

Croom

Family Resource Centre



Annual Report 2023

Presented to the Board 1st July 2024

CROOM FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE Croom Mill, Church Road, Croom, Co. Limerick

CHAIRPERSON STATEMENT

Croom Family Resource Centre is an exciting and dynamic organisation to chair.

The strong work that has been undertaken by the family resource centre for the year 2023, is testament to its commitment to community and needs led response. Family resource centres aim to provide services to the whole community from the newest members through to our older populations and every person in between, and Croom FRC is no exception to this. Now extending across three sites, and providing vital services across the population of Croom, the enhancement of the service offering this year is clearly evident throughout this annual report..

This report is a key document in demonstrating Croom FRC's commitment to the residents of Croom and surrounding areas and clearly speaks to our vision of bringing quality and relevant services to rural populations in a timely and quality manner.

I wish to acknowledge the dedicated staff team, funders, wider stakeholders and trustees in making this report possible and ensuring the work of Croom FRC continues to grow on an annual basis.

Finally, I wish to say a warm thank you to all of the community members who put their trust in Croom Family Resource Centre every day when accessing services within the FRC and whose continued presence have made the organisation a true hub of the community.

Kate Stoica

Chairperson



The overall objective of our Croom Family Resource Centre

To strengthen and empower children, families and vulnerable individuals within the community by providing support suited to their needs. The core of these services is tailored around the needs of local people, families, and children / young people, through the provision of childcare support (Clever Clogs Childcare Services), parent and family support service, young adult programmes, therapeutic supports (Croom Therapy Hub), education and training programmes, senior services and community development programmes / initiatives. In addition, information and health supports are provided daily to those most in need (e.g., Croom FRC's Nourishing Community Project – Food poverty supports, drop-ins, period poverty).

Croom FRC is committed to shaping its operations by putting the community at the forefront of all aspects of the centre.

Croom FRC is core-funded by TUSLA and is part of the National Family Resource Centre (FRC) programme, Ireland's largest National Family and Community-based support.

Charitable Purpose

- To support families and promote community development in Croom and Ballingarry and the surrounding areas by providing pre-school and after school facilities, family supports, adult training and second chance education.
- To facilitate other community groups to access space and to deliver services primarily at our centre in Croom.

Management & Staffing

The Board delegates the day-to-day management of Croom Family Resource Centre to the Manager. In 2023 Croom Family Resource Centre employed 8.5 FTE.

6 staff were employed in Clever Clogs Childcare Service and 4 staff in under the Core FRC programme.

In 2023, Croom Family Resource Centre supported three 3rd level students on placements (TUS).

We supported 1 Youth Employment Support Scheme participant (DES).



Directors / Trustees during 2023

- Kate Stoica (Chairperson)
- Trina O’Dea (Secretary)
- Sean Sweeney (Treasurer)
- Caroline Fitzgerald (Director)
- Sandra Kacperowska (Director)
- Aine Mckillican (Director)
- Anthony Kelly (Trustee)

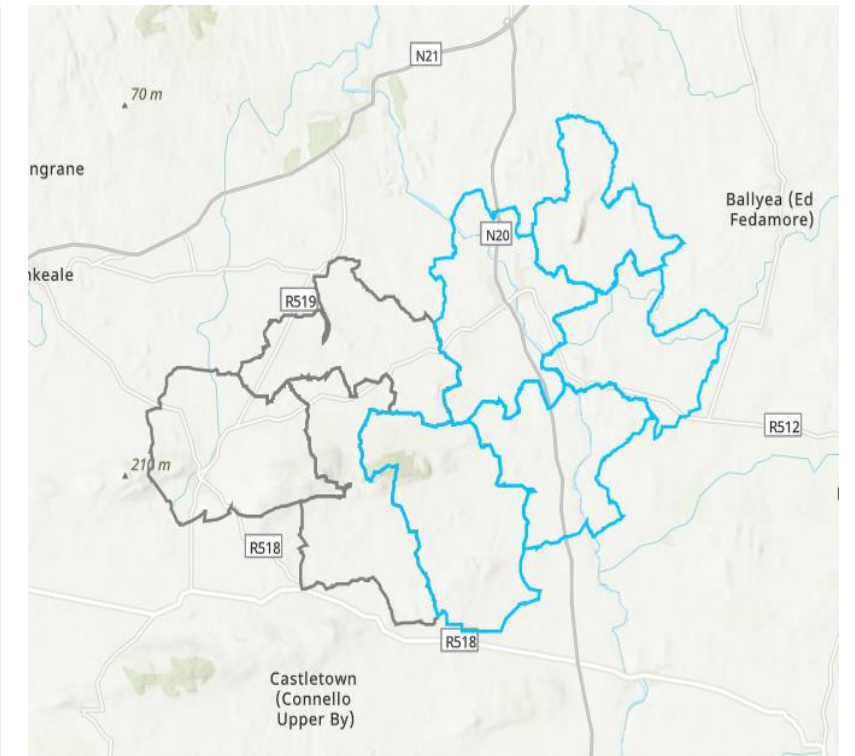
Governance



The board meet a minimum of six times per year and met six times in 2023 with 70% attendance in addition to the AGM. Conflict of Interest and presentation of management accounts are agenda items for all Board Meetings.

Catchment Area & Bases

Croom FRC’s primary catchment comprises of Abbeyville Electoral Division (ED), Ballynabanoge ED, Coolrus ED, Croom ED and Garrane ED. This catchment had a total population of 3,458 in 2022. The secondary catchment comprises of Ballingarry ED, Ballgrennan ED and Kilfinny ED. This catchment had a total population of 1,580 in 2022. The total population of the combined catchment area is **5,038 people**.



Croom FRC

Croom Mills



Clever Clogs

St, Marys Old National School

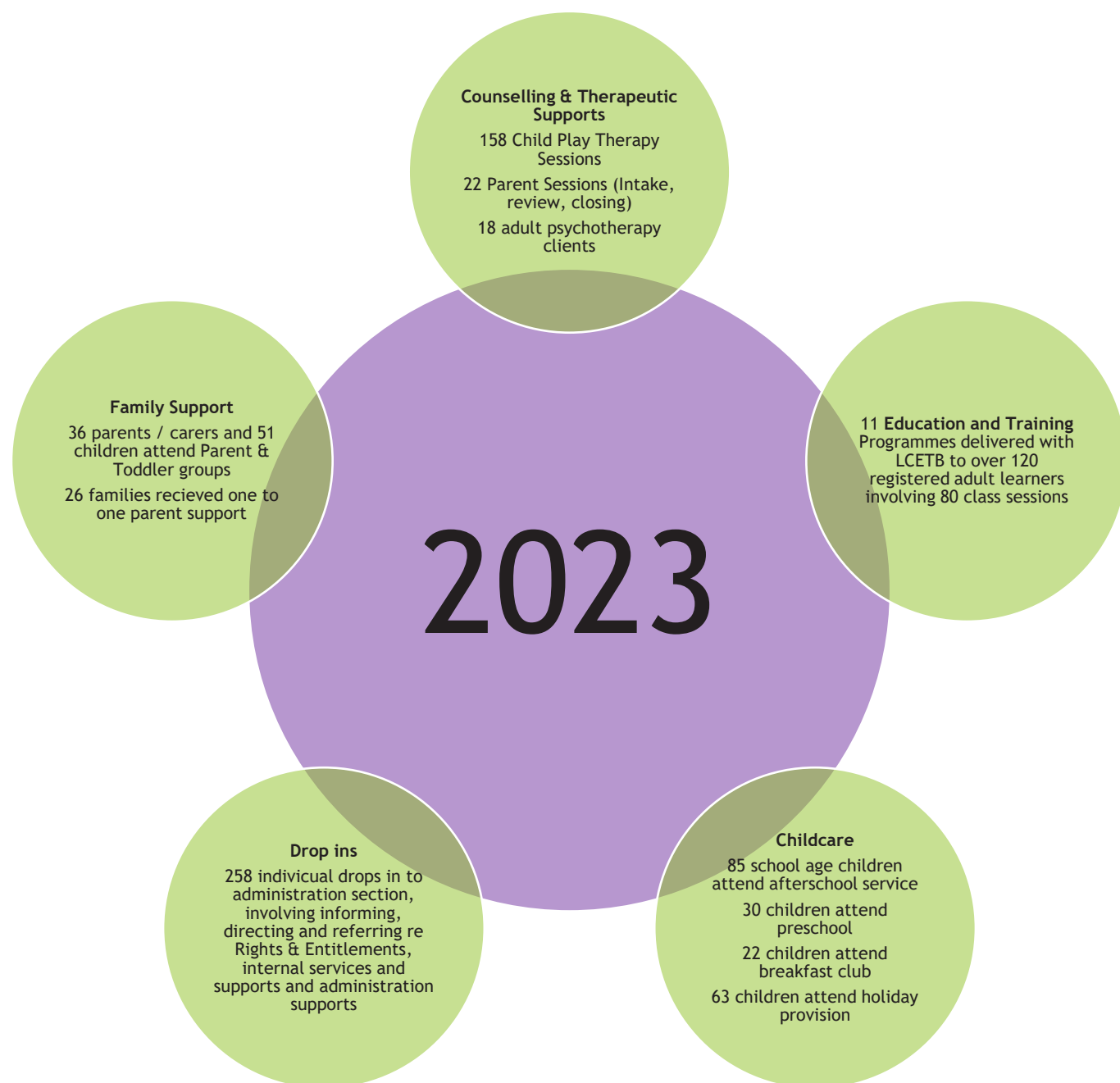


The Old Library

Ballingarry



Snapshot of some key outputs / achievements 2023



1. Education & Training

Croom FRC provides Education and Training programmes in partnership with Limerick and Clare Education and training Board (FET). In 2023 the following accredited and non-accredited courses were facilitated in Croom FRC to over 120 adult learners with 90 classes facilitated in our centre.

- Payroll QQI Level 5
- Special Needs Assisting QQI Level 5
- Painting & Drawing (Croom & Ballingarry)
- Genealogy (X 2 courses)
- Mindfulness
- Chair Yoga (Ballingarry)
- Basic Computers
- Health & Beauty
- Community Singing

Croom FRC takes a key role in

- ✓ Identifying education and training need and interest
- ✓ Advertising and recruiting adult learners
- ✓ Registering learners on the FETCH registration portal
- ✓ Supporting learners in their education journey
- ✓ Liaising with tutors and LCETB FET staff



2. Counselling & Therapeutic Services



With one off funding from Tusla (December 2022) and FRC National Forum - Recovery & Resilience fund (HSE)¹, Croom FRC delivered a reasonable level² of Therapeutic support in 2023. Croom FRC in partnership with Hospital FRC provided the Gambling Addiction Therapy service from our centre. Despite funding uncertainty and constraints Croom FRC delivered,

- ✓ 158 Child Play Therapy Sessions
- ✓ 22 Parent Sessions (Intake, review, closing)
- ✓ Refit of dedicated Child Play Therapy space
- ✓ Adult Mindfulness & meditation Programme (7 sessions)
- ✓ 2 Child Music Therapy Programmes (delivered in our preschool)
- ✓ 2 Child Yoga Programmes (delivered in our preschool and afterschool)
- ✓ 18 adult psychotherapy clients
- ✓ Weekly GAT sessions

In 2023 we focused on revising our model of Therapeutic Service delivery and updating our counselling policy and procedures in **readiness** for funding opportunities that support us to implement a sustainable and expanded therapeutic service that meets the need and demand we have monitored (more detail in next section). Croom FRC's revised Counselling Policy was approved by the Voluntary Board of Management (23/10/23)

¹ [Recovery & Resilience Final Report Feb. 2024 - Family Resource Centres Supporting Children after Covid 19.pdf](#)

² Reasonable in relation to demand. Croom FRC continues to see a high demand for community based accessible and affordable therapeutic supports in our communities. Croom FRC continues to struggle with increasing waiting lists due to demand (adult and child therapy).

Clinical Governance & Service Expansion Developments

In September 2023, Croom FRC was invited by Tusla Commissioning to join a group of FRC's in exploring and developing the concepts of 'Therapy Hub' and 'Enhanced Therapeutic Services' in the FRC setting. Croom FRC produced an ambitious business case to Tusla of service offering for our catchment area. This has resulted in a 'set up' phase in Q3 of 2023, working towards the employment of a dedicated 'Therapeutic & Clinical Lead' 2024.

The Therapeutic & Clinical Lead will oversee Croom FRC's therapeutic offering ensuring strong clinical governance and management.



In October 2023, following an application and assessment process Croom FRC became an Associate member of AACPI (now Community Therapy Ireland).

Community Therapy Ireland is a national association of services who provide professional, affordable and accessible counselling & psychotherapy across Ireland.

- ✓ Community Therapy Ireland hosts events, workshops, and seminars for members.
- ✓ Advocates for and build the profile of members at a national level.
- ✓ Provides a data management system.
- ✓ Supports and bolster strong clinical governance.
- ✓ Provides practical governing and operational good practice and procedural guides, templates and resources

3. Clever Clogs Childcare Service

Clever Clogs Child Care Service, based in St. Mary's Old National School (on the grounds of Croom National School) provided children and their families from Croom and its surrounding areas, a safe, welcoming, stimulating, age-appropriate environment.

The below table indicates the numbers of children registered in each of our services over 2023.

2023	Preschool	Afterschool	Breakfast Club	Midterm Camp	Summer Camp
January – March	19	70	20	27	
April - June	20	71	22		
July					Week 1: 22 Week 2: 36 Week 3: 36 Week 4: 36
September - December	18	70	21	18	

- ✓ Clever Clogs, a Community Childcare Service, core funded through Pobal (DCEDIY), operates a low fee policy and implements the following childcare schemes for families in our area³:

The National Childcare Scheme
 AIMS (Access and Inclusion Model)
 ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) scheme
 CCSP (Community Childcare Subvention Plus).

- ✓ All of the children moving on from Preschool in Clever Clogs (January – June 2023) transitioned to Croom National School. Clever Clogs continues to act as a key link between children, families and the local school community.
- ✓ In 2023, the Childcare Manager successfully introduced TeachKloud management software to the service, a system that provides a management interface, care and education features, family partnership and professional development supports.

Some of the highlights of the year across Clever Clogs services include

- ✓ The introduction of Community Music and Therapeutic music provision with the children in Preschool and Afterschool
- ✓ The introduction of Child Yoga to Preschool and Afterschool
- ✓ The second successful delivery of a dedicated summer camp for older primary school age children 10-12 years (supported by Limerick & Clare Education and Training Board Youth Work summer grant)
- ✓ The continued strong relationship between Clever Clogs Childcare Services and Croom National School in supporting the educational and care needs of children and families accessing our services



³ <https://www.limerickchildcare.ie/schemes/>

4. Community Development

Croom FRC adopts Community Work Ireland’s definition and values of community work. Community work, “a developmental activity comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights, and the process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision making in a structured and co-ordinated way”⁴

Having fully moved into our new premises of Croom Mills in 2023 enabled us to have a high and vibrant programme of groups, activity and initiatives that fall under our community development umbrella. In particular having access to space after hours has enabled us to respond to a demand for evening provision in the community (as highlighted in our strategic plan consultations 2022), with the delivery of evening and night-time programmes and activities including, kids movie nights, mindfulness, meditation, lifelong learning week events, creativity workshops and the development of a weekly community singing group – Croom Local Vocals in September 2023.



Achievements under our Community Development umbrella include

- ✓ Supported by grant aid from the Bank of Ireland Cost of Living fund (Community Foundation), Croom FRC implemented the **Croom Nourishing Communities** Project in

⁴ [What is Community Work - Community Work Ireland \(cwi.ie\)](https://www.cwi.ie/)

2023. Over 150 people have been directly impacted by this project and key achievements include

- The delivery of Healthy eating workshops with young children from Clever Clogs afterschool where they got to learn about how to make healthy meals and treats like a smoothie. They also got to learn about the food pyramid, and take part in fun food quizzes.
- The development of a Community Food Bank in Croom FRC with Mid-West Simon (to be operationalised 2024)
- We have grown direct food supports for vulnerable individuals and families in our catchment area (doubling our support)
- The project supported our local primary schools (X 2) with back-to-school packs (targeting 6th class and the local afterschools clubs)
- We also linked with our local secondary school with back-to-school packs in partnership with the Home School Community Liaison Teacher



- ✓ Croom FRC was supported to delivery a **Period Poverty Initiative** in 2023 with grant support from the FRC National Forum (Healthy Ireland, DoH). Through this initiative Croom FRC was enabled to implement the following actions

- Free period product dispensing machines are now installed and stocked in our centres in Croom Mills & Ballingarry Outreach (reaching a footfall of approximately 600 people per week). Foroige Newcastlewest (reaching an estimated 60 teenage girls) Foroige Croom reaching an estimated 60 -100 teenage girls)
- 20 teenagers were targeted for Teenage Period Packs to further enhance accessibility of product and information, and the educational needs of teenagers locally
- 45 women attended Menopause Awareness events and availed of Menopause Packs and sanitary products
- Croom FRC has reached out on our social media about Period Poverty and the actions of this initiative.



✓ Awareness Days, Celebratory Events, Information Workshops

Croom FRC has delivered, supported and participated in many community events over 2023, with our Mague River Room synonymous with a warm welcome, tea and good food, friendship and community cohesion. Some of the events of note over 2023 include

- International Women’s Day #EmbraceEquity – Croom FRC held a series of events including a presentation to learners on our Healthy Food Made Easy Course, input from Primary care practitioners and a coffee morning.
- Limerick Pride 2023 – Croom FRC delivered a community t-shirt printing workshop, and joined our fellow FRC’s from the Midwest region to march in Limerick Pride 2023
- Barn Owls of Ballyhoura Workshop – Croom FRC was delighted to host Ballyhoura Development and the Barn Owl Project and meet Erin their ambassador Owl
- In partnership with Croom Men’s Shed, Croom FRC held a Big Coffee Social morning in aid of Milford Hospice raising €1,167
- Mental Health Ireland’s Hello How are you campaign – Croom FRC delivered a morning boxercise class and river walk followed by teas coffees and chats.



✓ Older Person’s Supports

Older Person’s support continues to be a growing area of demand for Croom FRC. In 2023, within limited resources we provided a suite of services with and for older persons in our community. Croom FRC is monitoring a daily demand for supports for older persons (from social and recreational needs, advice and guidance, referral and signposting supports e.g. independent living supports, education needs (e.g. digital supports) and poverty supports (in particular food poverty)).

With limited grant aid from the HSE older persons fund and Age & Opportunity, Croom FRC delivered weekly Chair Yoga and initiated a new dance programme with Dance Limerick in 2023. In addition we facilitated weekly groups such as Croom Knitting Club and Growing Young group. We incorporated outings and trips for our older population into our programme of activity (e.g. Bloom 2023).



5. Parenting & Family Supports

- ✓ Croom FRC’s Family Support Worker facilitated two weekly Parent and Toddler Groups to 36 parents / carers and 51 children in 2023

Croom Parent and Toddler Group (Tuesday mornings, Croom Mills)

Ballingarry Parent and Toddler Groups (Wednesday mornings, Ballingarry)

Programme delivery included:

- Messy Play - 4 sessions in each group
- Outdoor Play - 2 sessions in Croom
- Zumba -2 sessions in each group
- Yoga - 3 sessions in each group
- Input from HSE (Health Service Executive) - Speech and Language Therapist - 1 visit to each group
- Summer party and Christmas party
- Sensory Play
- Visit from MAM rep to inform parents on bottle feeding, cups and weaning
- ‘My Holistic Midwife’ workshop on 4th Trimester, self-care for mothers post-natal



- ✓ The Family Support Worker meets with parents, typically weekly on a one-to-one basis following referrals to the Family Support programme. The Family Support Worker works with parents using evidence-based parenting programmes and offers internal and external referrals for parents and children when necessary. The below table is a summary of the *one-to-one case load* of the Family Support Worker during 2023.

Case Load Jan – Dec 2023	Referral Pathways / Agencies (external)	Referral Pathways (internal)	Issues Presenting	Engagement Methods	Cases exited during reporting period
26 Families	HSE Social Work (2) School (4) Self-Referral (12) Political Rep (2)	Croom FRC (6)	Homelessness Child Health Displacement Financial Difficulty Advocacy Child Behaviour Bereavement /Suicide Anxiety Additional Needs	One to One parenting Play therapy. Links to external agencies (citizens info, council)	0
Total Case Load 2023					Total Cases exited 2023
26 Families					0 Families

- ✓ Family Focussed Programme delivery included

Baby Massage

3 x Health Food Made Easy programmes with food poverty follow up service



- ✓ Child Focussed Programme delivery included

A joint outing to Croom local park of both Parent and Toddler groups to meet/greet/walk and socialise

Lifelong Learning Week (STEM workshops with Mary Immaculate College Creative Arts & Future)
Early Childhood Learning in partnership with ABC Start Right Speech and Language to provide books to Parent and Toddler groups to promote and encourage literacy skills

- ✓ Parent focussed Programme delivery included

Two Self-Care for Parents Workshops

Caring for your wellbeing with SHEP

Mum on the Move Programme – 6-week physical exercise programme with Limerick Sports Partnership

16 days of action 2023 – Coffee morning
 Health Promotion workshops
 Essential Oils workshops



6. Drop In Supports



Croom FRC's Administration section, recorded 258 individual drops ins to Croom FRC, involving information, direction and referral in areas such as

- ✓ Rights & Entitlements
- ✓ Internal services & supports
- ✓ External referral pathways
- ✓ Administration supports

(this data does not include phone or email contacts, or contacts made directly / taken by other staff / external services)

7. Supporting Additional Community Provision

Croom FRC has invited and provided space in our centre to other community, voluntary and statutory providers in ensuring heightened accessibility to our rural communities to additional support services.

Groups and services who operated from our centre in 2023 include

- Adapt Domestic Abuse Services Outreach Programme
- Alcoholics Anonymous (twice weekly in person evening meetings)
- Citizens Information Clinic (monthly drop-in clinic)
- Grow Support Group (weekly in person daytime meeting)
- HSE Living Well Programme
- HSE Drug & Alcohol Services
- Northstar Family Support Service



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www.croomfrc.com



Croom Family Resource Centre CLG

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