

**NORTHERN IRELAND SAFETY GROUP**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**Trustees Report for year ended 31 December 2023**

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

**Reference and Administrative Details**

Northern Ireland Safety Group  
13 De Courcy Avenue  
Carrickfergus  
BT38 7LJ

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC 100743)

**Charity Trustees/Directors**

The Charity Trustees who served during the year or who were trustees at the date of this report were

Wilson Lambe (President)  
Wendy Beatty (Chairperson)  
Wendy Moore (Vice-Chairperson)  
Jimmy Fenton (PRO)  
Ashleigh Birkett (Immediate Past Chair)  
Ernie Spence (Joint Secretary/Treasurer)  
Nicola McCracken (Joint Secretary)  
Tom Stephenson  
David Cooke  
Priscilla Woods  
Heather McKinstry  
Mandy Nelson  
Lyndsey Thompson  
Ian McIlveen  
Declan McLogan  
John Thompson  
Will Johnston  
Jim Hegarty

**Status**

The Charity is registered with the NI Charities Commission under reference NIC100743

The Charity has also been accepted as a charity by HMRC under UTR number 0115305845 and as such no provision for taxation has been made.

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**Structure & Management**

Northern Ireland Safety Group is a charity which is governed by its Constitution.

The organisation is primarily managed by an Executive Committee made up of the Office bearers, 8 other committee members and 4 technical advisors on the committee.

There are no employees. However, 2 members of the Executive Committee function as Secretaries and tender for their services on a 3-year contract.

Through the period the payments to the two Executive Committee members were:-

Ernie Spence	£37,873.95
Nicola McCracken	£22,455.31

**Description & Purpose**

The principal aim and objective of the Charity is to promote occupational health and safety amongst all people in the workplace and as such raise awareness of the reduction of work-related fatalities, workplace incidents and cases of ill health in Northern Ireland for the public benefit.

**Activities & Objectives**

This is carried out by running monthly meetings which allow health and safety practitioners (and other interested parties) to network together, share ideas and in general strive to improve the overall health and safety of and for the workforce and those who come into contact with them.

The Trustees are greatly appreciative of all their funders and the continued support of their members, without whose help the charity could not fulfil its charitable aims and objectives.

Other activities carried out by the Group include the running of seminars, running of a safety quiz, running of a Safety Conference, management of a Safety Awards scheme (in conjunction with the National Irish Safety Organisation), and the promotion of health and safety to those in secondary education about to embark on work placement.

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**Achievements & Performance**

2023 has been a landmark year for the organisation, as we reached our 70th anniversary. Whilst completing the normal full programme of events we also planned and held a 70th Anniversary Conference and Gala Awards Dinner in November 2023 to mark this milestone.

We continued to follow the hybrid format of mixing in-person meetings with online webinars throughout the year, and also returned to holding practical Workshops, which can provide hands-on learning for our members.

A total of thirteen meetings were held and the stats below show the numbers for the various meetings and views of any webinar recordings.

Month	Meeting type	Attendees: In-person or Online	No of Webinar Recording Views	Total views (Actual Attendees plus Recording Views)
Jan	In-person	58	N/A	58
Feb	In-person	61	N/A	61
Mar	Webinar	65	162	227
April	In-person Workshop	75	N/A	75
April	In-person Workshop	59	N/A	59
May	Online Webinar	38	4	42
May	Online Webinar	120	630	750
June	Online Webinar	76	145	221
June	In-person Workshop (restricted numbers)	37	N/A	37
Aug	Webinar	70	167	237
Sept	In person Workshop (restricted numbers)	37	N/A	37
Oct	Webinar	92	282	374
Dec	Webinar	55	Not uploaded as yet	TBA

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A key benefit of running in-person meetings is that we are able to facilitate member networking at these events, which is greatly beneficial to the health and safety community and welcomed by the membership. The online webinars offer the benefit of being easy to access and questions are posted anonymously for the presenters, via the Q&A function on the Zoom call. The recording adds another tier of viewers, and, as can be seen above, greatly expands the overall numbers of people who are able to gain knowledge from topical presentations.

Our e-zine continues to be the mainstay of how we communicate to those that interact with us. Our subscriber list witnessed real growth through the year (see below).

Subscribers at start of year	919	Subscribers at end of year	988	Net increase of subscribers	7.5%
The actual number of new subscribers was 98 but we had 29 un-subscriptions over the year.					

Ezine open rates continued to be high, with numbers averaging from around 200 to 250 no. opening each ezines (note that many subscribers will only open ezines that are of particular interest to them). The number of ezines sent out this year have also increased, so it is pleasing to see open rates remain high.

Membership numbers (paid members) increased in the year from 282 to 294 (nett increase to also take in account members who left).

The annual Occupational Health and Safety Quiz took place in University of Ulster Belfast Campus in February, with the university coming on board as an additional sponsor. The winner of both Previous Entrants and Novice Categories then attended the All-Ireland NISO / NISG Quiz Finals in Sligo in April.

Our annual NISO / NISG All Ireland Occupational Health & Safety Awards saw ten entries from NISG and four of these entries achieved Category 1 awards, the top category. NISG members continue to score very well across the board. It is also interesting to see repeat entrants year on year, showing that our members value this benchmarking with their peers.

The John Gordon Safety Person of the Year Award received eight entries this year, many of them from organisations who have not previously entered. Two worthy nominees won overall, both from a non-H & S background, showing that good health and safety practice is active outside of the H & S professional who would be our main member contacts.

Our Farming Sub committee saw a flurry of activity in the second half of the year, with representation at Clougher Valley Show. Collaboration then took place with the Young Farmers Club, following a positive meeting with their new Chief Executive.

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This resulted in NISG Executive Committee members becoming judges at the Young Farmers Annual Public Speaking Competition throughout the Province. This partnership is due to continue with the aim of interacting with young people early in order to engage them and encourage them to adopt good practice on local farms going forward. A new Farming Sponsor, Lakeland Dairies, was also signed up during the year, providing financial and contact resources for this busy sub committee.

NISG are Affiliate Members of the Farm Safety Partnership in Northern Ireland, and work alongside organisations such as HSENI; DAERA; UFU; FSF; NFUM; YFCU. This year we received recognition of our work in improving health and safety in farming at the Farming Life Awards and we won the Farm Safety Affiliate Award, a great achievement as competition came from much larger organisations than ours.

The most active sub committee in 2023 was the 70th Events one, which was formed last year to plan for our 70th Anniversary celebrations. A celebration conference – “Learning from the Past, Planning for the Future” saw almost 250no. people attend La Mon Hotel in November. The morning presentations focused on reviewing health and safety legislation and practice since 1953, when NISG was formed, Taster Workshops provided a hand-on experience during the lunch break and throughout the day with Machine Eye; 3M Ear Fit Validation; EHS International showcasing the Avenger Fire Robot; Iyengar Yoga for the Workplace with Jayne Bailie; Working Beside Railway Lines Video Demo with Translink and Health Matters’ MOT Health Checks Van in operation.

An exhibition of over 30 stands showcasing local health and safety Apps; tech products; PPE innovation and training consultancy organisation, many of whom support the construction industry, was also viewed by the 200 attendees from all sectors of the Northern Ireland workforce. As the largest gathering of health and safety personnel since before Covid, it provided an excellent networking forum for sharing knowledge.

The afternoon session was a panel forum on new and emerging risks, which organisations such as Belfast Harbour Commission; P&O Ferries; Translink and EHS International showcasing the tech and innovation they are using now and planning to engage for the future.

We also held an evening Gala Dinner provided a fitting backdrop for the NISG / NISO All-Ireland Occupational Safety Awards 2023; the NISG John Gordon Awards 2023 and long service presentations to long-standing NISG Executive Committee members being presented. We had almost 180 no. in attendance, and this proved a fitting finale to our 2023 celebrations. A ballot also took place during the event, with an amazing total of £2100 donated to our chosen local charity - Air Ambulance.

Our other sub committees including Development & Governance, Driving, and Education continued to meet during the course of the year and much of their activity assisted both the programme of meetings and workshops and the 70th Conference.

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Collaboration with others was strengthened with activity taking place with Building Mental Health Alliance, Workplace Health Leadership Group and Buildhealth, to name a few.

It has been an extremely busy year for the organisation, and we look forward to 2024 with a clear mission to promote occupational health and safety across all of Northern Ireland and continue to provide relevant knowledge and learning for all of our stakeholders.

**Public Benefit Statement**

The Northern Ireland Safety Group meets the public benefit requirement as follows:

The direct benefits which flow from the purpose are the improvement of safety and health knowledge in the workforce leading to the reduction of accidents/incidents and ill health at work. These benefits are evidenced through the increase in Group membership, the numbers who attend monthly meetings, feedback from Conferences and seminars that the organisation run, the growing number of subscribers to the organisation's e-zine, the increasing numbers who attend the Annual Safety Quiz and the increased numbers of organisations who enter the All Ireland Safety Awards. There is no harm from the activities pursued by the organisation. The Charity's beneficiaries are Safety Group members and the wider safety and health profession in

Northern Ireland and those people working for or with them be they employers, employees, self-employed or sub-contractors and young people who will be entering the workforce in the future.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 4 of the Charities Act 2008 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

**Financial Review**

The Financial Statements show a Deficit for the period of £3,978 (2022: deficit £1,764).

**Reserves Policy**

The Trustees of the charity have established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets ('the free reserves') held by the charity should amount to between 2 and 6 months' worth of the resources expended which equates to between £21,607 and £64,821 in general funds. At this level, the Trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding; however, it would obviously be necessary to consider how the funding would be replaced or activities changed.