

**Trustees Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

**Introduction**

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their annual report and unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

**Charitable objectives and activities**

Flourish NI is dedicated to the support of people whose lives have been impacted by modern slavery or other forms of exploitation, including forced labour.

The charities aim is that every individual affected by human trafficking is supported towards a brighter future.

**Public Benefit**

In setting the charity objectives and planning activities for the year, the trustees have carefully considered the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries and the educating the wider public on modern slavery and human trafficking.

**Review of Activities & Performance**

Flourish NI provides long term, tailored, client centred support for survivors of modern slavery.

Our work is focused on reducing vulnerability to re-exploitation by supporting survivors to empower themselves to be able to move on to lead safe, independent and resilient lives.

Our core work focuses on 3 areas:

1. Casework and advocacy;
2. Community activities and skills-based courses; and
3. Therapeutic interventions.

**Casework & Advocacy**

The aim of our casework and advocacy is to provide specialist, tailored support to enable survivors to move on to lead safe, independent and resilient lives. Our support is not time limited and focuses on the individual's recovery needs.

The programme of support offered by Flourish is based upon a strengths-based model using a trauma informed approach. Casework is intensive one to one support which aims to provide pathways to practical stability, navigating systems within the UK, understanding rights and setting both short-and-long term goals, working towards independence for survivors.

This year has been challenging for caseworkers as it became clear that many services that clients were entitled to were facing increasing demand, so accessing these services has become more difficult. This has increased caseworkers support time required which has inevitably put more pressures on the charity. We are still witnessing large numbers of referrals to the charity from several referral pathways.

To meet the increased demand for its services the charity started a weekly drop-in advice clinic which is run by experienced caseworkers. This service exists for those on our waiting list to have access to support and for those who have exited our casework service but required one off support.

During the financial year the charity formally partnered with Migrant Help who funded a casework position within Flourish to specifically provide long term support for male survivors with an additional focus on health and well-being activities.

The charity has continued throughout this financial year to address the gap in support for individuals who are waiting to enter the statutory system[pre-NRM]. While the mission of Flourish is to provide long term recovery and support for survivors, the charity recognised the need for individuals to be able to access specialist care while waiting to enter the NRM.

As the landscape of trafficking within Northern Ireland continues to change, the trustees and management continue to monitor these trends and adapt to meet the needs in the evolving landscape.

#### Other Policy Activities

Flourish NI is part of both local and national networks. Within Northern Ireland, it is a member of the Belfast City Council Migrant Forum and the Department of Justice Engagement Group on Modern Slavery. During this financial year the charity was invited to join the Racial Equality Sub-Group of The Executive Office.

Nationally the charity is a member of the Human Trafficking Foundation and also the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group ['ATMG'], which is a small coalition of anti-trafficking charities influencing policy at a national level.

#### Community activities

As a charity we have witnessed the immense benefits to survivors of community activities and we continue to prioritise ways for survivors to spend time together to build confidence, improve general wellbeing and reduce isolation.

A weekly drop-in service remains a focal point to providing a safe place for survivors to meet and become involved with various activities such as jewellery making, calligraphy, floral workshops, exercise and various crafts.

A number of survivor led activities were hosted during the year giving clients the opportunity to teach a skill to others. This was both an empowering experience for the client teaching and for those participating. The charity will continue to encourage clients to use their skills in a safe supportive environment.

A number of one off events and activities were held throughout the year such as cinema trips and farm visits.

Courses have the additional benefits of providing an opportunity to learn new skills. Some examples of courses that were hosted during the year were beginners sewing classes, an employability course, feel good with food course, a computer course, and a well-being and resilience course.

The charity also facilitated a nail technician course for a group of survivors wanting to enter the workforce and learn a new skill. The course was fully accredited and those attending became certified nail technicians.

Flourish NI will continue to prioritise activities and courses as the benefits to those attending have been clear.

**Therapeutic activities**

Whilst counselling continues to be identified as a need, currently this is provided through referrals to third party services/organisations. As with all services, demand is high and clients can often have long waiting times before being able to avail of much needed mental health support.

For the full financial year, the charity provided weekly art psychotherapy. The art therapy group at Flourish aims to provide a trauma-informed, supportive and consistent space for clients to come and experience the benefits of the creative process. The space is held by an art therapist and aims to be inclusive and accommodate clients at different stages of their journey. The art therapy group can be meaningful for clients on multiple levels.

**Fundraising and Partnerships**

Fundraising remains an important source of income for the charity, whether those events that are facilitated by the charity or individuals/groups engaging in activities to fundraise on behalf of the charity. Events that were held by the charity were: an afternoon tea and a concert to mark anti-slavery day.

The charity is also incredibly grateful to partner with Refuge Chocolate, Kindred of Ireland and EKO who all support the work of the charity financially.

**Review of financial position**

The financial results for the year to 31 March 2024, showed income of £268,318 (2023: £218,259). Of this, £196,288 (2023: £117,483) was restricted income and £72,030 (2023: £100,775) was unrestricted income. All income received was from fundraising, donations or grant income.

Expenditure during the same period totalled £246,702 (2023: £213,770) of which £176,309 (2023: £125,106) was from restricted funds and £70,393 (2023: £88,664) from unrestricted.

Total funds carried forward to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 were £131,152 (2023: £109,536), being £19,979 (2023: £Nil) restricted and £111,173 (2023: £109,536) unrestricted.

**Reserves Policy**

A reserves policy is in place that aims to hold between three and six months of unrestricted expenditure, to enable the charity to continue in operation for this time and meet the operational costs of a core team. This is regularly reviewed by the Trustees and has been closely monitored during the ongoing cost of living pressures, which continue to change the landscape of fundraising.

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have considered both the level of reserves held and forecasted income anticipated, concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that adequate resources are held to bolster any uncertainties that may arise and to continue in operation for the foreseeable future.

**Structure Governance and Management**

Flourish NI is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 21st May 2014. It is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission Northern Ireland [NIC 100423].

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles of Association are known as members of the Board. The Board are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. The Board of appointed trustees run the charity, delegating the day to day running of the organisation to employed members of staff.

New members are appointed to the board by the existing members at the Annual General Meeting, or the charity may from time to time in a General Meeting increase or reduce the number of members of the board.

Members of the board meet quarterly to discuss the strategic direction of the charity, the activities of the charity and the uses of its reserves. All members of the board give of their time and expertise on a voluntary basis and receive no remuneration or benefits from the charity. Flourish NI relies heavily on volunteers giving their time to the organisation.

Members of the board are also required to disclose all relevant interests and register same with the board. The board conduct a review of risks to which the charity is exposed and review these risks annually. Where appropriate, systems and procedures are put in place to mitigate these risks.

**Reference and Administrative Details**

Charity Number: NIC 100423  
Company Number: NI624552

**Registered Office:**

24 Mount Charles  
Belfast  
BT7 1NZ

**Trustees'**

The trustees who served the charity during the year were:

Mrs Elizabeth McKee  
Miss Sharon Pauley  
Ms Judith Fox  
Miss Liz Griffith

The Board of Trustees declare that they have approved the above report.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025 by:

  
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Mrs E McKee - Chair