



Thirty Years of the
Talbot Centre



Acknowledgements

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Talbot Centre 2014

Sincere thanks to all staff past and present who contributed to this work, to service users and to services we work with in the north inner city community.

This booklet is dedicated to all those who have used our service, and to their friends, families and loved ones, including those who are no longer with us,





"The staff in the Talbot Centre have been at the fore-front in identifying the changing nature of drug use and behaviours of young people in the North Inner City over the last 30 years, and ensuring that the service adapts to meet these needs and at the same time ensures that they provide ongoing advocacy supports for the young person and their family and at the same time ensures that they provide ongoing advocacy supports for the young person and their family.

When you walk through the door of the Talbot Centre, you are met with a warm, calm and welcoming atmosphere. The staff are professional, empathetic and hugely committed to their work. There is a healthy scepticism and intelligent filtering of what work needs to be prioritised by the staff in the service and the young person and their families always come first. My lasting impression when I leave the Talbot Centre is a sense of reassurance of what is being provided there and I know this is what young people and their families must feel when they leave to go back into the chaos they have to face.

I wish all the staff in the Talbot Centre all the best for the next 30 years, keep up all the good work particularly in times of adversity. You have shown what is effective and what works and there is much we and other services can learn from you. It has been a privilege to have been connected in a small way to the Talbot Centre and its staff".

Dr. Siobhan Rooney, Consultant Psychiatrist in Addictions Clinical Lead, HSE Addiction Services, Dublin North Central

"Congratulations to all involved in the Talbot Centre on your 30th anniversary! from NYP2!. In my experience the Talbot Centre has been a service that cared in a truly human way for all the young people we referred to it over the years. I have found the staff to be not only professional and competent but also genuinely concerned and interested in the young people they work with and I wish you all the best for the next 30 years and beyond!"

Fergus Mc Cabe, Project Leader, Neighbourhood Youth Project 2, formerly National Advisory Council on Drugs





Mission Statement

The Talbot Centre is committed to developing supportive relationships with children, young people and their families whose lives have been affected by drug and/or alcohol use in the North Inner City.

History & Vision

The Talbot Centre is now thirty years old and is the longest established drug education and prevention project for young people in Ireland. In 1983, *"The Talbot Day Centre... was set up by the Eastern Health Board in response to requests made by a local committee. They were concerned by the rapid increase in the number of young people in their area abusing drugs..."* (Donohue and Richardson 1984). A number of services were being provided at that time to address adult drug use, including the Drug Advisory and Treatment Centre, Jervis Street Hospital, Coolmine Therapeutic Centre and the Ana Liffey Project. There was however little provision for the treatment and prevention of drug use amongst young people.

Aims

Out of this need, the Talbot Centre was established. The purpose of the Centre was:

- » *To work with young people at risk of drug use,*
- » *To facilitate those already using drugs to critically examine the serious consequences of their drug use in order to stem the progression into dependency,*
- » *To engage with those already involved in chronic drug use,*
- » *To act as a resource to the local community by participating in the community response to the drug problem and by sharing our experience in the area of prevention education (Annual Report, 1997).*

In 1993, a research paper evaluating the early years of the project noted that, *"while the aims of the Centre have not varied significantly over time, the actual methods employed to realise these aims have been continually modified in a progressive*



manner, ensuring a flexible response to adolescent drug misuse in the face of changing needs" (Gallagher 1993: 7). This document *After the Talbot Day Centre*, evaluated and assessed the impact of the day programme on former participants, noting that the variable that most influenced service users, was the 'relationship' they had with staff members. Its conclusions and recommendations formed the basis, and provided an impetus for developing the programme in later years. "Developing supportive relationship" with service users is still the key focus of our work as articulated in our mission statement.

"For my family the Talbot is a safe haven. My first impression was cosy, warm and the oul cuppa (always good for the brownie points). No joking aside, the work they do. My daughter said "Ma they're people like us". We had been to so many hospitals all SO clinical. Now for the heavy bit, lol. The way the staff do, far more than is in their job description. My key worker well my daughter's key worker (I'm robbin her), with the help of the Centre I've been able to tell her, she's doing well, still at school, still going to the Talbot"

Mother of girl attending



Art work by father and son attending



Evolution & Milestones

The day to day operation of the **Talbot Day Centre** of 1983 bears little resemblance to the **Talbot Centre** of 2014, yet the core aims, client group, and ethos remain the same.

The Talbot Centre's Annual Reports have articulated some of its key milestones and shifts in emphasis during the past thirty years.

» ***From a full day programme to a sessionally based programme***

In the late 1980s, Government-funded job training and skills for living programmes, such as ANCO, (now known as FÁS) and Youthreach were established. Through liaising with various agencies, Talbot Centre staff recognised the positive value of service users attending these schemes. Accordingly, the Talbot Centre programme was adapted and offered on a sessional basis to those involved in school, training courses and jobs, facilitating staff to focus on prevention education, counselling and rehabilitation.

» ***From primarily focusing on the individual using drugs to focusing on the family and wider system***

Experience at the Talbot Centre suggests that successful intervention with young people using drugs is linked to the level of engagement of the family and / or significant others. Through systemic intervention, we facilitate family members and agencies working with the young person to recognise recurring patterns of interaction, to see how the presenting problem is maintained and to consider how best it can be resolved. In the supportive context of therapy, we draw upon the family's resources so that each member is helped to see how they are affected in living with substance misuse and the options open to them.

» ***From a centralised service to a community resource service***

Since its inception the Talbot Centre accepted referrals of young people from the greater Dublin area. A policy decision implemented in 1995, to accept referrals only from within our catchment area, Community Care Area 7, with a particular focus on the north inner city area, facilitated the project to become more of a resource in the local community. This was in response to the escalating drug problem in the area.



▶ **Moving from Eastern Health Board (EHB), Community Care Area 7, to EHB AIDS/Drugs Service (now the HSE Addiction Service)**

In 1997, the Talbot Centre was transferred from the Community Care Programme (which it had been with since 1983) to the AIDS/Drugs Service. Given the objective of the project (to support and empower young people at risk of or engaging in problematic drug use and their families), this shift was appropriate. In practical terms, it involved the expansion of our catchment area to include all of the Local Drug Task Force Area.

▶ **A Stronger focus on Prevention – Family Work with Children at Risk – the Family Intervention Programme**

*The original focus of the Talbot Centre was primarily to work with young people referred because of their problematic drug use. Experience informed us of the need to strategically expand our work with children not using drugs but considered at risk. The Annual Report 2000 notes a development in prevention work, focusing “more strategically on younger people and children most at risk. to explore how to make connections and how best to work with those most at risk.... The **Children’s Club** was initiated in 1999 with a view to working with children whose parents used the City Clinic service”. Evaluation of this Club noted positive interaction with the children, however the involvement of parents was very limited. Thus we decided to maintain informal contact with the children, and to refocus by working intensively with a small number of families. **The Family Intervention Programme** (see Annual Report 2002-2012) thus emerged and has been developed and consolidated since then.*

“The Talbot centre forms an integral and essential part of this community. In supporting and advocating for those whose lives have been affected by addiction, the Talbot Centre gives families a safe space to work through the challenges in their lives. The Centre works collaboratively with the school by providing school based and out-of-school support to vulnerable pupils as they grapple with the fallout from addiction in their families.”

Darina Burke, Principal, Rutland National School





Work of the Talbot Centre A Multidimensional Collaborative Response

The social, economic and educational contexts of disadvantage which leave young people vulnerable to becoming involved in drug use, overshadows the world in which families live in the north inner city (Haase & Pratschke, 2012) and therefore the work of the Talbot Centre. Research, evidence and experience, tells us that such complexity requires a sophisticated multidimensional collaborative response. (Carr, 2009., Haase & Pratschke, 2010., McKeown, 2000., Smith et al, 2008., Horgan, 2011., DHC & HSE, 2005 etc).

For this reason the Talbot Centre is involved in a multiplicity of ways at various different levels with children, young people, their families and their community. As a consequence of this Talbot Centre staff work collaboratively with housing, legal, health, social, employment and educational agencies on behalf of service users. Thirty years of experience and reflection of working with vulnerable children, young people and their families, has taught us that there is no simple single way of working with complex realities. In practice we do this by putting our resources into:

1. *Prevention Work with children/young people at risk and their families*
2. *Working with young people using drugs and their families*
3. *Community Interaction and participation*
4. *Educational Work*

Prevention Work with children/young people at risk and their families

Intensive and ongoing work with families continues in 2014 through the Family Intervention Programme, with long-standing and newly referred families. The nature of this work involves relationship development and intensive interventions over relatively long periods of time (Action 29 and 41 National Drug Strategy 2009-2016, Mc Keown, 2000, Morgan, 2001). This means that the level of involvement with some families, children and young people at certain times, requires extra responsiveness and attention drawing deeply on the Centre's resources. (Action 34 NDS 2009-2016).



"As Family Support Workers, we couldn't do our work with families without the Talbot Centre. It is a unique service which has been shaped by the staff as well as the people who attend the centre. This anniversary evokes so many memories and stories of families we've worked with together over the years. All the Talbot Centre staff are well known in the community, and know the community well. You are consistent, passionate and compassionate and see all people as a value to the community."

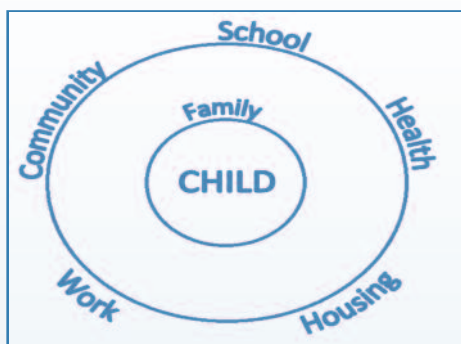
Addiction and perceptions of addiction can isolate individuals from participating fully in family life, community and society. Also, the links you've built with the prisons enables you to do a very special type of work. I can think of no better advocates for individuals and the community than the entire Talbot Centre staff. Your service provides a familiar, friendly and safe environment and you understand all the connections people have (positive and not so positive) which make them who they are. Because of the time and patience you put into building relationships and trust, people know there is no judgment and they come away feeling valued and respected."

I don't think a building could be any more in the inner city than the Talbot Centre is and it is reassuring for people who attend the Centre as well as their family and friends to know that you are accessible. We know that anytime we need advice, or a response in relation to a family or for a listening ear, you are always there. And if you can't help with something (which hardly happens), you always have really sound advice."

Ramona Riley, Manager and Family Support Worker's team

"Going back two years ago my eldest son was going down the wrong road, getting into a lot of trouble. I thought to myself how am I ever gonna save him from all this trouble, till one day I told my care worker all about this. So she got me in touch with the Talbot Centre. Ever since he's been attending, he's come a long way and he has been out of trouble since he's attended it. I thank all the staff at the centre, they could'nt have done a better job."

Mother of boy attending



(Bronfenbrenner 1994)

Working with young people using drugs and their families

Young people using drugs are not initially enthusiastic customers. Developing relationships with them requires an understanding of their world; their interests, worries, anxieties, practical and personal needs. Patience, empathy, a non judgemental disposition and perseverance are essential for maintaining connections. The worker is involved paradoxically, in a pull and push dynamic by linking with them at a personal level, and also with those who have influence, including family, peers, school/educational setting, probation, social workers, community workers, juvenile liaison officers etc. Linking into their world through home, street, and prison outreach is thus integral to this.

"At the age of 14 years I started to use drugs. I rebelled following the death of my Nana (she was such an important person in my life). At around this time I started to drink & take tablets. I needed to shoplift to pay for my habit. I was then referred to the Talbot Centre for support about my drug use and for some bereavement work regarding my Nana's death. Over the years I got to know the staff really well and they have gone out of their way to help me the "addict" and my whole family. I realised that my passion was art. Completing art helps me feel good and allows me to express my feelings did some art therapy sessions in the Talbot Centre. I attended every week for 18 weeks and I loved it. They help me nowadays with my children. Each week I spend quality time there with my boys. I want to thank the staff from the bottom of my heart".

24 year old Mother linked to Centre since she was 15 years



"My first involvement with the Talbot Centre was in the summer of 2001. I had been assigned the case of a young man from the Dublin 1 area, who had a long history of drug problems and related offending behaviour. This young man was serving a sentence in Mountjoy Prison at the time, but was due for release in the autumn of that year. When I met him in Mountjoy he told me that he was working with an addiction counsellor from the Talbot Centre. Naturally, I contacted the counsellor and we agreed to meet.

On arrival at the Talbot Centre I was immediately taken with the sense of calmness within its walls. Although the building is unremarkable in appearance, there was no doubting the positive ambience which was apparent from the moment one entered the premises. We went down to the kitchen and sat over a cup of tea, chatting about the young man in question. During our discussion I was hugely impressed with the level of intervention that was taking place. It was clear that the counsellor in question had developed a very strong connection with the young man and his partner and in doing so created an environment in which an extremely good working relationship was formed. My involvement with this young man finished after he successfully completed his period of supervision and I have always believed that his success was largely due to the support he received from the Talbot Centre.

In the years since this initial visit I have referred numerous clients to the Talbot Centre and worked with many others who have already been engaging with the service. I have enjoyed many a fruitful chat over a mug of tea in the kitchen, while discussing a case or simply looking for inspiration or a new approach to a difficult case or a challenging client. In many ways my own professional development has been enriched by these contacts with the Centre.

I believe the Talbot Centre is a valuable resource for both the people who live in the north inner city as well as the professionals who work in the area. Within its walls it contains a storehouse of knowledge and expertise and some of the most skilled advocates I have ever come across. Although the building itself may appear quite unremarkable, the service within is anything but. Nice one."

Neil F McFadden. Probation Service



"As a parent of an addict I thought I could cope alone. Staff at the Talbot Centre encouraged me to try get some counselling. I wondered what counselling could do for me. After two years of convincing me to try some counselling I attended some sessions. I used to cope by drinking alcohol, I don't do that anymore. I learned what drugs can do to the family and how an addict's behaviour affects the family. I changed how I see the situation. I am still living with a drug addict but I manage much better now. I'm less frustrated nowadays. My advice to any parent is not to be ashamed. Go get some counselling especially since in some services it's free. It's not just for the rich".
Father





"Myself and my family's first experience with the Talbot centre began in and around 2007/08. I entered into recovery from drug addiction and criminality in 2005 and engaged in the process of trying to re-create my life and rebuild the damage I had inflicted on others especially my children. My son started to get into trouble with the police and I began to witness the damage I had caused him and my daughter when they were growing up. They as children had experienced some horrific things while growing up and I would have taught them all the wrong values and morals. I started to see the pain they were in and that they had been really traumatised from the way that I lived my life as I had been a wrong role model for them in their development.

I was linked in with a service called Soilse which was supporting me in my recovery, I was really struggling being a parent and coping with life. I used to go in and talk with the manager of Soilse who I trusted and we discussed how I was really anxious being a parent and was riddled with guilt and shame I had attached towards my children. I also had a big fear that my son and daughter were going to go down the wrong road in life as my son had already been involved with the police and in the court system. The manager of Soilse suggested that I start linking in with the Talbot Centre to support myself and give my children the space to discuss their past trauma and to develop new coping skills for their future life.

My son began to attend there when he was 13 and I would accompany him to his counselling sessions and would collect him when finished. At first he was very resistant to attending the Talbot centre but I kept bringing him weekly and over time he developed a relationship with his counsellor who was very understanding and gave him the space to talk through issues. He began to start to trust his key worker and began to change bit by bit. He did well for a period and he had a keen interest and talent in soccer and the Talbot supported him with his interest.

He then lapsed back into criminality and was getting back in trouble with the Garda and the court system. He then went to detention centres and we were later to discover that he had a problem with substances and was addicted to snow blow. He was sentenced to a year in prison and his Talbot Centre key worker linked in with him in St Patricks on a regular basis and he began to see the errors of his ways, and let him see the things he wants from life. That has been over two years ago, and he has been doing well, still playing football at a high level and also just about to begin a job.

My daughter also linked in with the Talbot centre and this helped and supported her in dealing with the past. We also did family therapy there where we all attended and gave everyone the time and space to have their say which we all benefited from. My family and I owe a lot to the staff of the Talbot centre which helped and supported us to rebuild the broken relationships we had with each other and introduce us to the family we always wanted to be."

Father Anonymous




Thirty Years Working in the Local Community and in Prevention Education

The Centre was first established in response to a community initiative. In turn, over the years the Talbot Centre has contributed and been involved in various community development initiatives such as the V and S Committee (Voluntary and Statutory). Later Talbot Centre staff engaged and contributed to the establishment of community resources such as Crinan, and networks such as I.C.O.N (Inner City Organization Network) Y.P.A.R. (Young People at Risk Group) and the Inter Agency Drugs Project (precursor to the Local Drug Task Force) subsequently participating in same.

"During its 30 years, the Talbot Centre has made an outstanding contribution to the community, not just through the essential services that it provides for young people and their families, but also through the commitment shown by the Centre to working in partnership through the community networks such as YPAR and Citywide. The Talbot Centre has made a huge contribution to these networks through its willingness to share its knowledge and expertise with others and 30 years on it continues to play an active role in developing new approaches to improving life for our families and young people affected by drugs. Well done"

Anna Quigley, Citywide



***If it is too narrow to
Work with the Child or Young Person in isolation from the Family
It is too narrow to
Work with the Family in isolation from the Community***



"The Talbot Centre team truly are as one with the community and they display a contagious desire to assist those who seek a better life for themselves and their loved ones. My experience at the Talbot Centre showed me the value of a community based approach to effectively tackle and improve the lives of persons and families affected by alcohol and drug addictions. The Talbot Centre team effectively network with other local agencies and services to best serve their community."

Tom O'Riordan, Student Placement Merchants Quay/UCD, Addiction Studies 2013

Over the years the Talbot Centre has developed a collaborative inter agency work ethos with teams in local community, voluntary and statutory agencies. Multi disciplinary, inter professional and inter-agency work, has included collaborating extensively with services such as:

- ▶▶ N.Y.P.1 (Neighbourhood Youth Project) through *A Parents Education Group, Respite Breaks* family trips and family holidays, *Christmas Hampers* coordination and distribution.)
- ▶▶ Social Work Department supporting and organizing *access visits* (at the Talbot Centre and elsewhere) *with children*, (attending the Talbot Centre) who are in foster care and the care of their parent(s).
- ▶▶ Young People At Risk group, using the YPAR protocol to ensure coordinated integrated response for the young person and their family.
- ▶▶ Crinan and SASSY – joint education prevention and interventions with young people.
- ▶▶ St. Patrick's Institution, Oberstown Girls and Boys Units, Trinity House, with *Young people in custody* from the north inner city.
- ▶▶ Larkin Community College, St. Laurence O'Toole 2 (SLOT2) with *Potential early school leavers* and providing educational programmes in local Primary Schools, Youthreach Centres and Community Training Workshops (see Education Work).

"It has been an absolute privilege for us to have the opportunity of working and liaising closely with such a vibrant and responsive service that responds to the needs of young people and their families in such a unique and distinctive way – with real professionalism that is underscored with genuine compassion and commitment. This has been consistently marked out during the years by the trust and confidence demonstrated for the Talbot Centre by the young people themselves, their families and the expansive network of other agencies within the north inner city community. We would also like to thank all of the staff in the Talbot Centre for their constant generosity in sharing their expertise and experience which we hugely appreciate and we send you our very best wishes for all your endeavours in the future."

Paddy Ormond, Project Leader, NYP1



Education Prevention Work

Since 1983, the Department of Education and Skills has funded the position of Education Worker at the Talbot Centre. This was an innovative and creative approach at that time, through integrating education and health, and it has played a pivotal role in the development of the Talbot Centre. SAOL Project has administered this position in recent years. Formal prevention education work in line with best practice has shifted over the years from working directly with children to up skilling professionals who work with children / young people (Doody, 2008). In recent years, the Education Worker has delivered numerous Drugs Awareness Prevention Education Programmes on the basis of identified need to a wide range of services including:

Learning Together Working Together: an inter-agency drugs awareness training the trainers programme which the Centre has been running since 1996, for local agencies who work with young people in the North Inner City. The course brings together local voluntary, statutory and community workers, with a view to developing an inter agency, collaborative approach to substance use, and help participants recognize and respond to substance use in their client group. A primary goal of the course is to facilitate networking and interaction between agencies.

"Our service has benefitted from the Learning Together Working Together training, of which all staff have only positive things to say. This is achieved through the sharing of knowledge and of relevant information, including adapting to changes in the community, and by meeting other people and having perceptions challenged."

Ramona Riley, Family Support Service



Drugs and the Teacher in the Central Model School and Rutland National School:

The purpose of this programme was to facilitate school staff to explore the personal, corporate and practical implications of what it means to be a teacher in a community significantly affected by substance misuse. The programme invites teachers to carefully examine their role in the community response, while updating their knowledge base, and providing necessary skills to assist in their work with pupils and families

Youthreach Centres (North Great George's Street and Sherrard Street) providing:

A five week training programme with young people using a small group facilitation model and a drug education programme with staff from both Centres. The focus with trainees is both on prevention and harm reduction.

Drug Education Week 2014

As part of the celebration of 30 Years of the Talbot Centre, the Education Worker has organised a Drug Awareness Week in collaboration with Home School Community Liaison Officers in local schools. Preparation for this has included providing: materials and a manual for teachers, staff training, parents drug and alcohol awareness programme, and an art competition involving children in nine local schools.



Thirty Years: Reflection and Vision for the Future

Thirty years of reflection on experience has taught us that:

- » There is no simple single approach to working with complex realities.
- » The social, economic and educational contexts of disadvantage which leave young people vulnerable to becoming involved in drug use, constantly overshadows the world in which people live in the inner city, and therefore the work of the Talbot Centre.
- » The interpersonal/informal relationships established between staff and service users are still the most important variable in terms of facilitating change.
- » Struggle and stretching are integral to the process of growth. It is challenging at a personal and professional level to maintain energy for this work in the midst of an environment characterised by social and educational disadvantage and sometimes extreme violence. Supervision and teamwork is core to remaining dynamic and enthusiastic.
- » Working and reflecting together as a team within the Centre gives energy to go forward clearly grounded in the scope and limitations of our brief. By learning and working together as a team we are empowered to advocate on behalf of those who use our service.
- » The networks, connections and supports that we make through our work in this community, with voluntary and statutory agencies give sustenance for the journey.

To remain real and relevant the service as this report testifies, has continued to change and develop and not remain static. Part of the charm and strength of the Talbot Centre is that it is still small (there are six staff) and it is based in what could be a family home, where the atmosphere and ambience is "*homely*".



Present and Future Challenges and Direction;

- ▶▶ Staying small with consequent limited resources, challenges us to remain sharply focused in terms of our brief, while at the same time maintaining the core ethos of working in a qualitative and systemic way. Ongoing staff training and supervision are important elements of team development.
- ▶▶ Work with children at risk through the Family Intervention Programme should continue to be developed.
- ▶▶ Engage with “new communities” as need arises as part of our development.
- ▶▶ Continue to run on an annual basis the “training the trainers” drug awareness educational programme, Learning Together Working Together and relevant educational programmes in school and other educational settings.
- ▶▶ Continue to work in a collaborative integrated manner with relevant agencies so as to offer those who use our service a richer coordinated response to their needs.
- ▶▶ Continue to work with, and advocate on behalf of children young people and families affected by drug and alcohol use in the north inner city. The recent Review of the Dublin North East Addiction Service, which recommends that addiction services should treat “all addictions (including alcohol and stimulants)” and develop ‘specialty services... for Young People and Families” (Pilling and Hardy. 2013: 4-5) is welcomed.

“The Talbot Centre plays a unique role in the HSE DNC Addiction Service in that the focus of the project is on supporting young people using drugs while also providing education/prevention and family support for those living with individuals with addiction. I commend the work of the centre and their dedicated staff who have worked tirelessly and empathically with the North Inner City community to assist in developing a partnership approach to respond to the growing drug problem that remains an issue in the area. Unfortunately today the Talbot Centre work remains relevant because the number of drugs available for misuse has grown and in addition there is a problem associated with alcohol misuse. The need for awareness and education of the harms associated with substance misuse remains essential. I wish the staff well and congratulate them all for their dedicated work in this very difficult area.”

Tom O'Brien, Addiction Service Manager, HSE DNC



Staff Talbot Centre 2014

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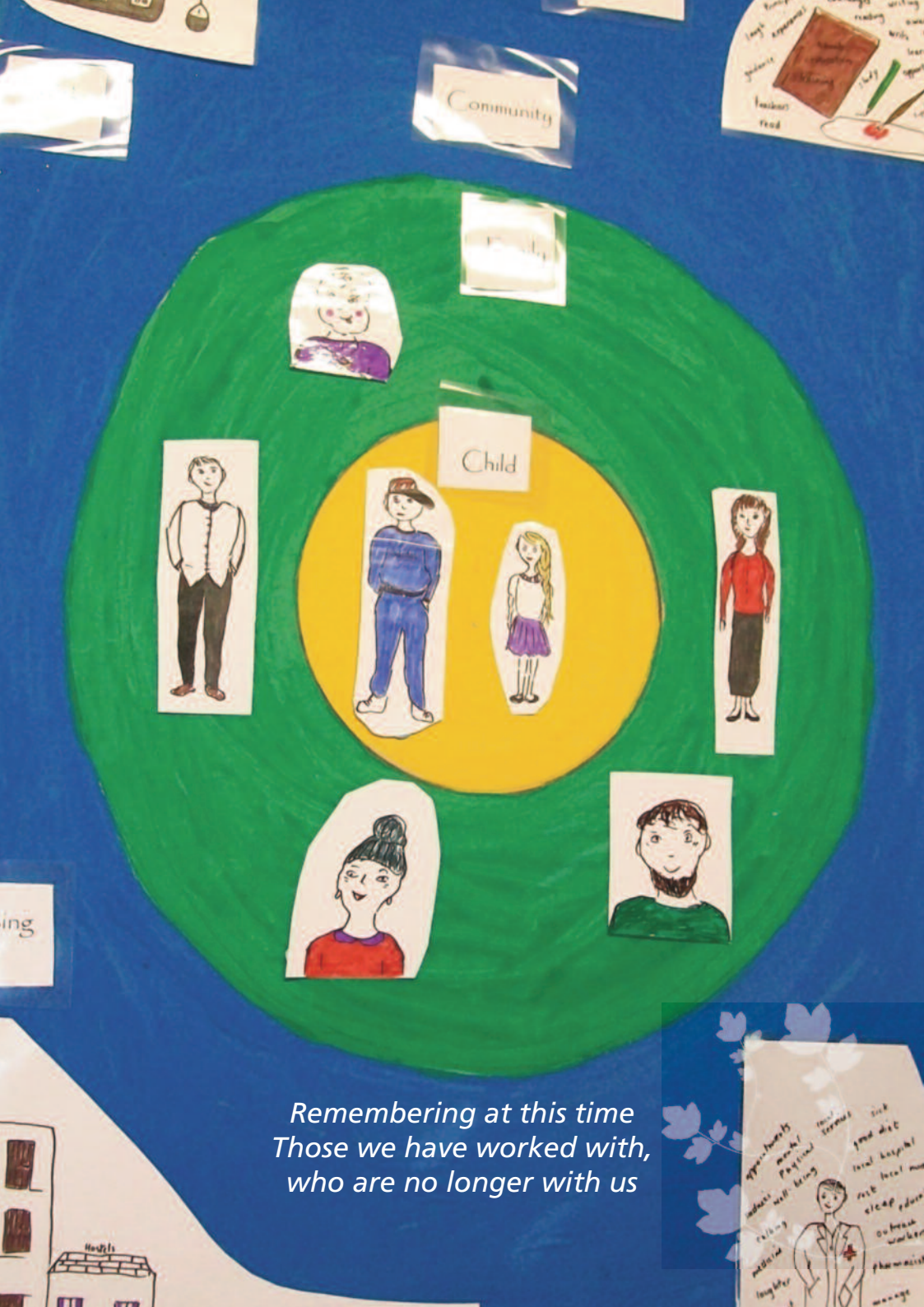




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Community

Child

Remembering at this time
Those we have worked with,
who are no longer with us

apprentice
nurse
pharmacist
manager
cook
postman
local hospital
local man
sleep
Graham
worker
pharmacist
manager

ing

