

Charity Registration number: NIC100114



SÓLÁS ANNUAL REPORT (01/07/22 TO 30/06/23)

PRESENTED BY: DR JOAN HENDERSON

SÓLÁS

PARKMORE BUILDING, 284A ORMEAU RD, BELFAST, BT7 2GB

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CHARITY OBJECTIVES

	Key objectives
1	Sólás is Company Limited by Guarantee and not Limited by Share Capital, and was constituted on 23 rd March 2009.
2	To provide practical supports & services for children and young people with disabilities and their families
3	To advance the educational and social development of children and young people with additional needs, including those children that fall outside remit of support offered by statutory providers

CHARITY LOCATION

During the period July 2022 to June 2023, Sólás's main site was located in Parkmore Building, 284A Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 2GB. We also have a lease on a first floor premises at 265 Ormeau Road, where we house our Home Support Services and our Therapeutic Services. During the period, we took a further lease on the a double mobile unit at the YMCA in Stranmillis, and refurbished it as a workable space for our new SONA programme and our respite programme. In addition, we delivered support services in 7 Outreach Community settings across south Belfast; Donegall Pass Community Centre, Apsley Hall (Apsley Street), Rosario Youth Centre, Surestart Building Markets, Windsor Women's Centre, Scoil an Droichid, and Village Church Hall Haypark.

CHARITY DIRECTORS / TRUSTEES

During the year 1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023, 11 trustees managed the charity including;

Chairperson (resigned as chair in April 2023) – Tom Doran - expertise in training, people management, quality systems, and networking.

New Chairperson (since 19th April 2023) - Fionnguala McCotter - expertise in Special Education Needs and educational management - current principal of primary school.

Treasurer - Catriona Nic Sheáin - expertise in early years education, and literature and has own creative business

New treasurer (since 19th April 2023) – Jean McGann – finance expertise (working with the Department of Finance) and also has a child with disabilities.

Secretary – Joanne Mercer (since 19th April 2023) primary school teacher and mum to a boy with Disabilities

Director – Elaine Holmes (Social Worker) – expertise in Health & Social care as well as Safeguarding.

Director – Ciaran Marley (resigned on 19th April 2023)

Director – Ross Reid – Qualified Architect - expertise in architecture, planning, building regulations.

Director – Emily Gallagher – Parent representative with two sons with disabilities - expertise in autism.

Director – Laura Burrows – Social Worker (resigned in Jan 2023) - expertise in supporting children and young people with a range of complex needs, as well as expertise in child safeguarding.

Director – Mairead McCartan – Engineer – expertise in Health & Safety, Fire Safety, joined in Feb 2022.

OUTSOURCING ARRANGEMENTS

Sólás outsources payroll, HMRC, Tax and Companies House returns to Tax Assist Accountants, 103 Cregagh Road, Belfast, BT6 8PY.

CHAIRPERSON'S SUMMARY

Over the financial year July 2022 to June 2023, Sólás has continued on a growth trajectory, both in terms of services, and income. The big development for Sólás over the 12 month period, was setting up and operationalising the SONA (Young Adults Day Transitions) programme) . This involved taking a lease on a new site at YMCA , Stranmillis, and refurbishing it to include a sensory room, a kitchen / cookery space, IT facilities (including WiFi), an open plan social & learning area and bathrooms. This new service supports young adults, not suitable or ready for employment, offering a well-resourced facility, social opportunities with peers, and life skills development at a pace appropriate to each young adult on the programme. Participants can use Direct Payments to access the programme. The programme can accommodate up to 12 adults each day, and runs between 9am and 3pm Monday through to Friday. By the end of June 2023, the programme is still in early days, however, there is a summer adult programme planned that will see over 30 young adults supported across 9/10 weeks of summer 2023.

During the year, our main Parkmore site, on the Ormeau Road, continued to run at full capacity, delivering Early years programmes between 8.45am and 2.15pm pm each day; afterschools programmes between 2.45pm and 5.45pm and youth programmes every evening between 6.15 pm and 9pm. Saturday clubs and evening / weekend respite was also running at full capacity, supporting children and young people with a range of complex needs, and in many cases offering transport to and from home to ensure maximum respite benefit to family carers.

Whilst, this year, saw us continuing to facilitate bespoke weekly home support programmes in the home, as well as a full suite of therapeutic interventions for children & young people with additional needs and their carers. This included play therapy, art therapy, group therapy, children's counselling and adult counselling. We also continued to deliver parent support programmes and parent support specific to the Early Years parents, with children going through the statementing process. Throughout the year, our Siblings programme, continued to be developed and supported over 25 young carers throughout the year.

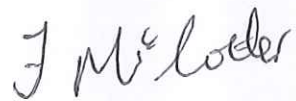
Under our educational remit, we started to re-build our Back on Track (school based) programme, which had largely been decimated over the COVID period. Between September 2022 and June 2023, our Back on Track Co-Ordinator engaged 18 retired teacher volunteers, who delivered support to over 360 children with additional needs (literacy and numeracy), across 15 primary schools, over the year. Throughout the period, we continued to deliver our Kids Den educational program to 37 children with an additional learning needs based in South Belfast Urban Village.

Our respite services has continued to be in high demand, particularly in the evenings and weekends. Our summer scheme ran in July and August of 2022 across 4 venues including Scoil an Droichid, Windsor Women's Centre, Rosario Youth Centre and our own premises in Parkmore. We continue to be part of a number of important delivery partnerships. We deliver the STEP programme with Barnardos, Surestart, BSCR and Forward South Partnership. This Early Intervention STEP programme across South Belfast allows Sólás to support over 36 families through Home Support as well as 20 young people on our REACH Youth programme. We have a Service Level Agreement with South Belfast Surestart, where we

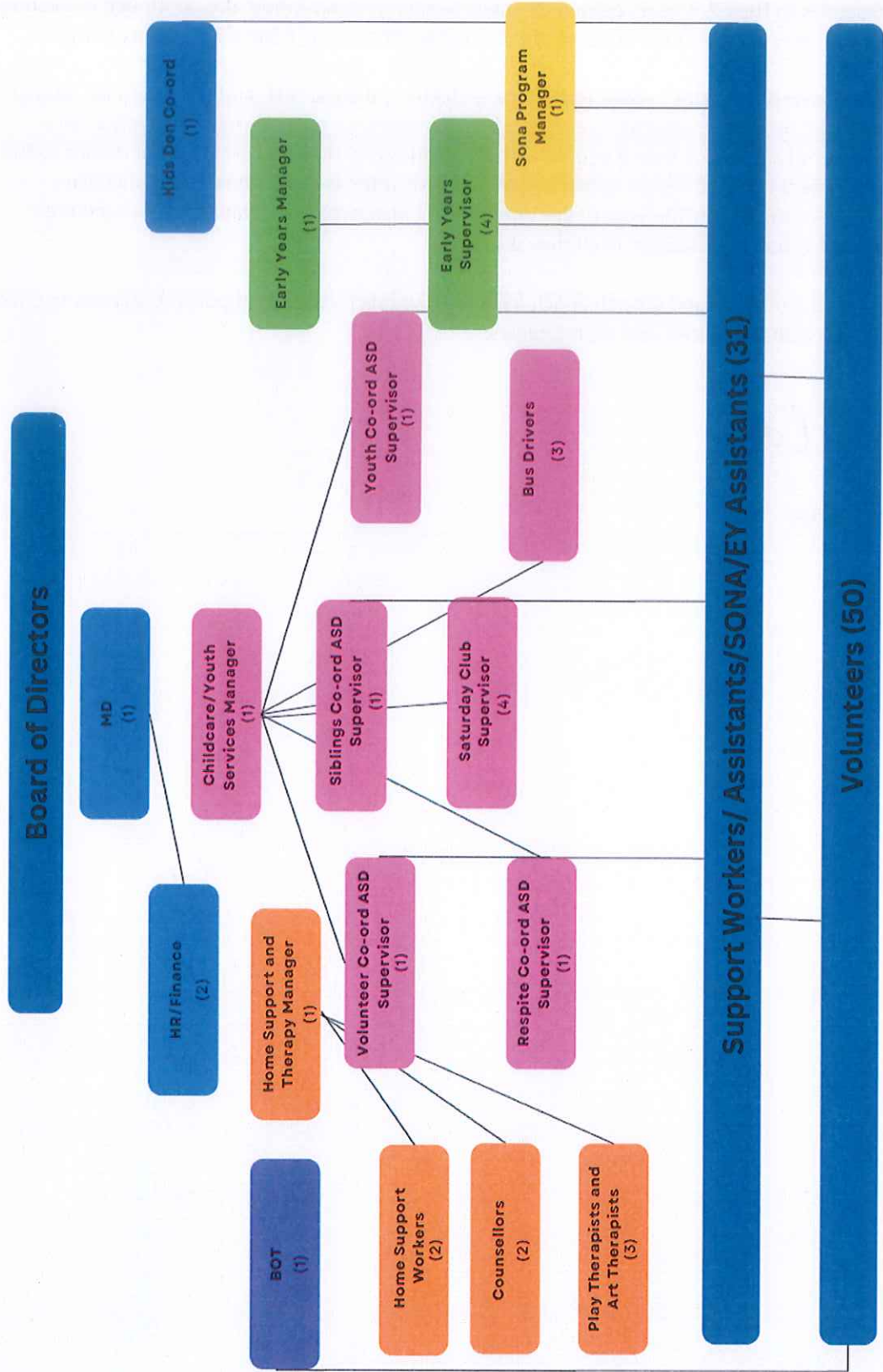
provide 10 spaces to their 2-3 years on our specialist Seedlings Programme. We continued delivering our youth provision, primarily with the support of the Empowering Young People Big Lottery Fund.

As Chair of a wonderful charity, I want to thank the children, the parents, and our Board for all that they have done and all that they continue to ensure Sólás continues to provide practical support to a growing number of children & young people with disabilities and their families. Special thanks to the staff and volunteers in SÓLÁS who's commitment and dedication is exceptional. They all have contributed enormously over the year under difficult circumstances and I want to commend their motivation, innovation and stamina in all they do.

I look forward to our continued growth at SÓLÁS and delivering incredibly important services to children & young people with disabilities and their families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F McCotter', written in a cursive style.

Chair. F McCotter



Annual Review of July 2023- June 2024

The establishment of SONA at a leased site on YMCA in Stranmillis was one of the key deliverables of the year. This program was set up to accommodate young adults leaving Special School, who need to be in a day provision, continuing to learn life skills, and develop social skills alongside their peers. This SONA programme is very much in pilot phase and has been based on generating fees from participants who access Direct payments (assessed by Disability Social Workers), which are payable to Sólás, on a monthly basis. The programme runs every day (Monday to Friday) between 9am and 3pm and includes trips, gardening in the new polytunnel, cookery, dance, music, exercise and fun. We secured a 5 year lease the YMCA mobile unit, and installed a sensory room as well as cookery space polytunnel and social / learning space.





Young People Enjoying activities at SONA

WHAT ELSE WE DO?

In addition to the above, Sólás delivered the following range of programmes and services in the year which can be broadly categorised into four key areas;

Social Development Programmes: supporting children and young people with additional needs including autism. These include; Early Years programme, Afterschools programmes across four locations, Monday through to Friday afternoon, for children aged 4-14 years, with autism and a range of learning disabilities, Saturday programmes (Morning and afternoon), Respite (afternoon, evening and weekends), Youth programmes every evening, for junior and senior youths (up to 19) with disabilities, Youth residential, and Summer Schemes.

Family Support / Therapeutic Services: These programmes support families of children & young people with a range of disabilities including autism, and include our Home Support & Therapeutic Services, our Parent support sessions, Carer & Wellbeing Programme, Parent & Toddler sessions, Play & Stay Sessions, Sibling programme and our Family Fun Days.

Outreach Programmes:

We deliver some outreach work, particularly in the area of autism support, across the City and into the Family Hubs. This work includes delivering Training workshops to community groups / staff working in the community and staff in schools. Much of this outreach involves, supporting SENCOs in schools, partnering with other organisations to plan and deliver research (Autism Friendly Village research with SBSS) and delivering training on autism awareness.

Educational Support Programmes, These programmes support children with some mild additional learning needs, and include our Back on Track (BOT) programme and our Kids Den Programmes.



Youth taking part activities

All of the Programmes listed above are delivered and maintained by a team of 14 full-time staff, 34 part-time staff, 13 bank staff and over 60 volunteers. Our Back on Track programme is heavily reliant on the support of retired teacher volunteers who provide 1:1 weekly sessions on literacy, or numeracy, to children in mainstream schools who have an additional need, but do not meet the threshold for additional statutory support. This programme was re-established by the co-ordinator, Kate Diamond, (following COVID), in Jan 2022, and by the end of June 2023, it had 18 retired teacher volunteers out supporting 15 schools and over 360 children with addition needs. Our summer scheme, also relies heavily on volunteers, and over the summer period of 2022, Jenny our volunteer co-ordinator, had recruited and engaged 35 student volunteers to help support the delivery. Other volunteers / placement from Intern Europe, and the local universities were also involved in volunteering across our Kids Den, Early years Afterschools and youth provision.





Back on Track Volunteer Training and Kids Den Activity

EARLY YEARS PROGRAMME

Kathryn K and her team, have continued to build an excellent, very high-quality Specialist Early Years (EY) Programme, for 18 children aged 2-3 years with additional needs and this year also a 3-4 year old pilot programme for 12 children with additional needs. Through the support of Department of Education Funding, the team has delivered a full programme of EY support. The start of the years saw the establishment of the Belfast Wide Early Years Programme, led by Sólás in partnership with, Glenbrook SureStart, East Belfast Surestart and Kids Together. It also had direct input from the Allied Health professionals (SLTs and OTs) as well as direct input from Educational Psychologists. All groups collaborated to deliver specialist developmental provision for almost 80 children, 2-3 and 3-4 year olds across the city in line. Following a detailed evaluation, conducted independently by Jane Turnbull, the Programme was approved for funding and delivery again in 23/24 by the Department of Education.

As above, these Early Years programmes include input from SLTs and OTs as well as Educational Psychologists. Children attend 3 to 4 sessions per week across the full academic year. Sessions are delivered by our Early Year's team, and include Attention Autism, Makaton behavior support and delivering on the developmental needs of each individual child. In parallel with this, we offer one to one family support sessions, parent training sessions (Make and Take, communication, what is autism etc.).

The input from the Child Development Clinics is a key feature of the programme. The Belfast Wide Early Years Programme for Children with Additional Needs (Partnership), has presented a real workable opportunity for Educational and Health professionals to work together in

Community Settings with community professionals, in a way that truly benefits children and provides real opportunities for efficiencies. Over the year, we continued our Service Level agreement with South Belfast Surestart,(SBSS), agreeing to allocate 10 spaces on our Specialist Early Years Team to SBSS referrals. Sólás is keen to partner with strong, reputable partners and sees partnership as a key tenant of future Community Service Delivery.

Our weekly play and stay for toddlers and parents also took place throughout the year– a social group for parents to meet with other parents with very young children with developmental delay.





ASD Afterschools / Respite and Saturday Clubs

During the year Sólás continued to develop our afterschool programmes to accommodate the bespoke needs of our growing client base. With 2 x minibuses on the road and available for school pickups, we were able to accommodate more children, and better support the childcare and respite needs of families. Lisa Toan, the Childcare Services & Respite Manager, worked in tandem with Rebecca the Respite Co-ordinator to develop bespoke respite packages, that would meet the specific needs of children who could not cope in a group / social situation. This allowed us to accommodate more complex young people, with 1 to 1 respite sessions or 2 to 1 respite sessions. We had developed capacity to ensure our Afterschool and Sat programme delivery can run alongside the respite. Following the annual Inspections in December '22 and January '23, our Belfast Health & Social Care Trust registered settings, were recognized for the very high quality of care that staff provide to children attending. Funding of these programmes continues to be challenging, however, we have put a bigger emphasis throughout the year, on bringing in children that have access to BHSCT Direct payments, and which allows us to charge at a slightly higher hourly rate of £14.83, compared to an hourly rate of £10 for Self Funded spaces. It's a fine balance between meeting need and reducing the number of Self-Funded spaces. We also have support from the Bright Start Fund, which helps to cover some of the Manager's salary. However, we have to continue to try and secure some core funding to cover overheads, across the organization, and make the case for fairness and equity for all.

Staff training has been high on our priority list over the past year. Two staff completed a Level 5 in Managing a Childcare Setting. 20 staff completed Supporting Participation and Wellbeing. Three early years staff completed Sensory Training, and 4 staff members completed online modules in Playwork with Playboard. Safeguarding refresher training was completed by 25 staff, Pediatric First Aid has been completed by 10 staff, 6 childcare staff updated their Food

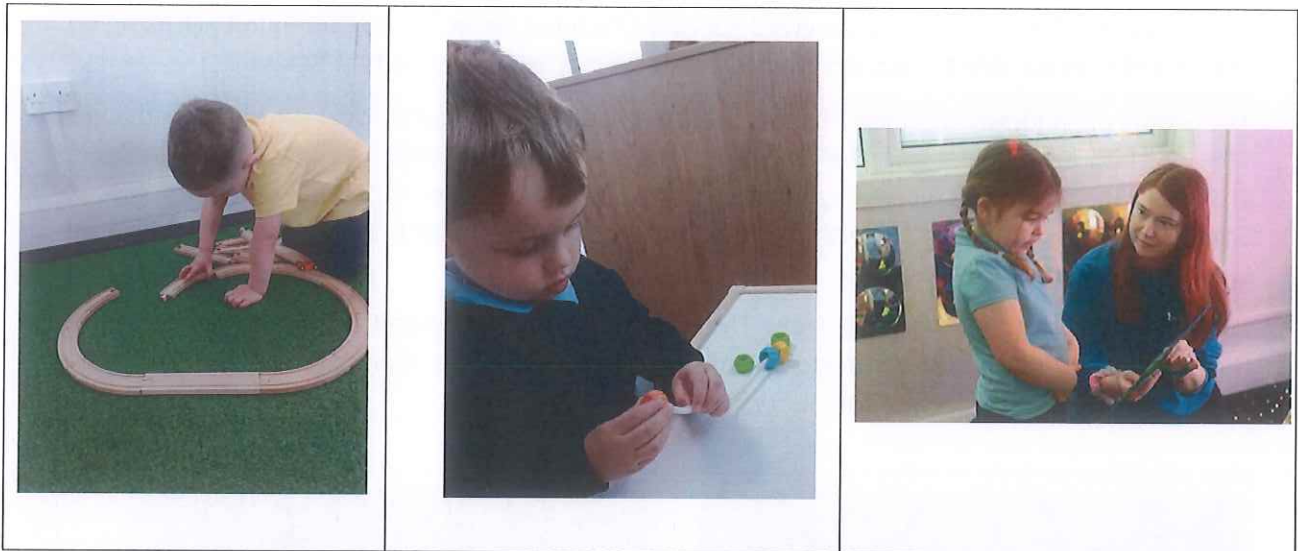
Preparation qualifications; an additional Child Designated Officer was trained up, (Sólás now has 3 Designated CPOs), and 4 staff received specialist training delivered by Community Nursing on site, in order to be able to support children with specific medical needs at Sólás.

The profile of children attending Afterschools has changed significantly over the years, with over 90% of children coming into the service attending special schools. Feeder schools include; Thorbank Special School, Glenveagh Special School, Haberton Special School, Oakwood Special School, Fleming Fulton, St Gerards, Greenwood House Assessment Centre, Hollycroft Special School, and Cedar Lodge School.

Sólás operates a pick up service from Thorbank School, Greenwood House, Fleming Fulton, Glenveagh, Oakwood and Haberton. Throughout the year, we also provided a drop home service for those who needed this service.



The afterschool programme on the Parkmore site is at full capacity with 8 children in each session. Jenny supervises this programme, and is ably supported by a team of assistants, bank staff and volunteers. Assistants have undertaken sensory play training, safeguarding training and autism training. We have a number of children in sessions with complex medical issues, requiring more specialist training, which nominated staff have received from designated nurses and training agencies. During the year, children in the afterschool sessions have taken part in therapeutic art sessions, yoga, and visits from the Sensory Bus. The children have grown a range of wildflowers, fruits and vegetables in our raised beds.



Our Donegall Pass ASD Afterschool programme also ran at full capacity from Sept 22 to June 2023. The age profile of children attending this club is younger than our Parkmore site, with a significant proportion of children coming from Greenwood Special School and Oakwood Special School. Supervisors were ably supported by a team of assistants, bank staff and volunteers. As with the Parkmore setting, all children were able to access sessions in therapeutic art, yoga and the Sensory Bus.

We delivered six ASD Saturday Clubs (three on Saturday morning and three in the afternoon) across the Parkmore site throughout year, and in the Markets Surestart building. Children attending these social clubs ranged in age between 6 and 14 years.

Our plan going forward is to continue to develop the afterschools and respite provision, providing as much support as possible to children with more complex needs, and in receipt of Direct Payments. Over 165 children accessed the afterschools clubs, 35 accessed respite and 50 accessed some Saturday sessions in the year.



SUMMER SCHEME

Summer is another key highlight in our autism programme delivery calendar. Over the summer of 2022, we delivered the programme across 6 weeks, including a 2-week programme specifically for the Early Years group. The school aged programme ran across 4 venues each week in south Belfast, including, Parkmore, Donegall Pass Community Centre, Windsor Women's Centre and Scoil an Droichid, Apsley Hall and Rosario Youth Centre. We have an excellent relationship with all of our community partners and really appreciate the support they give us through accessing their venues over the summer time.

The summer scheme is a huge commitment for the team. Lisa oversees the role of organizing the summer scheme, with support from Mari-Therese in recruiting staff and Jenny in recruiting volunteers for same. We had 168 children registered for the programme in summer 2022, and a long waiting list. Additional staff were recruited and trained for the scheme. Throughout the programme we were able to take children out on 2 to 3 trips per week per group.



Summer time - trips to the beach and playtime.

SÓLÁS YOUTH PROGRAMME.

Through the year, our youth programmes ran four nights of the week, Monday through to Thursday, with each night targeting 2 different age groups or ability group. Each group (with the exception of the very high needs group) has an average of 10 – 12 participants. With the support of Big Lottery, we were able to deliver additional youth sessions, and keep the continuity of the programme for all cohorts throughout the year. The REACH Youth Social Programme builds **Resilience** through **Exercise, Art, Communication** and **Healthy** engagement. These clubs ran as 1 session per week and supported approx. 10 young people with autism, aged between 12 and 16 years. Young people engaged in a range of physical activities including boxing, trampolining and yoga, as well as arts & crafts. In addition, each programme consisted of a range of trips to places like the cinema, the Ozone center and walks on the beach. A significant amount of energy and time was focused on developing the young people's social communication skills. Our youth programme has over doubled in the past year, and continues develop in line with the changing needs of our young participants.

The youth programmes place a lot of emphasis on helping young people become more resilient to managing changes / transitions. Through their participation, young people have developed a network of peers and have had opportunity to socially communicate through exercise activities as well as art. The programme supported young people with their mental health and instilled in them a greater sense of valuing themselves – not seeing their disability as an impediment but as a strength.



Trip to Clip & Climb



We integrated some life skills into sessions such as cookery, healthy eating and keeping safe online. We also had experts from Action Mental Health, who delivered a range of workshops and provided support on tools and techniques to adopt when feeling over-whelmed.



SÓLAS 'BACK ON TRACK' PROGRAMME

Sólás Back on Track Programme (BOT) targets primary aged children within areas across NI that experience high levels of deprivation including above average free school meals entitlement,

children on school special needs register, poor housing and low income families. Typically, these children begin to disengage from formal education as early as P1 and by P2/P3 are already demonstrating a lower sense of self-worth, are underachieving across the curriculum. Between September 2022 and June 2023, our Back on Track Co-Ordinator engaged 18 retired teacher volunteers, who delivered support to over 360 children with additional needs (literacy and numeracy), across 15 primary schools, over the year.

KIDS DEN

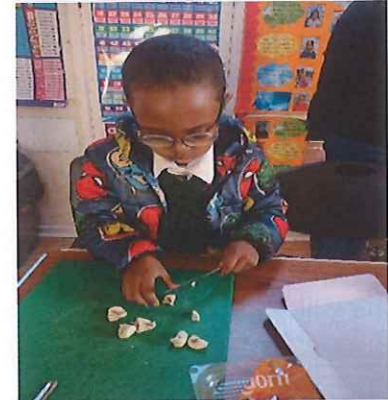
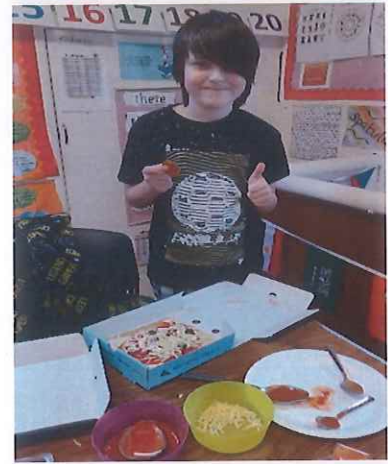
Under the leadership of Catriona, Kids Den operated 4 afternoons per week, offering one on one support to 35 children each week, from the local area of South Belfast. The programme, which is funded by Urban Villages, was delivered in Apsley Hall at Donegall Pass and served children from the Markets, Donegall Pass, Sandy Row, Lower Ormeau and Botanic. Catriona along with staff assistants and some student volunteers have worked exceptionally hard to inspire and encourage young children struggling with literacy, to help them grow in confidence and self-esteem. Students can bank experience gained volunteering in the Kids Den (and other Sólás programmes), against the volunteering criteria in place to attain a QUB 'future ready award'. 3 to 4 students each afternoon, from a range of professional backgrounds, supported children with homework and alternative activities on a 1-1 basis across the terms.

At Kids Den the children celebrate diversity and inclusion, and ensure all children feel respected and valued by staff and peers. The children look forward to celebrating each other's birthdays, and this provides them with the opportunity to sit at a table together and extend their social skills. The children enjoyed celebrating the Chinese New Year. A staff member was able to share information about her culture, as she grew up in Malaysia. She brought in a chocolate gold coin, inside a red envelope for each child and explained the reasoning behind this tradition. Each child received a card which displayed their birth year's animal, and the typical personality traits of a person born in this year.

To celebrate St Patricks day the children took part in St Patricks Day themed bingo. The children enjoyed competing against their peers and had lots of fun during this activity!

Children also celebrated Ramandan in March / April, and those children in the kids Den were able to discuss stories and the 'good deed' chain – which motivated the group to chart their good deeds over the month

'Kids Den'



HOME Support

During the year, we have experienced ongoing need from families seeking home support and one to one home interventions, to support them with their child, taking them through the early stages of diagnosis or pre- diagnosis. Michelle (who was on maternity leave for much of the year) and her team provided specialist support and advice to families in distress. Over 130 families were supported through this programme during the year. There was a big demand for support with the 'Statementing Process', particularly between November and the end of January. The team also provided practical support to families, in their home, developing visual schedules, choice boards, sourcing financial support where needed, and referring if necessary to other in-house programmes (such as play therapy, art therapy or counselling). The majority of referrals came through the Family Support Hubs. We have tried to manage waiting lists, so that no one is waiting longer than 12 weeks for the Home Support Service.

Respite

In addition to the Respite which runs alongside the afterschools program, we also introduced bespoke respite for children and young people with very complex needs, and who really were unable to cope in a group situation. This case is generally organized to fit with the family needs, and can take the shape of a pick up, from home, a 3 hours respite session out of the house, and then a drop home after the session. In most cases, we are supporting children on a 2 to 1 ratio, (2 staff to each child), which reflects the complexity of needs of the children availing of this service. This area of work, provides care options for families of children with disabilities, and ensures that families can avail of some much needed respite. Links with Children's Disability Team Social Workers have been strengthened and a growing number of referrals to our respite service are now coming through this route. Similarly referrals from the Social Work LAC support team (Looked After Children) have grown, as indeed have self-referrals. The majority of children and young people availing of our respite services have a range of disabilities including autism, and will invariably attend a special school. As an additional support, we try to offer transport for families engaged in the bespoke respite programme.

Training and Research

We have delivered a range of training sessions for parents on autism and how to support children with ASD, offering session on communication issues, statementing process, transitions, preparing for holidays and sibling support. Our staff have also delivered training to external community organizations and school staff. We delivered sensory play training sessions to 10 primary schools in South Belfast). We also delivered autism awareness training to staff in the Lyric and in local community organizations including (Ark Housing, and Clanmill)

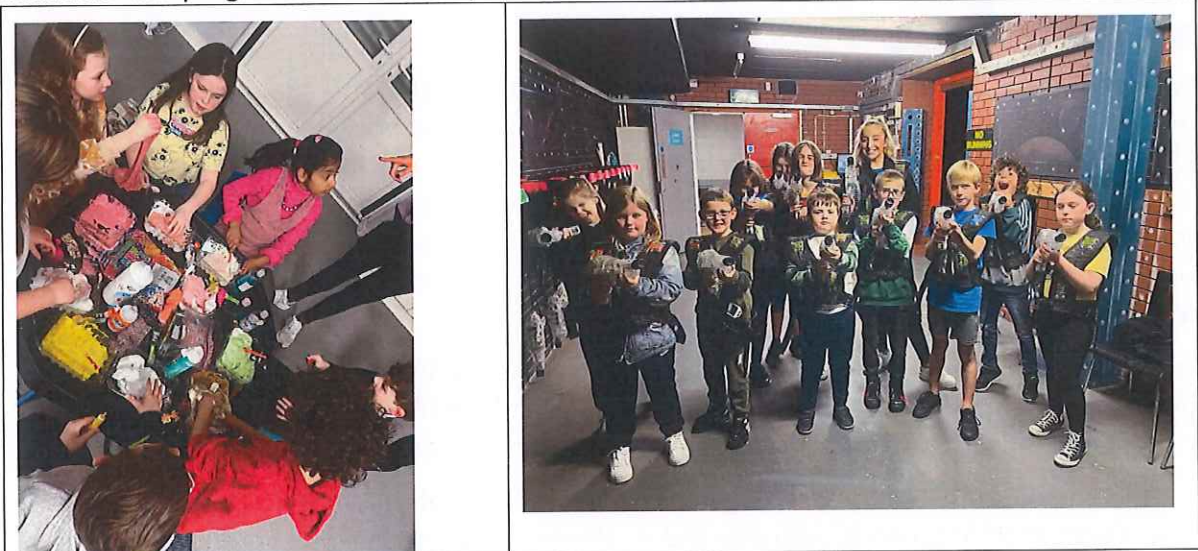
EXTERNAL PARTNERS IN DELIVERY- Sólás has established a number of very strong delivery partnerships including the STEP programme, and Early Intervention programme across South

Belfast delivered by Sólás in partnership with Forward South Partnership, South Belfast Surestart, Banardos and Belfast South Community Resources. Sólás also has a partnership with South Belfast Surestart for the delivery of the Urban Village 'A Place for Me' programme, which focuses specifically on the delivery of support interventions in the South Belfast Urban Village area, for those with additional needs and their families. Finally Sólás has a formal service level agreement with South Belfast Surestart to support 10 children from the South Belfast Surestart area, through our early Years program, which is a year-long intervention for children with additional needs and their families. Also as highlighted above, Sólás is lead partner in the BWEY Early Years programme including 2 x Surestarts, as well as Kids Together, Allied Health professionals from BHSC and Educational Psychologists from the EA.

SIBLING PROGRAMME

Sólás with funding from the Big Lottery was able to continue developing and delivering our Sibling programme across the year. Siblings have to shoulder huge caring responsibilities at a very young age, and very often their needs are overlooked as much of their parent's attention goes to supporting their disabled brother or sister.

This programme was independently evaluated by Jane Turnbull Consultant and has shown to deliver remarkable positive outcomes for those participating. Siblings have been able to relate to others in the same position and form friendships with children who truly understand their situation. This programme forms a key element of the National Lottery programme



Sibling team enjoying some art activities and a trip to Ozone Centre



Local families and groups in the community are very supportive of Sólás regularly drop in donations of stationary, clothes and materials to support our children sessions.

Connections with Others. We hosted a number of placement students from the MSc in Atypical Child Development at QUB and Bachelors in Psychology Degree programme.

We also have a relationship with Intern Europe, which had one student travel and work with us from Switzerland for almost 9 months.

During the summer of 2021, we recruited a number of teachers interested in summer work as well as SEN assistants, who helped to deliver our summer scheme.

Reflection from the MD:

As we reflect back on the last 12 months, we can be proud of the work that has been achieved at Sólás, and the range and quality of services on offer. On a personal note, I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of our staff. Sólás is very lucky to have such a strong supportive team, of staff and volunteers, that fully embrace the values of our very special organisation. Whilst we operate in a challenging environment, little certainty about future funding, and ever-increasing costs, we have managed to carve out a very strong social business, driven as much by hearts, as it is by minds.

Establishing the SONA program has been a very positive development and will help to support many of those children in Sólás approaching 19 years, and moving into adult services. In addition it will help to bring some financial stability to the charity going forward.

Our therapeutics services has been a game changer in terms of supporting children and young people with additional needs, with play and art therapy or counselling, Carers are a key focus of the organization now, with offerings such as counselling services and well-being programmes, a part of our expanding offering.

I am confident that we will continue to deliver great work going forward and raise awareness of our work in the wider community. I would like to acknowledge the sterling work conducted by our board over the past year, and the many hours they volunteered to ensure that the integrity and credibility of Sólás continues to be maintained. Thanks especially to our chairman Tom

Doran, who stepped down during the year and has given many years of support to the team, and myself. Thanks to Fionnuala McCotter for taking on the role of chair, and embracing this position with passion, vigour and energy. I would also like to thank Anne Clarke who, through her accountancy expertise, remains an invaluable support in ensuring that our accounts are kept in order.

The Next 12 Months

In the next 12 months we will consolidate our existing programmes and work collectively to plan for the development of our new building on site. We have started the process of applying for planning permission (July 2023), and would expect to have this secured over the coming 12 months.

We will continue to work diligently to support all of our children, young people and families, through the services that we offer. We will work hard to secure funding to allow us to continue delivering the full suite of services that we currently have available. We will continue to embrace partnerships that give voice to those with disabilities, and we will remain committed to our values or promoting fairness and equality for all (particularly those with disabilities).

Our Impact – Across All Sólás Programme

	2023	Description
People Directly Impacted. (People who have availed of the service(s) provided.		July 2022 to June 2023
		37 children took part in our Kids Educational Den programme – afterschool one to one support in literacy provide by tutors and student volunteers
		30 children aged 2-3 years and 3-4 years took part in our Early Years Programmes.
	1324	25 families took part in our Parent & Toddler programme.
		165 children with autism aged 4 to 14 attended our afterschool autism programme for social development
		180 children with disabilities aged 4 to 14 took part in our specialist summer scheme

		<p>60 children are registered and attended our Saturday autism social development club.</p> <p>25 siblings took part in our Sibling Programmes</p> <p>70 young people aged 11 to 16 are taking part on our REACH and Youth Programmes supporting young people with disabilities</p> <p>25 young people accessed respite (either bespoke or in small group setting)</p> <p>150 parents directly benefited from home support for their child with autism 150 children directly benefited from home support for their child with autism</p> <p>65 families directly benefitted from respite support</p> <p>100 parents / teachers / classroom assistants and community org workers directly benefitted from taking part in training sessions</p> <p>130 children / young people accessed play therapy or art therapy between Jan and June 2022</p> <p>20 adult carers accessed counselling</p> <p>52 children / young people accessed complimentary services (art therapy, clay therapy , trampolining)</p> <p>20 carers accessed our health & well-being programme</p> <p>20 young adults on SONA programme</p>
<p>Organisations Directly Impacted</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>8 schools gained support through Kids Educational Den 7 organisations were directly partnered with (Barnardos, South Belfast SureStart, Kids Together, Forward South Partnership, Belfast South Community Resource, Glenbrook SureStart, East Belfast SureStart)</p>

<p>People Indirectly Impacted People directly linked to service users who have</p>	<p>5000+</p>	<p>Encompassing; Parents and Teachers of children on Kids Den Programmes & Social Development programmes, parents of children in our specialist autism afterschool programmes and Saturday clubs, Parents of children with disabilities on our summer scheme, parents of young people with disability on our Youth Programmes, Parents receiving respite, Siblings on our Sibling Programme, Children on our early Years Programme; family members of those receiving play therapy, art therapy and counselling. Family members of those young adults on our SONA programme.</p>
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Financial Review

It is the policy of Sólás that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use, should be maintained at a level equivalent to 3 to 6 months salary. Where specific projects have been identified that require funding, an appropriate amount unrestricted funds can be designated to such projects.

SÓLÁS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income from:					
Charitable Activities	3	285,231	824,819	1,110,050	836,917
Investments	4	10	-	10	244
Total income		<u>285,241</u>	<u>824,819</u>	<u>1,110,060</u>	<u>837,161</u>
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	5	6,706	949,156	955,862	703,818
Total resources expended		<u>6,706</u>	<u>949,156</u>	<u>955,862</u>	<u>703,818</u>
Net (expenditure)/income for the year		278,535	-124,337	154,198	133,343
Transfers between funds		-86,152	86,152	-	-
Net movement in funds		192,383	-38,185	154,198	133,343
Fund balances at 1 July 2022		<u>131,902</u>	<u>461,399</u>	<u>593,301</u>	<u>459,958</u>
Fund balances at 30 June 2023		<u>324,285</u>	<u>423,214</u>	<u>747,499</u>	<u>593,301</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

SÓLÁS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	8	171,775	175,200
Current assets			
Debtors	9	30,603	28,824
Cash at bank and in hand		601,830	403,158
		632,433	431,782
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	(58,709)	(13,681)
Net current assets		575,724	418,101
Net Assets		747,499	593,301
Income funds			
Restricted funds	11	423,214	461,399
Unrestricted funds		324,285	131,902
		747,499	593,301

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to the companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 20.3.24



Fionnguala McCotter
Trustee

Company Registration No. NI072164

They were signed on behalf of the trustees' by: F McCotter.

SÓLÁS

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF SÓLÁS

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Sólás (the 'charity') for the year ended 30 June 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, and the notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 30 June 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended.
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements, or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
 - the directors' report included within the Trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.
-

SÓLÁS

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF SÓLÁS

Matters on which we are required to report by exception.

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the Directors were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies' regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the Trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustees' responsibilities, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Sarah Louise Lynch.

Sarah Louise Lynch (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Kearney & Co

Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor

Donegall House
2nd Floor
98-102 Donegall Street
Belfast
BT1 2GW

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions in section 444 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

In conclusion, Sólás has achieved a considerable amount over the past year, particularly in how it continued to remain delivering services for children & young people with disabilities and their families, over the COVID period. This was largely due to the collective efforts of staff, volunteers and the board. It has continued to grow and establish itself as a professional hard working charity, focused on delivering practical supports for children and young people with disabilities / additional needs and their families.

Declaration:

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustee's report.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

Signature:	<i>F. McCotter</i>
Full Name:	F. MCCOTTER
Position:	CHAIR
Date:	30-01-2024



