



# **Family Feedback Report**

## **2020**

February 2021

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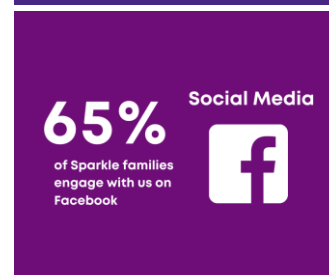
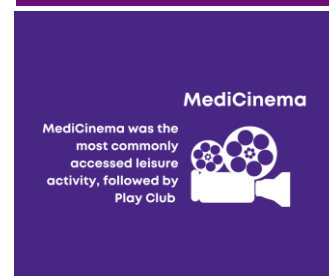
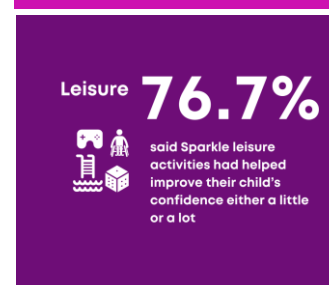
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## Executive Summary

- The following report outlines key findings from feedback gathered from families on Sparkle's services in 2020.
- Recommendations for improvement and service development are made based on the constructive feedback received from families.
- Sparkle, like all charities, has been greatly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and has had to adapt its service provision accordingly. Covid-19 restrictions have also had an impact on the collection of feedback, with a significantly reduced number of families attending Serennu and Nevill Hall Children's Centres.
- Despite the challenges faced by the charity in 2020, feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive.
- While 80% of respondents were already subscribed to Sparkle's Family Liaison Service mailing list, more indicated they would like to subscribe.
- Of those who had heard of Sparkle's leisure services, 70% had accessed a club or activity, with 76.7% agreeing the club had helped increase their child's confidence 'a little' or 'a lot'. Also, 71.4% said the clubs helped their child develop new skills, and 60.7% to form new friendships.
- Feedback from families has helped illustrate the impact the charity has on children and young people with disabilities and/or developmental difficulties.

*"Sparkle has made a massive difference to my son's life!"*

- Over 65% of respondents engage with Sparkle on Facebook.



## Introduction

Sparkle (South Wales) Limited directly supports children and young people (CYP), aged 0-18, with disabilities and/or developmental difficulties (DDD) and their families from across Gwent. Based at the Serennu Children's Centre, Newport, Sparkle has developed a unique model, whereby activities, information, training and support are provided, not only for CYP but for the whole family including parents, grandparents, and siblings. The guiding principle for Sparkle is to ensure that CYP with DDD, and their families, are fully supported and able to participate in valued childhood experiences, with access to the same range of opportunities, life experiences, activities and community services as any other child and their family.

Sparkle is the official charity partner for Serennu, and supports over 300 families per week at the centre. The Serennu Children's Centre catchment area covers Newport, South Torfaen and South Monmouthshire. In May 2019, Sparkle also became the charity partner of Nevill Hall Children's Centre, increasing the charity's cover to Blaenau Gwent, North Torfaen and North Monmouthshire, and in November 2020 became a charity partner of Caerphilly Children's Centre (Sparkle had yet to deliver services in this area at the time of the evaluation). Sparkle supports CYP with DDD and their families via supported leisure activities, equipment and toy provision, and through the Family Liaison Service.

### Family Liaison Service

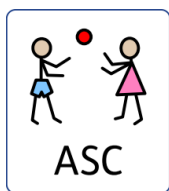
Sparkle Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) act as a first point of contact at the children's centres and for the charity. They answer queries from families, help parents navigate the health and social care systems and direct them to the correct professionals. They also signpost families to other services and sources of support. The FLOs offer emotional and practical support for families with a child with DDD and provide them with a variety of resources, for example anxiety toolkits. The FLOs regularly organise support groups and workshops for families, such as paediatric first aid training and sleep workshops.

### Leisure Activities

Sparkle leisure activities are specifically tailored to CYP with DDD and provide them with a range of valuable childhood experiences that they would not otherwise be able to access in their communities. Leisure activities and clubs in the community are often not equipped or staffed to support those with complex needs; Sparkle has access to facilities appropriate for the CYP the charity supports, for example sensory rooms, and all staff are trained in child development. The aim of Sparkle leisure clubs is to help CYP develop important skills and increase their confidence, whilst also being fun and a safe place to interact with their peers.

Leisure clubs currently available for CYP from Serennu Children's Centre include:

- **Afterschool Club:** An opportunity for CYP with DDD, aged 5 to 11 and 12 to 15, to take part in activities which encourage learning and development in a fun and exciting way.



- **Independent Living Skills:** An opportunity for 14 to 17 year olds to develop daily living skills, such as cooking and managing a budget.



- **Skills:** A club for 6 to 17 year olds to play sports and take part in activities which help develop skills such as agility, balance and co-ordination.



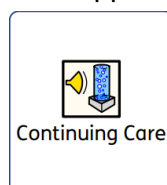
- **Little Stars:** A stay and play club for children aged 0 to 4 years.

- **Minecraft & Lego Club:** An opportunity for young people, aged 8 to 17, with a shared interest to meet and socialise.



- **Youth Club:** A club for 12 to 17 year olds where they can socialise and influence what activities and projects they take part in.

- **Play Club:** An opportunity for children, aged 5 to 11, with DDD to have fun and express themselves in a supported environment.



- **Continuing Care:** A fun, fortnightly club for CYP with complex healthcare needs run jointly with the Health Board.

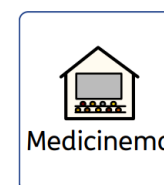
- **Sparkling Sibs:** A club for siblings of CYP with DDD to relax and have fun.



- **Swimming Lessons and Family Swim:** Opportunities for CYP with DDD to learn to swim and enjoy the water in a safe and supported environment.



- **MediCinema:** A specifically designed 3D cinema for CYP with DDD and their families.



Sparkle opened leisure clubs in the North Gwent area in December 2020, however most clubs were only able to run once before Covid-19 restrictions were tightened and in-person sessions had to be replaced by virtual sessions. The first clubs to open in North Gwent were a Youth Club and three Play Clubs at the Integrated Children's Centre in Blaenau Gwent, and a Play Club at SenCom in North Torfaen. Swimming lessons have also been offered by Sparkle at Crownbridge School since before Sparkle became the charity partner to Nevill Hall Children's Centre.

## Evaluation

Sparkle is constantly aiming to develop and improve the services provided for CYP with DDD and their families, and therefore regularly evaluates services and asks for feedback from the families supported by the charity. This report outlines the feedback received from families regarding Sparkle's services delivered in 2020.

## Method

This evaluation was based on a 'Family Feedback Questionnaire' sent to families who either access Serennu or Nevill Hall Children's Centre, or who access Sparkle services in the community. The online questionnaire was made using 'Survey Monkey' and was disseminated via the Sparkle FLOs distribution lists and the Sparkle leisure teams' contact lists for both North and South Gwent. The questionnaire was also advertised regularly on the charity's social media pages between December 2020 and January 2021, and posters with a QR code link to the questionnaire were displayed by the reception desks at both Serennu and Nevill Hall Children's Centres.

Participant recruitment was disadvantaged by the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of families attending the centres has been dramatically reduced due to current restrictions and the increase in virtual appointments, which lowered the overall number of families Sparkle were able to reach. Restrictions also meant Sparkle services have had to be delivered virtually for a significant period of time in the last year which has not been suitable for all CYP and families, therefore some families may not have felt they had any feedback to share at the present time. There were significantly fewer responses from families attending Nevill Hall Children's Centre than Serennu Children's Centre, which may have been because Sparkle has only recently begun delivering leisure services for families in North Gwent, which have now been temporarily moved to virtual sessions. It should also be noted that all participants were parents or carers and Sparkle were unable to gain feedback from the CYP themselves on this occasion due to in-person activities being suspended during the current restrictions.

The questionnaire itself (Appendix A) included: demographic information about the family member and their child, awareness and accessing of Sparkle services, and opportunities to provide quantitative and qualitative feedback on Sparkle services. The questionnaire also gathered information about how families were connecting with the charity on social media. Quantitative responses were analysed and descriptive statistics are presented below. Qualitative responses were analysed thematically and common themes are discussed.

## Findings

### Demographics

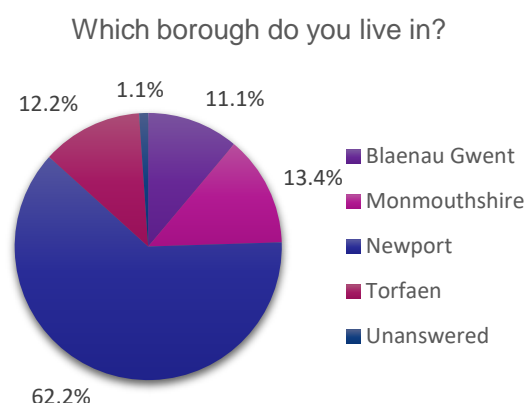
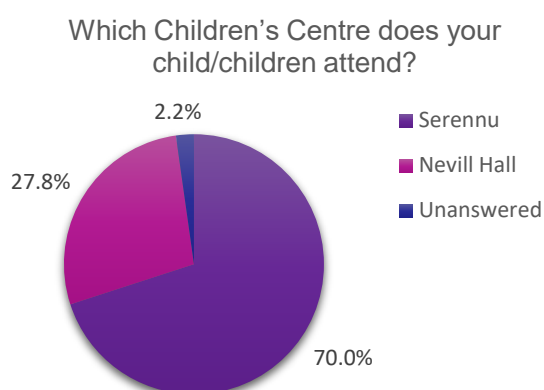
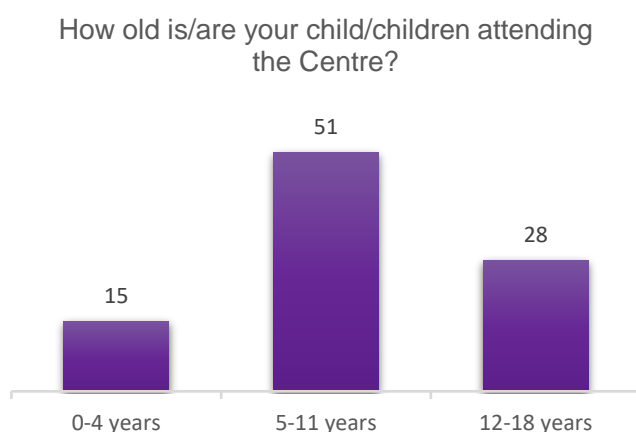
A total of 101 responses were initially received to the feedback questionnaire, however upon analysis only 90 responses were found to include usable data. The other 11 responses were left blank following the first question. The following results are taken from the 90 usable responses.

The majority of responses were received from families accessing Serennu Children's Centre, and understandably there was therefore a larger percentage of families from Newport than other boroughs included in the responses.

Participants were asked how long their child had been attending the children's centre: 41.1% had been attending for more than 5 years, 11.1% between 3 and 4 years, 26.7% between 1 and 2 years, 1.1% between 6 and 12 months, and 20% for less than 6 months. This diversity in the length of engagement is interesting as it means some participants will have experience of the children's centres and Sparkle pre-Covid, while over 20% will only have accessed services which have been adapted to accommodate Covid-19 restrictions.

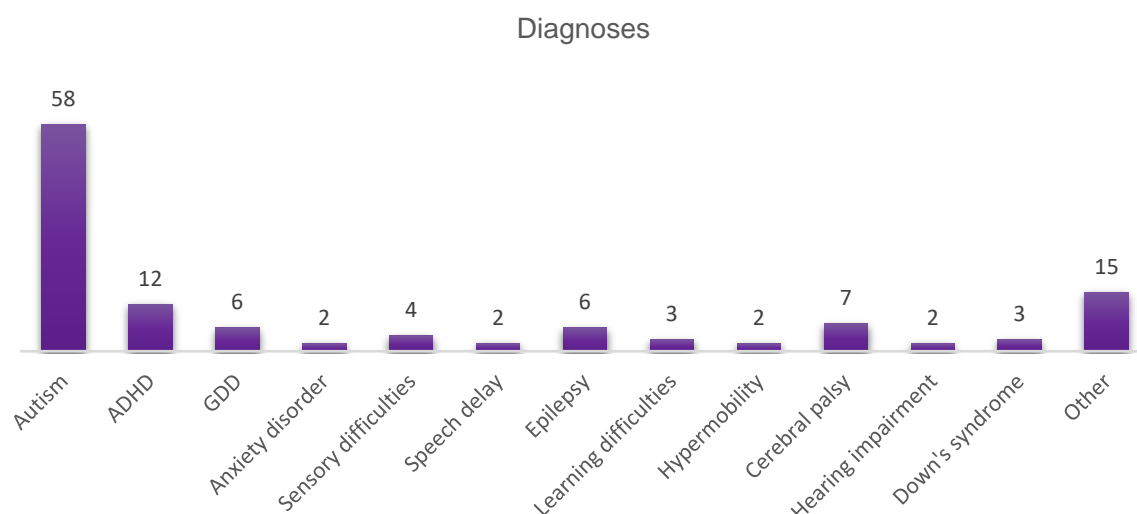
Most participants (83.3%) had only one child attending the children's centre, however 12.2% had two children attending and 1.1% had three children attending (3.4% of participants did not respond to this question).

The age of participants' children are broken down in the graph below. These figures are not presented as percentages due to participants being able to select more than one answer to accommodate participants with more than one child accessing the children's centre.



When asked whether their child had received a diagnosis, 86.7% of participants said they had and 12.2% of participants' children were either undiagnosed or awaiting a diagnosis (1.1% of participants did not respond to this question). Of the participants whose child had a formal diagnosis (86.7%, N=78), 48 had one diagnosis, 17 had two diagnoses and 13 had more than three diagnoses. The most common diagnosis, either as a single diagnosis or accompanying another

disability or developmental difficulty, was Autism Spectrum Disorder. A full breakdown of diagnoses are presented below.

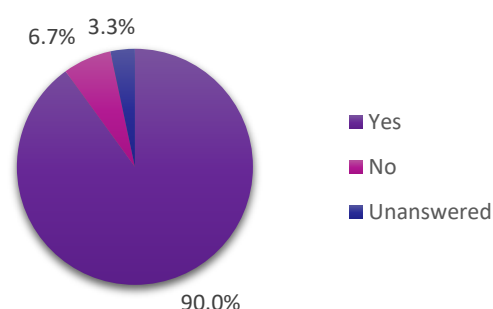


Other diagnoses included a variety of genetic abnormalities, epilepsy syndromes, musculoskeletal and neurological conditions, and chronic disease.

### Family Liaison Service

When asked whether they had heard about Sparkle's Family Liaison Service, 90% of participants responded they had. This is promising but it should also be noted that one of the recruitment methods for the evaluation was via the Family Liaison mailing lists, which may have contributed to the high percentage. While 80% of participants were already subscribed to the Family Liaison emailing list, of the 17.8% (N=16) who were not, 12 indicated they would like to subscribe while only three said they would not like to subscribe (2.2% did not indicate whether they were currently subscribed and one participant did not respond when asked if they would like to subscribe). Participants were given information on how to subscribe to the emailing list as part of the survey question.

Have you heard about the Sparkle Family Liaison Service/Officer at the Centre?



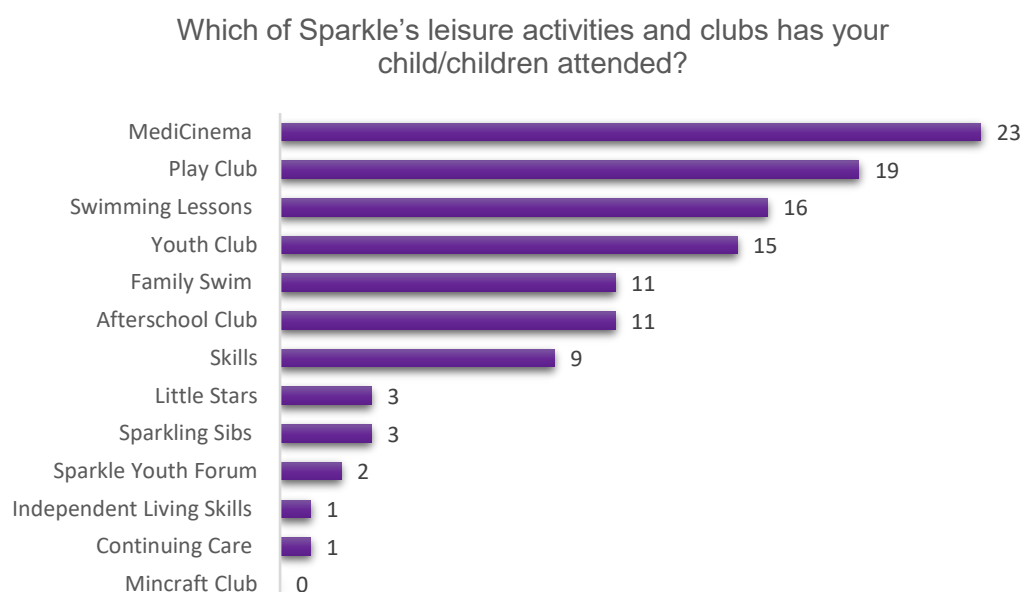
### Leisure Services

When asked whether they had heard about Sparkle's leisure activities and clubs, 87.8% of participants responded they had. Again, this is encouraging but recruitment from the leisure team's contacts may have contributed to the high percentage. Those that responded 'yes' were asked how they heard about the leisure activities and clubs. Common responses included from the Family Liaison Officer, from posters or leaflets at the children's centre and from other health or social care professionals. A few participants had heard about the services

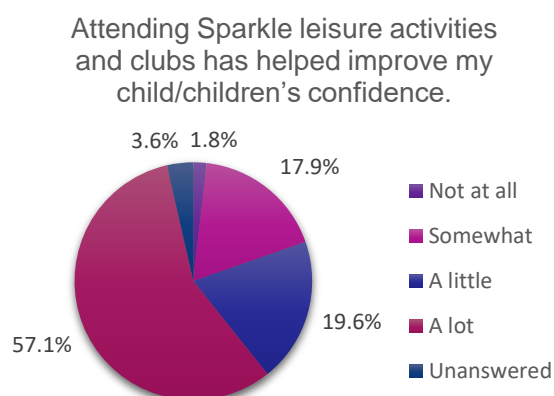


from friends and family, and some had been informed by other organisations such as Magic in Monmouthshire and the Newport Disability Leisure Team.

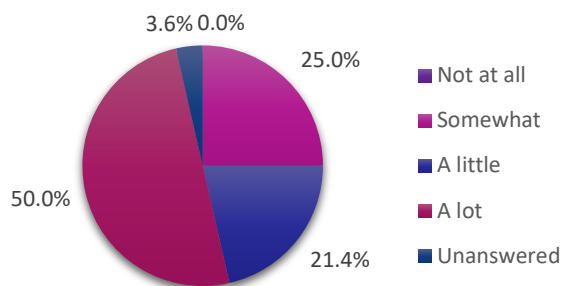
Of those who had heard of Sparkle's leisure services (87.8%, N=79), 70.9% had accessed an activity or club. A full breakdown of the clubs attended is presented below. MediCinema was most commonly accessed, followed by Play Club and swimming lessons. There were no responses from families whose children attended Minecraft & Lego Club, and only one response from families whose child attended Continuing Care or Independent Living Skills. Participants were able to select more than one answer.



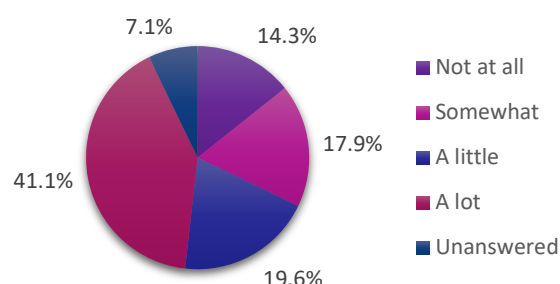
Participants who indicated their child had accessed a Sparkle leisure activity or club (70.9%, N=56) were asked to what extent they agreed that their child had improved their confidence, developed new skills and made new friends as a result of attending the club or activity. Results indicated that Sparkle's activities are most effective at improving the confidence of CYP, with 76.7% saying they agreed with this statement 'a little' or 'a lot'. Likewise participants felt the activities helped their child develop new skills, with 71.4% agreeing with this statement 'a little' or 'a lot'. Making friends by attending activities or clubs ranked lowest; in fact, 14.3% of participants did not think their child had formed friendships at all.



Attending Sparkle leisure activities and clubs has helped my child/children develop new skills.



My child/children has formed new friendships through attending Sparkle leisure activities and clubs.



Of those who had not accessed any leisure activities (29.1%, N=23), only three participants said their child was on the waiting list for an activity or club. This included Afterschool Club, Play Club, swimming lessons and family swim. (There is no waiting list for family swim, however the participant may be referring to the current closure of the swimming pool due to Covid-19 restrictions).

Finally, participants were given the opportunity to share qualitative feedback on Sparkle's leisure activities and clubs.

## Enjoyment

A strong theme that came through this feedback was how much CYP enjoyed Sparkle's leisure activities and clubs.

*"This service provides social time for my daughter. She loves coming thank you so much for all your hard work. This gives my daughter time to spend with others, activities and a little break for me" (P76)*

Encouragingly, participants commented on how much their children have enjoyed the new leisure clubs in North Gwent, despite the short period of time they were able to run in-person before current Covid-19 restrictions.

*"My Son really enjoyed the new afterschool club in SENCOM and it has given him more confidence with new things" (P26)*

*"We really look forward to attending, in person, when it's safe!" (P17)*

Sparkle's leisure activities and clubs are currently being delivered virtually, and one participant mentioned these sessions are still providing an enjoyable experience for their child.

*"My son loves the after school club even though these are now virtual" (P11)*

## Suggestions for Improvement

Another strong theme from the feedback was suggestions for improvement to the service. Suggestions mostly centred on participants' desire for more options. Some participants asked for more clubs for children aged 0 to 4, while others requested more activities for older children.

More MediCinema sessions were also requested. One participant suggested children could be able to attend more than one club, and another said their child would benefit more from outdoor activities or clubs.

*"My son would prefer to be outside so we haven't used the facilities" (P46)*

A few participants commented on their inability to access leisure facilities at Serennu Children's Centre due to catchment area boundaries, one participant specifically mentioning the lack of leisure services in Monmouth. Some participants suggested that an inside area for parents and family members to wait whilst their child is attending leisure activities would be beneficial, especially for those who do not drive.

*"Can parents have somewhere warm and dry to wait while their children are in clubs" (P4)*

### **Sparkle Staff**

A number of participants commented on the staff at Sparkle in their feedback. The majority of the feedback was positive, with participants commenting on the staff's high standard of training and describing them as 'helpful', 'supportive' and 'friendly'.

*"We are so grateful to the sparkle staff for their patience & enthusiasm my daughter thoroughly enjoys her club and has come on so much since joining. Thank you for the opportunities for her & us as a family" (P51)*

*"Thank you for the great work, staff are fantastic and provide a safe and fun environment for children to play and learn" (P54)*

However, one participant mentioned in their feedback that they found staff 'unwelcoming', which resulted in them not returning to the club.

*"We only attended little stars once, found the staff very unwelcoming on our first visit so did not return" (P59)*

### **Unique support**

Many participants mentioned receiving support and opportunities at Sparkle clubs which are not available to their children elsewhere.

*"It has been lovely for my child to access a club which is stimulating and inclusive. Mainstream clubs are not suitable for my son so having somewhere for him to develop independence and form friendships really is wonderful for us as a family." (P55)*

*"The support available is brilliant and there is nothing else like it available" (P29)*

*“Sparkle has made a massive difference to my son’s life! I really appreciate everything they do!” (P88)*

Some participants took the opportunity to share their feedback on the Family Liaison Service here as well, commenting on the excellent support they have received.

*“Family liaison officer is a godsend. Without Jayne, huge numbers of parents like me would have had breakdowns. She is amazing.” (P61)*

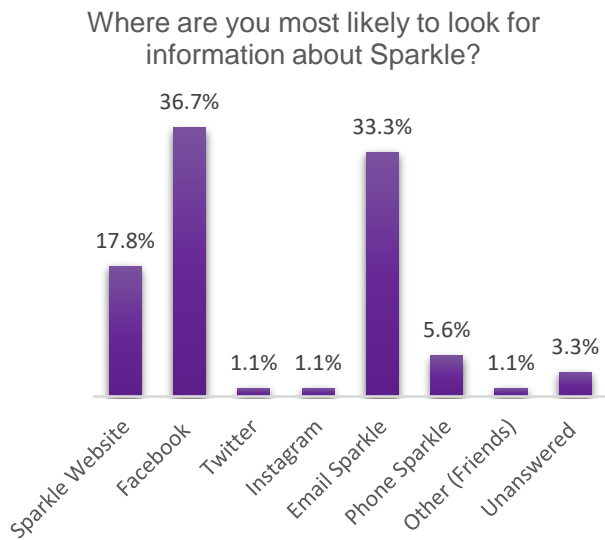
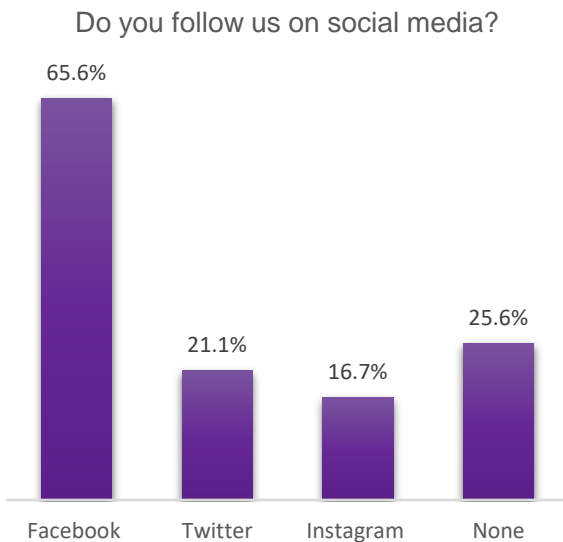
*“I also have a son who is now 19 years old with an ASD diagnosis. He too use to attend Nevill Hall. Your service of support and information for parents has been very helpful. As a parent I have sometimes found things difficult to manage, however the links you share and the workshops have helped. The workshops on supporting children’s anxiety and mental wellbeing have been the most valuable.” (P30)*

Suggestions			
	Suggestions from participants with a child diagnosed with ASD	Suggestions from participants with a child diagnosed with ASD & ADHD	Suggestions from participants whose child has other diagnoses
0 – 4 years			More activities for 0-4 year olds (unspecified).
5 – 11 years	<p>Children to be able to attend more than one club.</p> <p>Children outside the catchment area to be able to access the facilities at Serennu Children’s Centre.</p>	<p>There to be more clubs on offer (unspecified).</p> <p>There to be somewhere parents can wait inside whilst their child attends clubs.</p>	<p>Children outside the catchment area to be able to access the facilities at Serennu Children’s Centre.</p> <p>More MediCinema sessions to be available.</p> <p>Music clubs or sessions*.</p> <p>There needs to be somewhere parents can wait inside whilst their child attends clubs.</p>
12 – 18 years	Outdoors club and more outside facilities.	<p>More activities for older children (unspecified).</p> <p>More activities for families to do together (unspecified).</p>	

\*Clubs are currently being delivered virtual due to Covid-19 restrictions, however music is integrated into sessions when they are delivered in-person.

## Communication

Participants were asked about how they connect with Sparkle and were able to select more than one answer regarding what social media platforms they follow the charity on. The most popular social media platform was Sparkle's Facebook page. The charity's Facebook page was also where participants said they were most likely to look for information about Sparkle. Participants were more likely to email a member of staff at Sparkle for information, rather than looking on the charity's website or other social media pages.



## Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations for service development are made:

- A very high percentage of participants knew of, and were subscribed to, the Family Liaison Service and some participants shared very positive feedback on the service. It is recommended that the service continue to be promoted and service user feedback is explored in more detail in future evaluations.
- Participants felt the leisure services helped their children improve their confidence and develop new skills, however fewer felt their child had made friends at clubs and this could therefore be an area for development. All participants were parents or carers of children who access Sparkle services, not the CYP themselves, and therefore it is not known if this is an accurate representation. It is recommended that future evaluations include the views of the CYP who access services to ensure results are representative.
- Overall, the feedback about the leisure activities and clubs was overwhelmingly positive, including the new clubs in North Gwent and the virtual sessions currently being delivered due to Covid-19 restrictions. The most common suggestion for improvement was to introduce more clubs and leisure activities, however the number of clubs CYP are able to access is limited due to high demand and the charity's financial capacity. Some participants commented on the range of activities within clubs, such as activities for different age groups and outdoor activities. It is therefore recommended that Sparkle continues to monitor its leisure service provision and assess the charity's ability diversify the activities available within clubs, however this may currently be impeded by Covid-19 restrictions.
- Some participants requested there be indoor space available for parents and families to wait whilst their child is attending leisure activities and clubs, especially for parents who do not drive. It is recommended that Sparkle assess the available space within both the children's centre and community venues from which clubs are delivered and decide whether this would be possible. However, this would likely not be able to happen until Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted.
- The issue of 'boundaries' for access to the different children's Centres needs to be looked at by the Health Board, who have set the boundaries. This work should be conducted across all three Children's Centres in order to identify the most accessible sites for families.
- Sparkle's Facebook page was the most popular source of information for participants, and it is therefore recommended that the charity's Facebook page continues to be updated and monitored regularly. It is unknown whether participants engage with the charity less on other social media platforms due to the charity's reduced presence or whether participants are less likely to use other social media platforms regardless, however increasing the charity's activity on its other social media pages could be an area for consideration.

## Conclusions

Overall, the findings from this feedback exercise have been incredibly positive and it is evident from their responses that families find Sparkle Family Liaison and leisure services highly beneficial. Participants have commented on the much needed support they have received from the charity, the level of enjoyment experienced by their children, and the uniqueness of the services. Some suggestions for improvement and areas of development have been identified, however the majority of comments in this respect have been constructive and suitable recommendations have been made.

Sparkle, like all charities, has been hugely impacted over the past year by Covid-19. The pandemic and necessary restrictions have affected the delivery of services and Sparkle have had to adapt their support for families and provision of leisure activities for CYP with DDD, namely through telephone support and virtual club sessions in the place of in-person interactions. Despite the challenges faced, Sparkle has continued to be a constant source of support for CYP with DDD, and their families, in North and South Gwent, and the findings of the feedback questionnaire evidence they have managed to do this effectively and successfully.

Sparkle will continue to conduct formal evaluations of its services. Sparkle recently became a charity partner of Caerphilly Children's Centre and will shortly begin consulting with families on any unmet needs in the Caerphilly County Borough catchment area. Evaluations and feedback exercises in subsequent years should therefore include families from all of Gwent and will hopefully further demonstrate the impact of the charity.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### **Family Feedback Questionnaire 2020**

Your views matter.

We are constantly trying to improve our services, and we need your feedback to do this. We would be very grateful if you could take 5 minutes to complete this survey and share your views on services offered by Sparkle. Your responses are anonymous and will not have any effect on the care your child receives.

Weblink: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/FamilyFeedbackQuestionnaire2020>

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

#### **You and Your Child(ren)**

- 1) Which Children's Centre does your child/children attend?

Serennu ☐

Nevill Hall ☐

- 2) Which borough do you live in?

Blaenau Gwent ☐

Torfaen ☐

Monmouthshire ☐

Newport ☐

Other \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) How long has your child/children been attending this Centre?

Less than 6 months ☐ 6-12 months ☐ 1-2 years ☐ 3-4 years ☐ 5 years ☐

- 4) How many of your children attend this Centre? \_\_\_\_\_

- 5) How old is/are your child/children attending the Centre?

2-4 years ☐ 5-11 years ☐ 12-18 years ☐

- 6) Does your child/children have a diagnosis?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please state their diagnosis \_\_\_\_\_



### **Family Liaison Service**

7) Have you heard about the Sparkle Family Liaison Service/Officer at the Centre?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8) Are you currently subscribed to the Family Liaison Officer Parent emailing list?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If not, would you like to subscribe?

(Subscribing will mean that you will receive information on a variety of things including Children's Centre events and service updates, local support group meetings, etc.)

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you would like to subscribe please contact [family.liaison.abb@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:family.liaison.abb@wales.nhs.uk)

### **Sparkle Leisure Activities and Clubs**

9) Have you heard about Sparkle's leisure activities and clubs at the Centre/in the local area?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If 'No', go to Question 17)

10) How did you hear about Sparkle's leisure activities and clubs?

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11) Has your child/children accessed any of Sparkle's leisure activities and clubs?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If 'No', go to Question 14)

12) Which of Sparkle's leisure activities and clubs has your child/children attended?

Afterschool Club ☐

Play Club ☐

Youth Club ☐

Continuing Care ☐

Sparkling Sibs ☐

Sparkle Youth Forum ☐

Independent Living Skills ☐

MediCinema ☐

Skills ☐

Swimming Lessons ☐

Little Stars ☐

Family Swim ☐

Minecraft Club ☐

13) To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

*Attending Sparkle leisure activities and clubs has helped improve my child/children's confidence.*

1

2

3

4

Not at all

A little

Somewhat

A lot

*Attending Sparkle leisure activities and clubs has helped my child/children develop new skills.*

1

2

3

4

Not at all

A little

Somewhat

A lot

*My child/children has formed new friendships through attending Sparkle leisure activities and clubs.*

1

2

3

4

Not at all

A little

Somewhat

A lot

14) If your child/children has not attended any of Sparkle's leisure activities or clubs, are they currently on a waiting list for any of these clubs

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If 'No', go to Question 16)

15) Which of Sparkle's leisure activities and clubs is your child on a waiting list for?

Afterschool Club ☐

Play Club ☐

Youth Club ☐

Continuing Care ☐

Sparkling Sibs ☐

Sparkle Youth Forum ☐

Independent Living Skills ☐

MediCinema ☐

Skills ☐

Swimming Lessons ☐

Little Stars ☐

Family Swim ☐

Minecraft Club ☐

16) Do you have any other feedback on Sparkle's leisure activities and clubs you would like to share with us?

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### **Connecting with Sparkle**

17) Do you follow us on social media? (Please select all the apply)

Facebook ☐      Twitter ☐      Instagram ☐      None ☐

18) Where are you most likely to look for information about Sparkle?

Sparkle website ☐      Facebook ☐      Twitter ☐

Instagram ☐      Phone Sparkle ☐      Email Sparkle ☐

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**