

PRESS RELEASE

Date: 29th March 2018

INNOVATIVE CROSS-BORDER PARENTING PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

‘Shaping Ourselves and Our Children’ (SOOC), an innovative cross-border parenting programme will be launched on Thursday 29th March. The SOOC programme which is supported by the EU’s PEACE IV programme and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) was developed by the Lifestart Foundation and its partners - Lifestart Services Ltd, Sligo Family Support Centre, the Dunluce Family Centre, Barnardos and The Junction.

The launch will take place at The Junction, Bishop Street, Derry /Londonderry and guest speakers at the event will include Dr Sarah Millar, Senior Lecturer Queens University, Belfast, Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body, Maria MacInnes, Child and Family Agency, Peter Walker, Social Inclusion Unit, Health Service Executive and Dr Pauline Mc Clenaghan, Executive Director Lifestart Foundation Ltd. The event will be chaired by Ursula Birthistle who chairs the SOOC project cross-community Steering Group.

The SOOC programme aims to support parents of young children to create a home conducive to good child social and emotional development, inclusiveness and a respect for social and cultural diversity. The project partners will deliver 240 interactive SOOC parenting programmes within nine areas of Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of the Republic of Ireland. The recruitment of parents to the programme will begin in April 2018. 2,880 parents and their children from Protestant, Catholic, Black, Minority and Ethnic backgrounds will benefit from the participating in the SOOC programme.

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: **“The cycle of mistrust, division and fear can be passed from one generation to the next. This project will help to break that cycle by delivering a child development and cultural diversity programme, where parents will learn how their behaviours and parenting styles can impact upon their children’s development. What better way to deliver upon one of the core objectives of the PEACE Programme than to support**



people affected by the legacy of the conflict. The project will ensure that children learn from their parents to embrace difference and diversity,” she continued.

-Ends

Notes to the Editor:

- The Special EU Programme Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland
- The Lifestart Foundation and Partners has been awarded €1,279,917.28 under the PEACE IV programme for the SOOC project.
- The Lifestart Foundation is a charitable body with 30 years' experience in the delivery of quality parenting education and family support. The Lifestart mission is to produce better child development outcomes by making available to parents evidence based knowledge and information on how young children develop and learn. Our mission is implemented through the delivery of the *Growing Child* programme and home-visiting service to the parents of children from birth up to pre-school or school entry. The *Growing Child* is an evidence-based and outcomes focused programme grounded on strong empirical research on child development and parenting. It was designed by child development experts and it was empirically tested in Ireland through an independent Randomised Controlled Trial involving 424 parents and their children, which proved conclusively that Lifestart works, significantly improving parenting attitudes and practices and improving child development outcomes.
- The Growing Child programme is delivered by Lifestart Service providers in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland who employ family visitors trained and quality assured by the Lifestart Foundation to the highest quality standards. For more information on Lifestart see our website www.lifestartfoundation.org