for under 6 months with their parent/carer. We have introduced a booking system and limited numbers allowing us to work safely in the Covid restrictions. This work will extend to those under 12 months with a larger group as soon as practicable.



Aims:

To encourage parents/carers to spend time playing with their baby/infant.

To increase parents' knowledge and understanding of the importance of movement play regarding development.

Objectives:

To promote tummy time.

To provide sensory play opportunities in a planned weekly rotational way.

Promote the government / NHS guidelines on movement play for babies and infants.

Provide parents with staff who listen to concerns and can give guidance or signpost.

Outdoors and connecting with nature

Children and families have told us how much they have benefitted from the outdoor activities and the resources in their activity bags. Equally they have also highlighted how they feel unsafe in the parks. To address both aspects, we will:

- offer weekly sessions to encourage families and children to use outdoor local spaces for learning and adventurous activity. Activities will be organised and led by an outdoor activity supervisor with supporting staff. Sessions will explore the benefits of outdoor education, the positive impact on family mental health, and issues of sustainability. Encouraging families to embed outdoor play with children

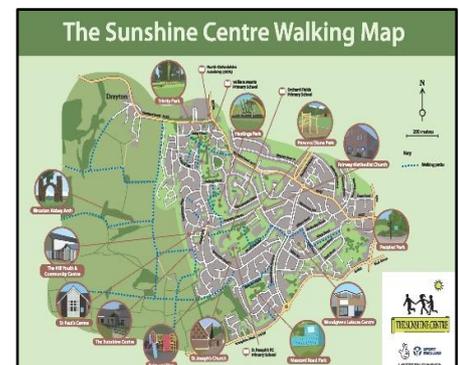


will foster within individuals a love and knowledge of the outdoors, which we anticipate will remain with individuals for life and transcends through generations.

- Challenge the Community to walk from Land's End to John 'O' Grote's. This will be a collective challenge. Each member who signs up will receive a free pedometer and their weekly miles will be collated by a volunteer. A map outside The Sunshine Centre will show their journey. The challenge will take place over two months and end with a celebration. (This work has been sponsored by Sport England)
- To display a map of the area showing where all of the local parks, landmarks and walkways
- We will endeavour to develop the outside areas of the centre, creating shade and offering unique opportunities to explore, discover, take risks and have FUN!



Dr. Lala Manners a movement and physical development expert in the EYFS recognises that movement and being physical is essential to a child's well-being and play's a large part in beginning to tackle the obesity issues emerging within our very young children. Being outdoors will be part of addressing this in a positive all-embracing manner.



Reducing Isolation and Supporting Good Mental Health

Many children and their families have experienced isolation and low mental health during the pandemic. We are consistently asked when groups will re-open, when will we bring back the monthly 'Senior' session. All of which are of course dependent on when lock down restrictions are lifting.

Moving forward to address identified needs we are planning to offer:

Stories & Rhymes

There is growing evidence that the past year has had a deleterious impact on young children's language skills.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research suggests the measures taken to combat the pandemic have deprived the youngest children of social contact and experiences essential for increasing vocabulary.

Little or no contact with grandparents, social distancing, no play dates, and the wearing of face coverings in public have left children less exposed to conversations and everyday experiences.

Evidence shows poor speech development can have long-term effects on learning.

We are planning to offer a Stories and Rhymes session for under 5's and their parent/carers. At first numbers will be restricted numbers to comply with social distancing advice. However, we will attempt to satisfy demand by offering more than one session a week. Families will be able to book for six consecutive sessions to help them collect a library of stories and rhymes to use with their child at home. We will use puppets and props as part of interactive sessions.



We are planning to re- introduce Stay and Play sessions. These are a great opportunity for parents/carers to get together in a welcoming, comfortable, relaxing and stimulating environment where they can join in activities with their babies and young children. It is a place where families can find support, advice, friendships, share experiences and skills.

Stay and Plays reduce isolation, promote good mental health and offer activities that are challenging, fun and stimulating supporting children's development and learning.

Smile Accreditation



From the Summer of 2021 we will work towards our Healthy Smile accreditation. This will involve: -

- *All staff being trained to encourage children and families to practice good oral health and to apply tooth friendly practice within their settings.*
- *Staff will discuss with parents the benefits of registering their children with their local dental service and advise how to do this.*
- *A lunch box audit will be completed for our organisation to recognise the levels of sugar some children have in their diets.*
- *Healthy smile campaigns will be used to promote tooth friendly practices.*



Lucy's YouTube Cooking Demonstrations

The Governments "Tackling Obesity" document states that, 1 in 3 children leaving primary school are already overweight, 1 in 5 are already living with obesity. Obesity prevalence is highest amongst deprived groups. This is sowing the seeds of adult diseases and health inequality in early childhood.

We are aiming to respond to this highlighted issue which is prevalent within our community by:

- Offering family cookery courses. We will be providing families ingredients each week for one of the recipes in Lucy's Covid 19 cookbook (the book created by a Lucy who received food boxes during lockdown).

- Staff in collaboration with Lucy will video cookery demonstration's and upload them to YouTube so families are able to follow techniques and benefit from Lucy's hints and tips.



- Introducing the puppet “Charlie the Chef” to children in the context of talking about healthy eating. We will bring Charlie into Early Years sessions and use him on special occasions in relation to food-based activities. Charlie will also support parents in encouraging their children to try new foods or eat a balanced diet.



UPDATING OUR IMAGE AND REBRANDING.....

The pandemic has emphasised to us the importance of our public image, particularly by way of social media and the importance of easy accessibility to information. We are determined to improve our virtual profiles, update our communication systems and rebrand to bring our organisation into the 21st century.

Our current branding has served us well for 23 years but so much has changed over that time and we have become so much more reliant on social media and on linked communication, that we know it is essential to provide a new shop window to the Sunshine Centre for clients and professionals which illuminates our ethos and spirit.

We consulted with staff, the community and our trustees and appointed a designer who has offered us a variety of rebranding options and helped us plan our route to rebranding, updating and creating imaginative social media opportunities.

We have decided on our new logo and progressing with our designer to create a corporate, lively, informative, and accessible web site and social media platform, to be launched at the end of the summer.



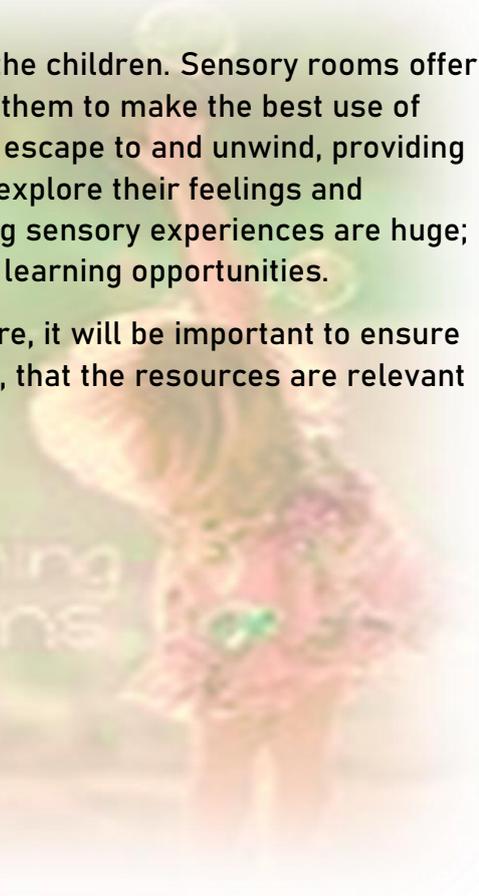
We are hoping to launch our new image, website and social media platforms at the end of the Summer 2021.



And our ultimate dream.....

We would love to establish a sensory room for all the children. Sensory rooms offer children rich and varied experiences which enable them to make the best use of their senses. They are a great place for children to escape to and unwind, providing calm and tranquil space where they can relax and explore their feelings and emotions. The benefits children gain from accessing sensory experiences are huge; they stimulate their imagination leading to exciting learning opportunities.

Babies develop their senses from day one. Therefore, it will be important to ensure our sensory room is tailored to children of all ages, that the resources are relevant to every child's developmental needs.



never stop reaching
for your dreams

Jill Edge MA

This report celebrates our work over six months of the pandemic and encompasses all the challenges it presented to us. It is also a tribute to the local community who initiated The Sunshine Centre in 1998 and who have continued to support and work with us.

On behalf of the children, families, community, staff and trustees I would like to thank our funding partners which includes private donations, grants from trusts and local organisations and last but no means least our amazing volunteers.

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND

LOCAL COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S PRIORITY FUND

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

TOWN COUNCILLORS

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND

SPORT ENGLAND

CAF BANK RESILIANCE FUND

HDH WILLS TRUST

PYE TRUST

PF TRUST

THE ORMOND CHARITABLE TRUST

THE GRACE TRUST

DORIS FIELD CHARITABLE TRUST

OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

SANCTUARY HOUSING

SOVERIGN HOUSING

REDROW HOUSING

NEIGHBOURLY ROTARY CLUB

MORRISONS SUPERMARKET

WAITROSE HANWELL VILLAGE RESIDENTS

LOCAL CHURCHES THE HEDGE FUND INDIVIDUAL DONORS

BANBURY FOOD BANK MAGENTA BANBURY FOOD FOR CHARITIES

MILCOMBE GOLF CLUB TESCO BAGS OF HELP ICELAND

It has not been our intention to not mention all our funding partners and we sincerely apologise if we have inadvertently done so.