

MID & EAST ANTRIM COMMUNITY ADVICE SERVICES LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)".

Objectives and activities

The Company's objectives are to promote charitable purposes that benefit the community in the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council area through the advancement of education, the protection and preservation of health, and the relief of poverty, sickness, and distress. We aim to establish and provide advice services offering free, independent, confidential, and impartial advice, information, and support to the public, and to support the implementation of such guidance.

We hold meetings and training sessions, either independently or in collaboration with others, while maintaining active communication between the public, government, local government, and other public and charitable organisations.

Our goal is to influence public opinion and make representations to governmental and other bodies regarding the development and implementation of appropriate policies through our Social Policy work. We will provide evidence for government, both local and national, cooperate with authorities (national, local, or otherwise), and seek to obtain rights, privileges, and concessions that allow us to operate in alignment with the Company's objectives. This includes entering into contracts to provide services to or on behalf of other entities and engaging in any other trade that is not expected to generate taxable profits.

Additionally, we accept grants, subscriptions, and donations to support our mission.

ACTIVITIES

The Trustee Board of Directors for Mid & East Antrim Community Advice Services, led by our chairperson, is responsible for ensuring that our services are effectively delivered to meet the needs of local residents while complying with all contractual and legal obligations in accordance with charity law.

Our staff and volunteers offer practical advice, negotiate on behalf of clients, and represent them in formal settings, such as tribunal hearings. Our client group includes, but is not limited to, individuals in need due to reasons such as youth, age, ill health, disability, financial hardship, or other disadvantages. We assist a diverse range of clients, including members of the general public, older adults, the unemployed or those with low incomes, individuals dealing with addictions (including drug, solvent, and alcohol abuse), carers, ethnic minorities, the homeless, and those with mental health or physical disabilities, as well as tenants.

Common areas of inquiry for our services include:

- **Benefits** – entitlements, support with applications and appealing decisions
- **Debt and money advice** – how to manage debts, improve your financial situation and maximise income
- **Consumer issues** – from used cars to difficulties with gas and electricity suppliers
- **Work-related problems** – terms and conditions, dismissal, redundancy, and intimidation
- **Housing** – from renting through to homelessness
- **Relationships** – separation, children and bereavement

MID & EAST ANTRIM COMMUNITY ADVICE SERVICES LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

PROJECTS

Mid & East Antrim Community Advice Services have specialised Welfare Reform Advisers in each of our offices, funded by the Welfare Reform Support Project. Additionally, we have Debt Advisors in each office through the Debt NI project and offer Pensionwise appointments to guide individuals aged 50 and over, in making informed decisions about their pensions.

We collaborate with the Mid & East Antrim Age Well Partnership to extend our services to their clients throughout the Borough, offering face-to-face appointments, home visits, telephone advice, and the provision of other necessary support and guidance.

STATEMENT FROM TRUSTEES

On behalf of the board of Directors of Mid & East Antrim Community Advice the Chairperson confirms that the said Board of Directors have implemented the guidance from Charity Commission on public benefit.

CONTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteer numbers were greatly impacted due to the pandemic; however, we continue to grow our volunteer team members who provide an invaluable contribution to the work we do through their lived experience and wealth of knowledge from all areas and aspects of life.

Achievements and performance

In the year 2023/24, across all projects MEACAS provided advice, help and support to 15511 clients, dealing with 27,812 issues. The total income generated for our clients across all projects was £4,230,759. This income is generated primarily by the identification of benefit entitlement and subsequent successful benefit applications and successful benefit appeals.

Financial review

The charity's incoming recourse for the year amounted to £511,807 (2023: £651,849). Principal sources of funding are from grants and donations. The outgoing expenditure for the year amounted to £541,129 (2023: £688,555) The net outgoings for the year amounted to £29,322 (2023: outgoing £36,706).

The Charity is extremely grateful to all its grant funders, without whose support Mid & East Antrim Community Advice Services would not be able to run a number of its activities.

Reserves policy

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six months expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This current level of free reserves falls short of this, but the Trustees continue to monitor.

Risk assessment

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

MID & EAST ANTRIM COMMUNITY ADVICE SERVICES LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and acceptable as charitable by HMRC under reference XR39848. The company was incorporated on 25th June 2003. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the company, and is governed by its Articles of Association.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Deborah Neill
Rosemary Quinn
Rosemary Simpson
Marilyn Weekes

The Directors of the company are also charity Trustees for the purpose of charity law. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association unless otherwise determined by the company in General Meeting the number of Trustees shall not be less than three and is not subject to any maximum. Trustees are elected to serve only until the next Annual General Meeting, at which they shall then be eligible for re-election. In agreement with the Board one new board member was co-opted on to the board, a further two members will be sought during 2023-24 to ensure that the quota of trustees is maintained. All applications to join the board are advertised in MEA local papers.

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that MBS Chartered Accountants be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



Rosemary Quinn

Trustee & Director

Dated: 10/12/24.....

MID & EAST ANTRIM COMMUNITY ADVICE SERVICES LTD

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees, who are also the directors of Mid & East Antrim Community Advice Services Ltd for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.