

# first steps

Women's Centre

Support. Educate. Empower.

## Annual Report 2022-23





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Project Manager



**Michael McGoldrick**  
Chief Executive Officer



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Progression Officer



**Joanne Orr**  
Monitoring Officer



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Training & Education  
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**Bernie Mallon**  
Recruitment Officer



**Ingrid Bell**  
Participant Liaison  
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**Gillian Steenson**  
Life Skills Coordinator



**Franco Donnelly**  
Mini Bus Driver



**Sonata Slajene**  
House Keeper



**Helen Elmoustaghit**  
Childcare Leader



**Jacqueline Donnelly**  
Childcare Assistant Leader



**Gledre Blair**  
Childcare Assistant



**Fransica Mendes**  
Childcare Assistant



**Susan Gates**  
Childcare Assistant



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# Chair's Report

## Maria McGilly, Chairperson

This has been a year of upheaval, change and moving forward. Our previous Chairperson, Louise Mallon quoted Gandhi in her report last year. This is still a very poignant quote:

*"The future depends on what we do in the present"*

First Steps Women's Centre was bracing itself for the end of the European Social Fund (ESF) funding. Just like 63 other organisations, the Centre was facing at worst, total closure and at best, the decimation of staff, programmes and services. There were many unknowns and this added to the stress. There were rumours of a possible extension to the programme giving some hope. However, with no Executive in place any hope evaporated by the time January-February 2023 came around.

Back to Gandhi's quote. I can safely say that the Board prepared for the loss of ESF funding. The amount of funding lost was over £272,000 equating to 53% of the total funding for the previous year. FSWC could not survive if other funding was not identified and put into place.

Yet that is what the Senior Management Team managed to do. They had prepared for the future by seeking funding from a number of sources. These included the Big Lottery and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

In December 2022, FSWC received great news from The Lottery. FSWC had been successful in a five-year bid to fund a Wellbeing Programme. This was brilliant news given that things were beginning to look a lot gloomier by the day. There was a realisation that this funding on its own would not be able to save the Centre and staff. FSWC was still edging closer and closer to the precipice.

FSWC had also been working in the background since December 2021 to identify partners for an additional programme – The UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This programme was something that could help cover the loss of the ESF funding.

The aim and objectives were similar. FSWC was approached in December 2022 by SW FE College to be part of a consortium bid for the funding. This bid was successful. The funding was announced on Friday 31st March 2023.

### Loss of 62 years Experience

Sadly, on Thursday 30th March FSWC had made five staff redundant due to the end of the ESF programme. Unfortunately the news of funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund was too late for these staff. Like so many community and voluntary organisations across the province the end of ESF was felt deeply and personally at First Steps Women's Centre. I want to pay a huge complement to the staff who left, for their professionalism, their integrity, their dignity and their caring for all things at First Steps Women's Centre. These staff continued to work right up to the very end never once holding back. They gave their all.

The Board had prepared for the loss of staff from October and the issue of the end of ESF funding had always been a standing item on Board Agenda's for at least the previous 12 months.

My role was to lead the Board and SMT through the redundancy process and to ensure that all processes and procedures were followed correctly. In my opinion FSWC followed the proper and laid down procedures in a caring, friendly and sometimes emotional manner.

### The Future

As I reflect on the past year it never ceases to amaze me what First Steps Women's Centre continues to do. The work, the programmes and the sheer number of nationalities attending the Centre.

You can see for yourself in this report the numbers of women attending, the types of programmes and also the cooperation between various other organisations.



I want to thank personally all our staff, our volunteers, our tutors, our supporters and our funders for making this Centre the place that it is. Lastly, I want to recognise the journey of the 450+ women and children that came through the doors during the past 12 months.

I believe that the future for First Steps Women's Centre is secure and safe because of what the Board and the organisation has done in the past and present. Ghandis words will drive the Board and FSWC to keep moving forward, to keep planning and to follow and maintain a professional and caring standard of governance.

*Maria McGilly,  
Chairperson*



# Chief Executive's Report

## *Michael McGoldrick, Chief Executive*

This has been the best of years and also the worst of years!

First Steps Women's Centre (FSWC) lost five staff in March 2023 with a culminated 62 years of experience. These staff had worked so hard, so diligently and professionally giving their all. They were made redundant as a result of the end of the European Social Fund (ESF) programme. FSWC had been in receipt of European Social Fund funds since 2008. The impact has been felt across the whole of Northern Ireland with many community and voluntary groups suffering the same fate.

FSWC lost professional, dedicated and loyal people. They gave their all to ensure that this organisation was a strong pillar within the Mid Ulster community. Right up until they left on 30th March, they continued to work to deliver a wide variety of programmes and courses for women.

In October 2022 all the main political parties came to FSWC to hear about the impending impact of losing ESF funding. The community and voluntary organisations came together to lobby MLA's, MPs and Permanent Secretary's. Despite encouraging responses from all parties the European Social Fund ceased on 31st March. This left dozens of community groups and communities with a mammoth task to find funding to replace a very effective and well managed fund.

### **Programmes and Courses Apr 2022-Mar 2023**

FSWC has noted an improvement in numbers attending this year compared to last year. This year, FSWC provided 44 different courses with 543 places. The evidence suggests that the days of people fearing to go out because of the spectre of Covid-19 are waning if not totally gone.

### **Lifeskills**

This past year has brought some new and some not so new courses. Our Lifeskills programme continues to provide English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to multiple nationalities.

This year there were nine different nationalities. (Please see the Lifeskills report to find out where these women came from.)

Lifeskills also continues to offer Essential Skills in Literacy. The Centre is now witnessing a number of the migrant women progressing into our Literacy programme. That is clear evidence of the progress these women are making in their level of English. They have very good tutors in Louise Cameron and Una Quinn who have taught ESOL at FSWC for over 10 years.

### **Wellbeing**

The one area which has witnessed a continued increase in demand is our Wellbeing Programmes. During this past year there has been 31 different courses and 516 places provided. There was quite a lot of interest in the Chinese Brush Strokes art class, Tai Chi, Chi Me and Forest Bathing. Please read the Wellbeing Report and Testimonies from participants who have felt their mental health and lives have improved as a result of attending one of these courses.

### **Cultural Programme**

This continues to develop. With more than 10 nationalities learning alongside each other at First Steps Women's Centre the place is an eclectic cauldron of people with many diverse backgrounds. This programme funded by The Executive Office under their Minority Ethnic Development Fund, was responsible for the first "Human Library" event at FSWC. The aim of the Human Library is to better our understanding of diversity in order to help create more inclusive and cohesive communities across cultural, religious, social and ethnic differences.

The event in February was a great success. The participants included the PSNI, Orange Order, Sinn Féin, St Patrick's Academy and women from a local Church group. FSWC seeks to provide more of these opportunities as a means of promoting and developing greater understanding, respect for differences and to engender better Good Relations.

### External Evaluation

FSWC commissioned an External Evaluation in October 2022. This included focus groups and an online survey in multiple languages. I have included some of the testimonies within this Annual Report. The conclusion of this independent evaluation highlights the continued positive impact that FSWC has on women.

### Support Services

FSWC recognises the many barriers that exist for women seeking to attend the Centre. Special thanks to Karen and Ann who gave up their time freely as volunteers to provide much needed counselling. Also to our Childcare Staff and to Franco our Minibus Driver. Without these services retention and attendance would be a lot less.

### In Conclusion

Despite the loss of one third of staff First Steps Women's Centre has rallied well to continue the magnificent work that it does. The successes of funding applications through Lottery and UK Shared Prosperity Fund has steadied the ship. It has given FSWC a hope and a future. This in turn gives hope and a future for the women who attend and want to attend here.

Without the help and commitment of the Board, Staff, Volunteers, Funders and Tutors our Centre would not exist the way that it does. I am extremely proud of the work and the impact that continues to be achieved.

*Michael McGoldrick,  
Chief Executive*



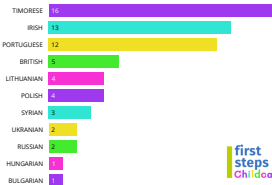
# Childcare Report

The total places allocated for April 2022 to March 2023 was 63 children.

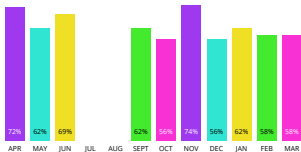
Crèche opened on the 5th September 2023 for the autumn-winter programme. Overall, FSWC had 67 enrolments during the year.

This year **11 nationalities** in all including Russian, Indonesian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Portuguese, Polish, Lithuanian, Timor, Syrian, Irish and British

## The chart below shows the Nationalities in Crèche



The chart below shows the attendance from March 2022 to March 2023



#### Parent Evaluations.

Staff are always interested in the opinions and suggestions of our parents/carers. Evaluations help staff to maintain the professional service they provide. Staff conduct one-to-one meetings with parents once a year and carried out parent evaluations in January/February 2023.

There were 25 evaluations distributed and 24 were returned. The results were excellent with positive feedback.

Some of the testimonies were as follows:

*"There are a wide range of activities, make my child improve her language, brain development, etc."*

*"I feel the staff are all very approachable and communication is regular."*

*"Everything very clean, the girls are very friendly and helpful."*

*"Comfortable, clean, safe and humble staff. Totally excellent. Really helped me supervise my child during my course."*

### Reggio Emilia Programme

At FSWC, staff continue to use the Reggio Emilia approach to learning. The Reggio Emilia approach to early years education puts children in the driver's seat and sees them as curious individuals with the power and potential to develop and learn from their environment and the relationships they build with others.

**The Reggio Emilia Approach is innovative and inspiring to early childhood education** which values the child as strong, capable and resilient; rich with wonder and knowledge.

FSWC staff use provocations which simply mean to provoke thought, discussions, questions, interests, creativity and ideas. Provocations can also expand on a thought, project, idea and interest.

Topics staff used with the children this year are based around the children's ages and stages of development, as well as their interests and capabilities. Topics included 'All about Me', 'Nature and Flowers', 'Maths is Fun', 'Our Five Senses' and 'Animals Big and Small'.

FSWC continue to use 'The Rhyme challenge' and this is proving quite popular and a useful learning tool. All parents are happy with the challenge and continue to teach their children rhymes at home with a new rhyme each month. Rhymes this year included 'An Elephant Goes Like This and That', 'Humpty Dumpty', and 'Mary Had a Little Lamb'.

'Group Time' is still incorporated into our daily routine and is seen to be the most important time of the day. At the beginning of every session each child is welcomed through song. Makaton signs are used at this point where appropriate; the staff and children love to learn easy Makaton signs.

Children are taught the days of the week, counting and now we have included the 'Baby Shark' song. This particular song gets children and staff up and moving.

At the end of the day, children are taught to relax through the popular song 'Sleeping Bunnies' staff also take this opportunity to do a little yoga to help them relax before they go home.



### New Staff

In November and December 2022 two new employees joined our team: Francesca Mendes and Susan Gates.

### Staff Training Record

It is important that staff continue to learn and develop their own skills and to keep up to date with essential training.

There were a number of relevant courses available from many reliable sources. The main site used was the Southern Childcare Partnership.

The training that staff have undertaken this year include:

- Paediatric First Aid
- First Aid at Work
- Supporting children's emotional behaviour
- Global development delay
- Safeguarding Course
- Emotional wellbeing for children with learning disabilities
- Exploring gender in the early years
- Global development delay
- Level 2 Food & Safety
- Level 3 supporting Children and young people with Special Needs

### Policies and Procedures

Every year on the advice of Social Services and Early Years we review and amend as necessary our policies and procedures.

This year we amended our:

- Intimate and Personal Care Policy
- Food Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Allergy Policy and Risk Assessment



**Helena Oudiden**



**Jacqueline Donnelly**



**Giedre Blair**



**Francesca Mendes**

# Cultural Programme

This project was funded through The Executive Office's MEDF (Minority Ethnic Development Fund). It provided funding to help run four ESOL English language courses and a Cultural Awareness programme.

This report will focus on the latter as ESOL is covered in our Lifeskills report.

In September 2022, 12 local and migrant women came together to find out more about each others background, culture and history. There were a number of aims for this project.

They included the following:

- Developing greater community cohesion
- Gaining a greater understanding and acceptance of different cultures and traditions
- Celebrating Cultural Awareness
- People to gain a learning and understanding about the challenges facing BME communities

The programme met weekly and the women began to share their stories of how and why they came to Mid Ulster. This included local women indigenous to N. Ireland.

By late October the group was reduced to 6 women. However the numbers increased by December when a number of local women joined the group. They had heard about the programme through their local Church. The Church had brought a group of Carol Singers in to the Centre just before Christmas.







# Wellbeing Report

31 courses have run in this period with 387 places accepted. The number of courses, participants and retention rates have all increased and are virtually back to their pre-Covid rates.

## Places Offered, Number of Courses and Retention Rates 2019-2023

|                | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Places Offered | 298  | 383  | 127  | 243  | 387  |
| Courses        | 23   | 29   | 15   | 24   | 31   |
| Retention      | 92%  | 80%  | 72%  | 83%  | 84%  |

### Courses organised at FSWC

- 4 X Chi Me / Tai Chi & Relaxation courses plus a one-off outdoors at The Argory
- 2 X Pilates courses
- 2 X Walk & Talk courses
- 2 X Yoga courses
- 2 X Forest Bathing courses
- 2 X Living Life to the Full courses
- 1 X Relax & Unwind course
- 1 X Stretch & Tone course
- 1 X Spring Clean Your Life course
- 1 X I Can course
- 1 X Holistic Therapies Tasters course
- 1 X Stress Management course
- 1 X Drumming course
- 1 X Managing Your Money course
- 1 X Meditation & Journaling course
- 1 X Creative Writing course
- 1 X Discover You courses
- 1 X Body Mind Emotions course
- 1 X Dancing Your Way to Health & Happiness course
- 1 X Menopause Awareness course
- 1 X Fundamentals of Food course
- 1 X Arts Class – Chinese Brushstrokes course

### Average no of women in each course: 12

- 2022: 10
- 2021: 8
- 2020: 13
- 2019: 13

### Average attendance per course: 8

- 2022: 7
- 2021: 6
- 2020: 10
- 2019: 10

### Reasons for leaving

- 6 X Time didn't suit any longer
- 3 X Caring Responsibilities
- 19 X Unknown
- 2 X Gained employment
- 7 X The course was not for them
- 9 X Ill Health
- 7 X Other Reasons

### Comments

We can see numbers have increased this year. Once again there is a large demand for Wellbeing courses.

We reverted back to in-person courses only and only 2 or 3 women were requesting Zoom classes.

There were 4 new tutors this year, Laura Stankute (Yoga), Fionnuala Cassidy (Creative Writing), Giovanna Baistrocchi (Body, Mind, Emotions) and Margaret Johnston (Discover You and Menopause Awareness). The feedback was excellent and some even commented that they were exceptional for all courses. Some women also stated that they were a great addition to our team.

All courses were successful. Some with lower numbers and some with higher numbers but even the smaller classes were successful in that they were of high importance and valuable to those who attended. Feedback as always has been great and I have no concerns in regards to any of the tutors or classes.

**Adding 1-2-1s to three courses (courtesy of the CLEAR Project)** has proved to be really beneficial to the participants who accepted this additional support.

There was an underspend within the CLEAR Project and FSWC was granted permission to buy exercise equipment. This included the purchase of: yoga mats, blocks and straps, blankets for relaxation, pilates balls, pilates bands and circles.

This year we had an emotional support dog attend with one of our participants.

We have had a few new courses this year all of which were very successful – Arts class, Body Mind Emotions, Managing Your Money, Discover You, Meditation & Journaling and Forest Bathing. The Tai Chi and the Forest Bathing were outdoors. I feel outdoor classes are very valuable and will aim to have more going forward.



# Testimonials

## Yoga

- Look forward to it every week have started doing it at home
- In particular I found the class very good for stress I had at the time
- I've done a lot of yoga classes over the years and I would say this is the best experience I have had
- I am glad I went to this, I thoroughly enjoyed it
- Allowed me to really focus on me, everything around melted away

## Body Mind Emotions

- I found this course very interesting. I would love to attend other courses relative to this subject as I can say it was very valuable. Thank you
- Giovanna s fantastic, her knowledge is amazing, so friendly and helpful
- I would recommend this course to anyone I know
- Thank you very much for letting me take part in this course. I am very grateful

## Spring Clean Your Life

- I learned so much more about the importance of decluttering both physically and psychologically and have done so much of it.
- Norah was an exceptionally organised and engaging tutor who encouraged class participation through group work, thus increasing opportunity to forge friendships.
- It was a fantastic class. I loved it!! So thank you!!!
- The leader was exceptional. All the ladies were very special. Loved them all as I had a very tough time for 2 years.
- Excellent tutor, Norah. Very interesting course which will improve my life.

## Stretch & Tone

- Very encouraging, great delivery, meet new people, more energy
- I would definitely recommend this course and this centre to every – Highly recommended
- Positivity – Great Encouragement. No improvements necessary – very well organised and delivered

## Tai Chi

- The overall atmosphere was excellent and the tutor the best
- The course was well delivered and at a level where all participants can enjoy
- Great fun, great teacher, overall 10/10
- I thoroughly enjoyed everything about the course, I can't wait to do it again.
- A relaxing enjoyable course. I thoroughly relaxed and looked forward to attending each week. Loved every minute and with no parking we are thankful for Franco.Franco is a star.
- Highly recommend, brilliant course.
- I have really enjoyed the Tai Chi Classes. The gentle exercises are helping my arm and I am benefitting from good breathing exercises etc.

## Relax & Unwind

- I thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you I've been doing a lot more self-care
- Feeling a lot more relaxed and a lot more secure in meeting people
- Women together openness a chance to speak about your worries and empathy from the tutor
- I have really enjoyed this course great for the mind, meeting new people, having a chat

## Drumming

- It lowered my stress and made me feel alive again and happy
- Absolutely amazing, great fun. I enjoyed every second.
- Brings out the best in us!!!

## I Can

- I believe I can do things, I thought I couldn't do, I have changed my opinion about myself greatly
- It helped me build confidence around decision making
- Excellent course – highly recommend
- Helen is a very smart motivated lady who makes a difference to our lives – Thank you

### Living Life to The Full

- I enjoyed this course and how helpful it was
- Mags was easy to understand, friendly, full of ideas, always helpful and a great personality and a great tutor.
- I think all of the programme was very helpful and helped me to understand that life is about perspectives and thoughts and that we can control most of the thinking.

### Walking

- Met fantastic and awesome friends and friendship with others
- Really enjoyed this course had a great time with my lady friends
- Brilliant experience
- Many strengths, getting out and about socialising, fresh air!
- Great fun and healthy exercise

### Forest Bathing

- Truly magical / emotional / spiritual experience
- I would say how therapeutic it is
- It's a great way of taking time out for yourself and meet new people and appreciate nature as you would have as a child
- Definitely recommend!!
- Really beneficial to your wellbeing – Great to be in a group with new people, really fantastic
- A most enjoyable relaxing experience in nature, very calming indeed.

### Pilates

- Allows me to push myself and find new strengths within a fantastic course. Teacher is brilliant and has time for everyone.
- It was a very friendly class. A lot of inspiration gained.
- I really loved this course, would do it again.
- Great new experience

### Other comments

- Just thanks to FSWC. A wonderful place xxx
- It's just fabulous what this place does for the community
- Please keep doing what you do, thank you so much x
- I love coming here.
- Thank you for helping me to get me back out there, meet people again and enjoy life
- I am so glad I found this place
- Coming through the doors I said to myself 'ah I'm home'

# Info Officer Report



## Facebook

Likes: 2580 (2022)

2700 (2023)

An average increase of  
10 likes per month



## Instagram

New Posts: 96

New Followers: 61

Following: 16



## Twitter

Tweets: 61

Profile views: 1838

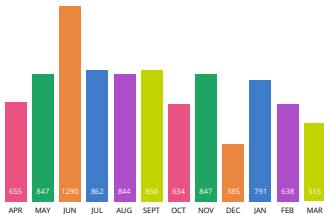
Impressions: 12062

Mentions: 35

New followers: 18

## Website Stats - April 2022 - March 2023

Average monthly visit over the 12 month period ~763 (last year's figure = 841)



### Centre Promotion Summer 2022

As the lockdowns are now behind us, we began the new financial year "returning to normal" by preparing for new leaflets & new pavement signs with our new logo, new Supermarket Promotion dates and Open Days - all in the knowledge that this could inevitably be the last year of our ESF Funding.

Leaflets were delivered to local shops and petrol stations as well as Mother and Toddler groups and front-page Tyrone Courier advertising secured.

Supermarket promotions went really well with people approaching us and wanting to get back to courses! Lockdown has made them (and everyone) more appreciative! The Open Days had a fair attendance and Carmel took this opportunity to enrol her ESOL students on those days which worked really well.

The allotment had a good tidy up and a class and tutor were organised for September 2022. The carpets were cleaned and the stairwell was repainted.

We were all looking forward to getting back to normal!



The highlight of September 2022 was the visit by the Minister of Communities, Deirdre Hargey, where we made our case of the importance of FSWC to the women in Mid-Ulster. The visit was also attended by Michelle Gildernew MP and Colum Gildernew MLA.



There was a great buzz around the place and everyone was very impressed with our facility and the interaction from our students who explained why FSWC is important to them and the women in Mid-Ulster.







In October 2022 FSWC held a "Political Breakfast" to showcase the work of the European Social Fund programme. Over 35 people attended from all major political parties including Democratic Unionist Party, SDLP, Sinn Féin and Ulster Unionist Party. All of the parties stated the high value of FSWC within the Mid Ulster community and praised its work over the past two decades.

This event was spearheaded by the Community and Voluntary Sector within Northern Ireland working together to push forward a replacement for the European Social Fund programme. First Steps Women's Centre has been in receipt of ESF funding since April 2008. Sadly this funding came to an end on 31st March 2023. FSWC lost around 45% of its overall annual funding.

However the events across the province did raise the awareness and importance of funding that worked with the most vulnerable groups.



FSWC was awarded £500 from ASDA's Green Token Giving in autumn 2022.



First Steps Women's Centre received funding for our Allotment (based in Dungannon Park) from The Donnelly Group and was featured by the Tyrone Courier.

FSWC also returned to the Rugby Club on Thursday 2nd February 2023 for our annual Fundraising Quiz. It was a great night and we made £769!



After we returned from our Mid Term Break we held a fundraising Pancake Day on Tuesday 21st February 2023 for the terrible Turkey-Syria Earthquake disaster, raising almost £1200.

# Season's at the Allotment '22-23



# Lifeskills Report

In the period **April 2022 to March 2023** there were 128 places where the attendee accepted one or more places over 19 classes which included ESOL Classes Speaking & Listening and Reading & Writing, Pre-ESOL classes, and an Essential Skills class. Class sizes ranged from 16-18 in ESOL classes to 9 in Essential Skills.

There was a total of 78 qualifications/awards achieved with an overall pass rate of 85%

## The table below shows statistics for retention

| Course               | Number started on 1st day of course | Number in course at the end of March 2023 | Percentage remaining against first day |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| ESOL Entry Level 1   | 15                                  | 11  | 73%                                    |
| ESOL Entry Level 2 M | 15                                  | 11  | 73%                                    |
| ESOL Entry Level 2 A | 15                                  | 9   | 60%                                    |
| ESOL Entry Level 3   | 15                                  | 12  | 80%                                    |
| Pre-ESOL             | 12                                  | 7   | 58%                                    |
| Improve your English | 9                                   | 6   | 66%                                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>81</b>                           | <b>56</b>                                 | <b>70%</b>                             |

We also had new participants from different nationalities including Ukrainian, Bulgarian, and Indonesian and from Eastern European countries.

## Current nationalities as a snapshot at the end of March 2023

| Nationalities        | Numbers   | Percentage of Total |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| English              | 4         | 4.5%                |
| Tetum                | 27        | 32%                 |
| Lithuanian           | 13        | 15%                 |
| Polish               | 4         | 4.5%                |
| Portuguese           | 20        | 24%                 |
| Syrian               | 3         | 3.5%                |
| Indonesian           | 5         | 6%                  |
| Slovak/Czech/Russian | 1         | 1%                  |
| Bulgarian            | 4         | 4.5%                |
| Ukrainian            | 4         | 4.5%                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>85</b> | <b>100%</b>         |

### Essential Skills

First Steps Women Centre is currently not a registered Centre for Essential Skills. However, we are currently working in conjunction with the Southern Regional College to offer both learning and qualifications in Essential Skills.

On the positive side, we had nine students in Michael Murphy's class this year, four of whom are awaiting certification, and we hope to recruit for Essential Skills Numeracy in 2023 -2024 year.

### Vodafone

This year again Vodafone donated SIM cards with free calls and data for students. They had previously helped in 2021. Students were able to use the Sim card for online training and Homework.

### Pre-ESOL

One day a week, Theresa Boyle, our Pre-ESOL tutor, worked with students who had more initial learning needs that would allow them to access Entry Level 1 and its qualification route. Some students were just new to Northern Ireland, some had a poor experience of learning in their own countries and some were lacking in confidence and would benefit from learning in a smaller group. This has worked really well for the students with those benefitting wanting to progress at the end of the year. The students were from Portugal, Cape Verde, Angola and East Timor etc.

## LifeSkills Qualifications ESOL

In 2022 to 2023 year 78 Qualifications were achieved. This represented an overall pass rate of 85%.

| Exams Taken                                    | Total Numbers Achieved | % Pass Rate Exam Entrants |
|--|------------------------|---------------------------|
| ESOL Entry Level 1 Speaking & Listening 2023   | 7/11                   | 64%                       |
| ESOL Entry Level 2 M Speaking & Listening 2023 | 8/11                   | 72%                       |
| ESOL Entry Level 2 A Speaking & Listening 2023 | 4/5                    | 80%                       |
| ESOL Entry Level 3 Speaking & Listening 2023   | 11/11                  | 100%                      |
| ESOL Entry Level 1 Reading 2022                | 8/8                    | 100%                      |
| ESOL Entry Level 2 Reading 2022                | 7/9                    | 77%                       |
| ESOL Entry Level 3 Reading 2022                | 8/9                    | 88%                       |
| ESOL Level 1 Reading 2022                      | 2/2                    | 100%                      |
| ESOL Entry Level 1 Writing 2021                | 7/8                    | 88%                       |
| ESOL Entry Level 2 Writing 2021                | 6/10                   | 60%                       |
| ESOL Entry Level 3 Writing 2021                | 8/9                    | 88%                       |
| ESOL Level 1 Writing 2021                      | 2/2                    | 100%                      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                   | <b>78</b>              | <b>85%</b>                |

# Testimonials - Participants

## ESOL Entry Level 1

- I can now speak and write about myself and family. I can write about my town and house.
- I like to meet other people, use the bus, and the women's centre.
- I like the women's centre to meet other people. Tutor is very good.
- I would like to thank you about everything (teacher, manager, and everyone working there, and I would thank you about childcare. I'm very happy to be here with you.
- I like to use the bus, childcare, tutors very good. I like the women's centre to meet other people.
- I like to learn English, use the bus, childcare. Tutors are very good. I like the women's centre.
- I like the English class in women's centre. It can help me to improve my English. I like to meet other people in the women's centre.
- I am very happy because I can understand many lessons.
- I like my Teacher, she is very patient.
- I can now make an appointment.
- I like to go to the women's centre to meet other people.

## ESOL Entry Level 2

- I like the course. I like the teachers, they explain well. When I came here, I don't know any English, now I speaking, listening, reading, writing.
- I like the people in the class.
- I would like to study more speaking. I like to learn with vocabulary and dictionary.
- We have good discussions; the teacher is very good.
- Good teacher, I like to meet new people.
- The teacher explains well.
- I like to practice speaking in a group, to make a conversation and to have a discussion.
- The strength of this course is that I can write, read, listen and understand and speak better English.
- This course really helped me to learn English.
- I am very happy on this course.
- I can learn and practise at home, work or anywhere.

## ESOL Entry level 3

- I am happy to participate in this class. It is very interesting and I learned a lot of new things.
- This course is helping me find a job, helping me to communicate, learn spelling and meet others.
- For me everything in Women's Centre is good and people are very friendly.
- I think the content of the course is developing my writing and speaking.
- I like the course and I have developed a lot in a few months.
- Content of the course can help me with speaking well and using grammar to make sentences.
- A lot of new words, excellent grammar, building sentences. English needed for talking, reading and writing.
- This course is good for me - all good talking, reading and exercises.
- I like learning English - and how the teacher is presenting it.
- I like to work within a group.
- It's really helpful for us to improve our English and help us to find a job too.
- We can ask the questions and our tutor is willing to answer. All resources provided for us.
- I can talk more in English communication with people around me.
- I like that there is a certificate and qualification at the end.



ESOL Tutor Louise Cameron with some ESOL students receiving their pass certificates

### ESOL Level 1

- I'm happy how the course is going. We're learning a lot of reading, writing and speaking.
- We're learning ways to use tenses.
- Atmosphere is great but I miss tea breaks.
- Everybody has a chance to talk and is asked often.
- My problem is lack of time and the problems I'm facing now, but I really want to improve.
- They provide childcare, and transport, it's very good.
- The teacher is professional, classes are clearly, well explained, she is very patient!
- Every lesson we get new materials, it means that every lesson we learn something new
- Tutor organisation and presentation are very good.

### Improving Your English Skills

- I feel that I have improved my English especially in my ability to write and express my views
- Definitely recommend to all. Great place and great people. Mr. Murphy has been amazing
- Brilliant place to be
- I felt towards the end I wanted to quit as I was not ready due to my life being very tough. The tutor would not allow me to as he encouraged me to do it as he knew I could. Now I am doing well!
- I enjoyed the class a lot, good atmosphere and our teacher Michael is an amazing man, very calm and kind as always
- The strength of the course is a friendly tutor and good delivery of the lessons but I am so missing tea breaks.



Senior Nurse Nulagh Hanna, Vaccination team with some ESOL students

# Testimonials - Questions

## 1. How did you feel about learning English before you started First Steps Women Centre?

Before I made the decision to learn I wasn't sure but I wanted to have a better standard of English to look for a job. I was excited to learn. I love English and learning a new language. When I first came to Northern Ireland I was afraid meeting people but now I can speak some English I am not so afraid. When I first went shopping I didn't know what the shop assistant was saying to me and I couldn't reply to her. The first few days learning English at the centre I was nervous but I got better and better.

## 2. How did you feel during the programme?

I loved the programme. I learnt a lot and my teacher was great I met other girls and had conversations with people from other countries and they really helped me to improve my English. I am currently learning Speaking & Listening Reading and Writing. I enjoyed coming to class twice a week and I felt comfortable with the teacher and centre staff.

## 3. Do you like the Women's Centre? Do you have childcare or use transport?

I have both childcare and transport support. My daughter is very happy with the creche. The Women's Centre is a good place for those who want to learn and it not expensive like the College. The bus driver is a very friendly man.

## 4. What are the strengths of the course. Is it a good Course? Is the tutor a good teacher?

The course is a very good course. The teacher is understanding, patient and wonderful. I am happy to be here. I feel like I am learning something new every day. The course is really good for beginners but there are all levels. I like talking to others in pairs and doing the class worksheets.

## 5. What have you learnt here?

I have learnt Speaking & Listening, Reading and Writing. I have learnt new words, spelling and grammar. I have learnt new English skills and got confidence to speak English. We learnt plurals, singular, simple present, simple past, verbs etc.

## 6. Did you make new friends? Where they from other countries?

I have made many new friends especially two lovely girls, one is from Poland and the other is Lithuanian. I have other friends from East Timor and Indonesia, and Portugal.

## 7. How do you feel about the end of the Course? What will you do next year?

Next year I want to continue with the programme and learn more English. I am very glad I decided to come to the Centre. I hope to pass my exam this year and start a higher level in September. In the Summer holidays I will miss everybody as they are like a family to me.





### 1. How did you feel about learning English before you started First Steps Women Centre?

Before learning English at the Centre I did not feel very confident talking to people. I tried to learn English on line but it did not work for me. In the centre I can learn from my tutor and my colleagues and other people. I feel confident now speaking to people from other countries too.

### 2. How did you feel during the programme?

During the programme I felt good as I was learning a lot of new things in English. I felt happy because the programme helps me to improve my Reading and Writing as well as my Speaking and Listening.

### 3. Do you like the Women's Centre? Do you have childcare or use transport?

Yes, I do. I have childcare here for my little son. My son has friends at the creche. At home he only plays with his Mummy and Daddy. The transport helps me get to the centre with my son. I like it when it is raining.

### 4. What are the strengths of the course. Is it a good Course? Is the tutor a good teacher?

The strengths of this course are that the staff are friendly. It is better than learning on line as learning is face to face. The teacher encourages the students to be confident when speaking English. I like that the students come from different countries and we are sharing our cultures. It is easy to make friends here. I would recommend it to anyone.

### 5. What have you learnt here?

I have learnt Speaking and Listening. I have learnt about tenses, grammar, writing letters and I also completed a food safety course.

### 6. Did you make new friends? Where they from other countries?

In my class I have made a lot of new friends. I really like our group of students. They are kind and helpful. I will continue to be friends with them on other courses. I have two new friends one is from Poland and the other is from the Ukraine.

### 7. How do you feel about the end of the Course? What will you do next year?

Next year I want to continue with the programme and learn more English. I am very interested in Photography and would like to do this. I think it was a good decision to come here and I would like to continue my course to the next level.

# Transport Report

## April 2022 - March 2023

**Total passengers:** 1096  
**Total mileage:** 2706  
**Total runs:** 624 approx.



# Accounts Report

## Statement of Financial Position (balance sheet) as at 31 March 2023

|                                       | Note | 2023<br>£      | 2022<br>£      |
|---------------------------------------|------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Fixed assets</b>                   |      |                |                |
| Tangible assets                       | 13   | 349,454        | 379,101        |
| <b>Total Fixed Assets</b>             |      | <b>349,454</b> | <b>379,101</b> |
| <b>Current assets</b>                 |      |                |                |
| Debtors                               | 14   | 50,760         | 46,285         |
| Cash at bank and in hand              |      | 344,427        | 344,347        |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b>           |      | <b>395,186</b> | <b>390,632</b> |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                    |      |                |                |
| Creditors falling due within one year | 15   | 5,277          | 3,453          |
| <b>Net Current assets</b>             |      | <b>389,909</b> | <b>387,179</b> |
| <b>Net assets</b>                     |      | <b>739,364</b> | <b>766,280</b> |
| <b>The funds of the charity:</b>      |      |                |                |
| Unrestricted income funds             | 16   | 174,073        | 180,290        |
| Designated Reserves                   | 16   | 150,000        | 150,000        |
| Restricted income funds               | 17   | 415,291        | 435,990        |
| <b>Total charity funds</b>            |      | <b>739,364</b> | <b>766,280</b> |

## Income from charitable activities

| Income from charitable activities                                   | Restricted Funds<br>2023<br>£ | Restricted Funds<br>2022<br>£ |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| European Social Fund / Department for Economy                       | 271,472                       | 272,716                       |
| CIF - Match Funding: Department for Communities                     | 38,903                        | 35,642                        |
| Department for Communities - WCCF                                   | 37,051                        | 38,242                        |
| Mid Ulster District Council - Strategic Community Development Grant | 11,814                        | 6,800                         |
| The Pathway Fund  | 15,000                        | 15,000                        |
| TEO (MEDF)  | 40,373                        | 26,331                        |
| DoH - Prep for Work   | 2,789                         | 2,803                         |
| Clear/HSC   | 5,669                         | 4,226                         |
| TESCO (Ground Works)  | 1,125                         | 1,000                         |
| CIF - Non match Funding: Department for Communities                 | 26,993                        | 26,888                        |
| DoH HWSB  | -                             | -                             |
| Garfield Weston Foundation  | 30,000                        | 30,000                        |
| The Volant Charitable Trust   | -                             | 17,300                        |
| Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)                                      | 2,250                         | 2,000                         |
| TEO (GR)  | -                             | 17,435                        |
| The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust                                  | 3,000                         | 3,000                         |
| Mid Ulster District Council - Community Development                 | 6,100                         | 2,500                         |
| ASDA Foundation   | 500                           | -                             |
| Screw Fix   | 4,300                         | -                             |
| DFC CIF Funding - Energy Grant Funding (22/23)                      | 1,500                         | -                             |
| The W.G Edwards Charitable Foundation                               | 1,520                         | -                             |
| Choice Housing  | 3,100                         | -                             |
| Apex Housing  | 4,380                         | -                             |
| B&Q Neighbourly   | 3,000                         | -                             |
| The Edward Gestling Foundation                                      | 5,000                         | -                             |
| Co-operation Ireland Small Capital Grants                           | -                             | 1,398                         |
| Ecclesiastical - Movement for Good                                  | -                             | 1,000                         |
| Arnold Clark Community Fund   | -                             | 1,000                         |
| Mid Ulster District Council - Business Marketing Grant              | -                             | 300                           |
| AMAZON SMILE/Royalties  | -                             | 1                             |
| CFNI - Sir George Earle Benevolent Fund                             | -                             | 1,600                         |
| CFNI - Wesleyan Assurance Fund                                      | -                             | 9,950                         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>515,841</b>                | <b>516,321</b>                |

| Income Allocated to Capital Grants | Restricted Funds<br>2023<br>£ | Restricted Funds<br>2022<br>£ |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| DoH - HSC - Childrens Partnership  | 1,947                         | -                             |
|                                    | <b>1,947</b>                  | <b>-</b>                      |

## Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

|   | 2023           | 2023          | 2023           | 2022           |
|---|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
|   | Total          | Unrestricted  | Restricted     | Total          |
|   | £              | £             | £              | £              |
| Wages and salaries                      | 280,963        |               | 280,963        | 263,961        |
| Redundancy Payment                      | 54,390         | 54,390        | -              | -              |
| Staff T&S /Expenses                     | 3,732          |               | 3,732          | 3,448          |
| Staff training and recruitment          | 2,959          |               | 2,959          | 942            |
| Facilitation & Events                   | 4,162          |               | 4,162          | 472            |
| Exam Fees                               | 1,529          |               | 1,529          | 3,863          |
| Participant Travel                      | 1,391          |               | 1,391          | 1,998          |
| Participant Training & Course Materials | 371            |               | 371            | 2,579          |
| Volunteer Expenses                      | 1,040          |               | 1,040          | 843            |
| Interpreter Services                    | 40             |               | 40             | -              |
| Rent and Rates                          | 15,971         |               | 15,971         | 16,099         |
| Light and heat                          | 14,159         |               | 14,159         | 5,725          |
| Telephone                               | 2,920          |               | 2,920          | 2,961          |
| Printing, postage and stationery        | 2,966          |               | 2,966          | 3,247          |
| RC - Printing/Stationary                | -              |               | -              | -              |
| IT support                              | 3,787          |               | 3,787          | 3,099          |
| Motor expenses                          | 1,568          |               | 1,568          | 1,637          |
| Repairs and maintenance                 | 9,063          |               | 9,063          | 6,553          |
| Insurance                               | 4,826          |               | 4,826          | 3,064          |
| Small Equipment Purchase                | 643            |               | 643            | 2,250          |
| Creche Equipment                        | 2,478          |               | 2,478          | 2,103          |
| Subscriptions                           | 346            |               | 346            | 540            |
| Accreditation Fees Application          | 750            |               | 750            | 740            |
| Health and Safety                       | 124            |               | 124            | 81             |
| Donations to other Charities            | 987            |               | 987            | 50             |
| Emergency Assistance                    | 2,780          |               | 2,780          | 2,551          |
| Misc Expenses                           | 1,493          |               | 1,493          | 46             |
| OC - Deferred Funding                   | -              |               | -              | -              |
| Advertising                             | 2,300          |               | 2,300          | 4,204          |
| Course Expenses and tutor fees          | 44,403         |               | 44,403         | 47,940         |
| Participant comfort expenses            | 920            |               | 920            | 459            |
| <b>Support Costs</b>                    | <b>65,404</b>  |               | <b>65,404</b>  | <b>63,797</b>  |
| General expenses                        | -              |               | -              | 198            |
| Depreciation of tangible assets         | 31,762         |               | 31,762         | 35,584         |
| Refunds                                 | -              |               | -              | 72             |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>560,229</b> | <b>54,390</b> | <b>505,838</b> | <b>480,869</b> |

Restricted Expenditure on charitable activities for 2023 £505,838 (2022 £480,869).

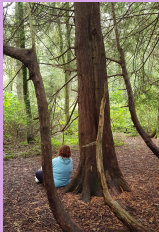
# External Evaluation

An independent external evaluation was carried out in November-December 2022. The aim of this was to collate and highlight the impact of the Centre. The best way to appreciate the Evaluation is to review and read over some of the comments made by the evaluator and also the testimonials of those women who participated.

The impact of attending courses at FSWC is vast, from gaining qualifications and accessing work to being a "lifeline" for women who are struggling with various negative life situations. For many women, FSWC has been the significant constant of support which has enabled them to survive, manage and live life beyond the sometimes extreme difficulties impacting on their lives. The impact of FSWC is via participation in the courses but more importantly through FSWC being a person centred organisation that provides a friendly, safe place where women are made feel welcome, regardless of their age, nationality, culture and/or social circumstances.

Staff are highly professional and reflect the person centred approach in their caring attitudes and actions and respect for all who attend FSWC, encouraging, supporting and valuing participants as individuals and encouraging them to participate via the various learning opportunities available.

In conclusion, FSWC is an extremely important, welcoming and safe space in Dungannon that provides an opportunity for women within the Mid Ulster area to be supported, personally develop and make vital connections with others and the wider community. FSWC is widely recognised as a valuable community resource.



# Statements of Impact

Individual respondents provided statements as to why FSWC is / has been important to them. These statements are grouped in common themes in relation to impact as follows:

## All-encompassing impact

*"FSWC has allowed me to meet new people, learn new skills, and has probably been one of the most crucial aspects of bouncing back after COVID and lockdown. I don't know what I would do without the centre and its fantastic staff."*

*"My 1st time at the centre I wasn't in a very good place, 5 years on I don't know where I'd be if I didn't go that first day."*

*"I have been a stay at home Mum, that thought she was getting freedom before covid poked his head into our world. My confidence in even having an adult conversation was at rock bottom. I lost also work friends, mummy friends etc as life moved on, so taking a step towards this great place helped me so, so much. I took the Creative Writing course first as its times worked for me. I found an outlet and from actually speaking proper sentences, writing proper sentences I also met some likeminded people."*

*"Difficult to quantify in words the benefit First Steps Women's Centre has made to my life, wellbeing and connection with local community. Due to attending confidence and wellbeing courses I have gained knowledge, techniques and new friends allowing me to cope better with health and family issues."*

*"It's been a pleasure to be part of this family. I've enjoyed every course I took, and I can easily say that it changed my life."*

*"It has helped me to deal with my husband's life threatening illness."*

*"I had closed myself off and when I took the leap to join a course in FSWC I wished I had of done it sooner. It became my wee time for me heaven."*

## Improved Mental Health

*"Got me out of bed."*

*"It's helped my well-being when I was a bit lost."*

*"I'm so happy I found this place. This is my mental health relax place."*

*"It gets me out of my house and my head."*

*"Very important with my mental health after I came through some very difficult years in my life."*

*"Gets me out of the house."*

*"I was made redundant last year, after 25 years in the same job, which badly affected my confidence. The courses at First Steps really helped me with my anxiety and lack of direction, and I was able to get back into work again."*

*"... given me back my majo."*

*"It has really improved my mental and physical health and give me a reason to leave the house."*

*"Coping with partners depression and how to maintain my own wellbeing. First Steps has made a difference to how I cope/deal with daily difficulties."*

*"Important for my mental health to get out and meet people and make friends I wouldn't have been able to make if First Steps didn't exist."*



## Improved English and Related Impact on Life

Many respondents made reference to the importance that FSWC has on enabling them to improve their level of English. Some expanded upon this and provided insight as to the impact that this has/had on their lives.

*"First Year in 2019 I came to Northern Ireland I didn't know English at all. I had problems when I went shopping because I didn't understand what the cashier said. After learning English at FSWC I'm confident to speak in English."*

*"For me being at First Steps Women's Centre was one of the best choices I've made since I got here, it's helping me a lot in my insecurity, in my fear of talking to people here in Northern Ireland. It's very important for me to continue to learn from you. For me, it made me greatly improve my pronunciation in English, made me have more self-confidence."*

*"The English language course was very important for me because it helped me communicate with the population of this country and with friends from different countries."*

*"I don't know how I first entered Northern Ireland. Yes, speaking when you answer people's questions - for me it's good to be able to answer people's questions."*

## Improved Self Worth/ Value and Zest for Life

*"Most importantly I have got my own identity back, I like myself again and I now realize that self-care is one of the most important areas of your life to look after."*

*"It has given me time for just myself to chill and relax."*

*"It's made me feel more motivated and confident and I have learned many new skills and aware of self-care importance."*

## Increased Confidence

*"First steps helped to increase my self-confidence when I was feeling very low. I was taught brilliant skills which helped me to negotiate what was a really difficult time."*

*"My confidence has improved, I'm now meeting people for the first time in 5 years, has helped me see that nothing is impossible."*

*"It's been a lifeline for me, without it I wouldn't be able to even have the courage to fill in this form. They have given my life a meaning of self-importance. Nothing is too much, if I have a problem they have the time and tools to help."*

*"It has improved my self-confidence and gave me a chance to socially interact with others."*

*"It helped build my confidence and taught me how to say no to people."*

## Increased skills, knowledge and impact on work

*"Before coming to the Centre, I had been out of work for several years. At FSWC I was able to learn new skills, making me more employable, and meet new people, which increased my confidence."*

*"It has enabled me to take on more roles in my current employment. Increased my potential to secure a better job in the future as I have more skills now to apply."*

*"Learning new things while having fun."*

*"Helped me to get back to work."*

*"Building up my confidence and through this services I can engage with local people and get the job."*



## Importance of Meeting New Friends and Reduced Isolation

*"It has been so vital to my wellbeing allowing me despite health issues to connect with others, make new friends, learn new coping strategies and feel not isolated but part of a local community. Invaluable things really!"*

*"I've made so many friendships & they're everlasting. We enjoy doing stuff outside the centre which has enhanced our lives & outlook on life."*

*"As I live on my own, it's my main means of meeting other people."*

*"It has helped with the feelings of isolation that I was trying to cope with."*

*"I have met some lovely people who I now consider friends."*

*"I have met a variety of people of various ages and nationalities and have really enjoyed doing so. This isn't possible when your children have all left home and you no longer have to collect them from school or sports, which is how most people meet."*

Combined extremely important and very important survey responses indicate the following factors as being priority:

Informal, friendly learning environment - 96% of survey respondents

Courses take place during the day - 82% of survey respondents

Affordable, low-cost courses - 80% of survey respondents

## Reasons for not considering courses or programme participation elsewhere

A common theme within the individual reasons given for not attending courses/programmes elsewhere focus on health and wellbeing.

*"I know and feel safe and secure in I would be very reluctant/anxious about changing. This would impact on my anxiety and wellbeing."*

*"First Steps is such a welcoming and caring environment, and I am in the early stages of confidence building, that I would be reluctant, for now, to try elsewhere"*

*"As a retired disabled and living alone person. I lost my husband in a horrific accident in 2012. Lots of people think I am over it. But nothing is further from the truth. I am now able to attend some course's and would be keen to attend courses that would helpful for me."*

*"Because my disabilities are restricting first steps is a brilliant chance for me to meet up with women from different backgrounds and feel 'normal'."*

*"I would find it stressful to change and probably would not due to anxiety."*

*"I would be anxious and stressed going to other local centres... First Steps is the only women's centre in my area where I and other women of all ages, beliefs, circumstances and nationalities can meet in a secure, safe and empowering environment."*

*"I enjoy the secure feeling of First Steps."*

*"I feel comfortable in the environment and I cannot see myself applying or looking elsewhere."*

Other reasons given for not participating in courses or programmes elsewhere also make reference to courses/programmes being available at suitable times and in an affirming environment

*"The courses are based around the time schedule of a woman's life. I could not imagine going into my local College, with lots of younger individuals, I am getting too old for that! It is also lovely that FSWC has small groups, so you can build your confidence and voice, something else that's impossible to imagine in a College."*

- support for women who do not have English as their first language

*"... here I feel comfortable and they understand very well my English situation is not good and they take good care of my child while I study there. and course fees are very affordable"*

#### **Additional Respondent Comments**

34% of respondents who provided additional comments used this opportunity to express their gratitude and thanks for FSWC and to the FSWC staff. Staff are acknowledged as being extremely kind, support, helpful and friendly. Several respondents made reference to the need for ensuring the continuation of FSWC as it is recognised as a vital community resource.

*"If it was up to me places like FSWC would have an unlimited funding and had as many members of staff to help many, many women. There are still so many in the community that cannot make it to the centre and need to so access for them would be something funding could help with. All I know is the contented smiles on the Ladies I meet. Long May it be able to continue."*

*"This is a much needed service in the area and helps women from all backgrounds to come together and learn in a stress free friendly relaxed place."*

*"It's a great place for women of all ages and backgrounds, they provide learning and other activities in a supportive environment, it would be a shame to lose this valuable community resource."*

*"I wish we had a centre like this in Armagh. I would highly recommend doing courses at this centre."*

*"A warm, welcoming, helpful centre, it's been crucial for many women in Dungannon."*

*"I enjoy First Steps and hope it continues to serve the community for many years to come."*

*"This is a most valuable and worthwhile service which benefits a very wide range of people. Young, elderly, lonely and stressed all can benefit for a very wide range of reasons. The local community need this now more than ever. Many thanks to facilitators and organisers."*

*"First Steps Women's Centre deserves to be recognised as a whole for its work and dedication to women and the community."*

# Funders 2022-2023



*"I was broken and First Steps Women's Centre helped put me back together again."*



**first  
steps**  
Women's Centre  
Support. Educate. Empower.

