



KOALA
North West
Supporting children
& their families

2020-21 IN A SNAPSHOT!



WHAT ARE WE MOST PROUD OF THIS YEAR?



We adapted our services quickly to the COVID-19 restrictions, offering support on Zoom or WhatsApp calls



We smashed our community fundraising target



We're reaching more people than ever through our new social media platforms



We launched our Sleep Support Service – supporting 97 families in our first year



We boosted our offer to volunteers



82%

of parents reported an improvement in their children's emotional health and wellbeing following our support during the pandemic

92%

of parents who took part in our Kind Words and Play course reported improvements in their child's behaviour

9 IN 10

families who took part in our Sleep Support programme said their child's episodes of waking at night had decreased or stopped



A QUICK WELCOME FROM BEV

In April 2020, after two decades as 'Home-Start Wirral', we made the decision to leave the Home-Start UK network to relaunch as Koala North West, with the aim of broadening our services and extending our reach.

Our first year as Koala NW has been heavily shaped by the pandemic. COVID-19 put extra pressure on families – and also on our volunteers, who are at the heart of many of our programmes. The lockdown restrictions have required us to think creatively to make sure we could continue to build relationships, support families and train volunteers while we couldn't meet in person.

Despite the additional challenges, it's been a great year of growth and learning. We've adapted quickly, added eight new staff members to our team, and delivered against every area of our strategy to support 1,042 families and 1,321 children. Although it's been a tough and an incredibly busy time, I've no doubt that the insights and experience we've gained will shape and strengthen Koala NW for the next 20 years.

Thanks for taking the time to read about our year.

Bev Morgan
Chief Executive



I have enjoyed every moment of this course. I have gone from feeling ashamed of myself to believing I can do anything. Home life with my boys has changed for the better, it's a lot happier and more relaxed. This course has changed my life and I am so grateful for the opportunity to be able to do it.

Incredible Years Parent Programme attendee

A YEAR OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE...THE TABLE

Over the last year we've continued to support children and their families through a whole host of programmes and groups:

Programme/Group	What we do
Breastfeeding Support	We make sure that mums have all the information and support they need as they make their way through their breastfeeding journeys.
Family Support	We offer emotional and practical support for every member of the family to improve life at home.
Early Learning	This programme uses play to encourage pre-schoolers in their development.
Empower Us	This targeted support programme has been developed for children with complex needs and their families.
Little Bees (social communication difficulties), Little Movers (physical disabilities and mobility difficulties) and Short Breaks (respite sessions)	These targeted groups support children with complex needs with their social or physical development, offering respite for parents and carers.
Parental Mental Health	We work with parents facing challenges around attachment, stress, and post-natal depression, to improve their mental health.
Incredible Years	Group sessions or one-to-one coaching to strengthen relationships between parent and child, and support regulatory behaviour over issues such as toileting and eating.
Video Interaction Guidance	We film interactions between family members and offer feedback on how to improve communication and relationships within the family.
Sleep Support	We work with families whose children have trouble getting into a steady sleep routine, offering practical support and guidance.
Family Coaching	Our coaches encourage families to think about the challenges they're facing and find ways through them, supporting them to come up with their own solutions.
Community Matters	We co-ordinate Early Help providers, processing referrals, and gathering and sharing information to help families find support. We also support the network of partners through a programme of learning events and meetings.
Kind Words & Play	A programme for parents with young children where aggressive and challenging behaviour is having a significant impact on family life.

LOOKING BACK ON 20/21

We supported our people:



We exceeded our target and retained **85%** of our volunteers, renewed our Investing in Volunteers accreditation (NCVO) and achieved Community Action Wirral's Wirral Volunteering Award

We became a **Real Living Wage employer** and gained the Disability Confident Award (DWP)



We spent **£5,723** on training staff and volunteers, and adapted our training for Zoom.

We diversified our income:



Our community fundraising efforts exceeded our expectations, raising 30% more than the 19/20 year, a total of **£20,480**.



We sustained our impact:



Our breast-feeding support services exceeded their targets – with nearly **7 in 10** mums feeding for 6+ weeks

We more than doubled our website users and Twitter followers, and gained **1100** followers to our Facebook page. We also launched an Instagram page which gained **329** followers.



“ Thank you for your help. I will definitely approach the services you have suggested to see if they are right for my family. I didn't realise there was so many places that can offer support.

Parent who accessed Early Help

We extended our reach:



We exceeded our fundraising targets, raising **128%** of our annual target for our family support services, and nearly doubling our targeted income to expand our services to support families in Ellesmere Port and Neston

We delivered fresh food parcels and activity packs to **104** families during the pandemic



We extended the age range of our services so that now any family with at least one child aged 0-11 years can access our support.



Thank you for the fresh food delivery - it's going to help us so much. The kids dive-bombed into the bag for the bananas when I got it!

Parent who received a food pack

LOOKING FORWARD TO 21/22



We'll launch the 1001 Days Programme, to help build strong foundations for a child's health and wellbeing during pregnancy and the first two years of life.

We'll partner with The Foundation Years Trust and Wirral Children's Centres to provide books from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to children in target areas.

We'll start a Baby Incredible Years programme to support parents of 0-2s.

We'll launch our own YouTube channel

We'll deliver the Anna Freud Centre's 'Mind the Dads' reflective parenting course with a Perinatal Mental Health Practitioner, and launch a Dads' Support Group.

We'll start delivering Sleep Better Parenting Courses.

We'll run 'Mums Matter' parenting courses in partnership with Wirral Mind.



T 0151 608 8288
E admin@koalanw.co.uk
W www.koalanw.co.uk

Charity Registration no. 1139517
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 7314767

What will we leave behind from COVID-19, and what will we take with us?



Tailoring our support to families in one-to-one online sessions has seen great results in our Kind Words & Play programme, so we'll continue to offer this as an alternative for those who prefer it to face to face sessions.

We'll grow our text buddy service run by volunteers to support mums who are breastfeeding.



We'll get back to offering families support in their own homes – it's been really hard to build trusted relationships online for this service.

We can see that families are missing out on the peer-support elements of our work, so we'll do more to bring parents together in groups to help them know they're not alone.



We actually feel that the course has worked better than in the past! By working one-on-one with families over Zoom we've been able to offer them more tailored support, and parents and carers have been able to be more honest and detailed about the challenges they're facing.

'Kind Words and Play' Co-ordinator



Koala's training is second to none. During lockdown I've done domestic abuse and debt training - the diversity of the training is great. It also makes you aware of the range of help that's available for families.

Volunteer