

SHELTER, CAMPAIGN FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE (NORTHERN IRELAND) LIMITED

DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 2 to the financial statements and comply with the company'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).

Management Committee's report

The Management Committee presents its report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023. All the company activity took place during the third year of the Corona Virus 19 pandemic.

Results

The Committee Members are pleased to present the results for 2022-23. There were net outgoing resources for the year of £61,567 including recognition of future repayments to NIHE of £35,225.

Structure, Governance, and Management

Shelter Campaign for Homeless People (Northern Ireland) Limited is a company limited by guarantee, registration number N1 014542. The Company has received approval by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland as a charity, reference number NIC 100767. The company is recognised by HM Revenue and Customs, reference number XN46537.

Shelter Campaign for Homeless People (Northern Ireland) Limited's conduct is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Management Committee is responsible for the policy and strategy of the company along with the financial and legal probity of the organisation and the appointment of members. The Management Committee meets on at least a bi-monthly basis and receives management and financial reports from the Management.

Members are recruited to ensure that representative skills and experiences are in place to deliver the company's vision and that the mission and objectives are achieved. There are two classes of membership; individual and; corporate and unincorporated bodies. Any person can apply for individual membership of the Company. Application to become an individual member is open to anyone and is subject to approval of the Management Committee.

Potential Management Committee members are considered by the membership and elected at a general meeting of the company or may be co-opted.

Objectives and activities

The main aim is to reduce the risk and the impact of homelessness and poor housing by raising awareness of housing and homelessness issues, campaigning for real change and by promoting and participating in effective long-term housing and support solutions.

This aim is to be achieved by the following strategic objectives and principal outcomes sought.

. Public Engagement:

- Effective awareness raising of the risk and the occurrence of homelessness and its prevention by engaging with the public and seeking their support.

. Promoting Housing Solutions:

- Promote multiple housing solutions and housing related services both temporary and permanent; innovate and encourage community led and self-developed housing.

. Campaign Ready:

- Provide evidence-based campaigns in support of Strategic Themes; research, evaluate, educate and respond to proposed government legislation and policy

. Resource Sound:

- Ensure financial/ fundraising action to underpin the achievement of Strategic Objectives; create the most effective highly skilled and motivated staff resource both paid and unpaid

. Reducing Poverty and Social Exclusion:

- Work with and support socially excluded people and enable them to act, designed to create pathways out of poverty and encourage greater choice and control over their housing and neighbourhood services.

Achievements and performance

In the year 2022/23

. The NI Assembly was collapsed in February 2022 which led to fresh elections in May 2022. However, the MLA's and parties were unable to elect a Speaker, so the impact has been to leave Northern Ireland without a functioning government. That continued for the whole financial year and continues still. The lack of an Executive and Assembly impacts on legislation and funding decisions and the longer this continues, the greater the impact on public funded services and on society.

. In the absence of a functioning Assembly, Shelter has continued to attend relevant All-Party Working Groups which comprise MLA's from across all political parties.

. As we moved into the 3rd Year of the global pandemic, some sense of normality began to appear progressively as the year went on. There was continuing vigilance by staff and service users in relation to the Corona Virus 19 pandemic. Front line staff in SLATE had worked within the office during the whole of the pandemic period, while staff in GABLE had periods of working from home when required. Staff mostly have returned to working in the office. The Management Committee continued to meet digitally.

. For part of a third year there was a more limited additional Covid Emergency funding available but was not accessed on this occasion.

. Our main recurrent funding comes through Supporting People. As part of the contract arrangements, Shelter is required to meet the accreditation standards every 3 years and Shelter was confirmed as a funding partner for a further 3-year period.

. This year the Supporting People funding programme received an uplift of around 5.8%, including some backdated to November 2021. This funding restores the numerical funding amount to match the level that was removed in 2017. However, the numerical funding remains close to the amounts originally awarded in 2007/8 for the Supporting People contracts. The situation has become more critical as Supporting People staff salaries have been increased by over 30% during this 15-year period. More time is spent looking for extra amounts of funding to mitigate the increased cost pressures on reserves. Supporting People have indicated that they hope to increase funding contracts amounts over the next few years.

. Supporting People funding enables SLATE to provide accommodation and support to young people aged 16-25 who are homeless in the Omagh area. While in the accommodation, the step-up service, residents build their skills and knowledge to enable them to successfully live independently when they are ready to move on. Young people can stay in the accommodation for up to two years.

. The SLATE project also provides a StepDown service which is made available to young people aged 18 to 25 who have initially been supported within the fully furnished accommodation and who are seeking to live in their own accommodation in the Omagh area and who, for a variety of reasons, need further support to sustain their ability to succeed in their own tenancy.

. This was another busy year for SLATE and staff did an excellent job supporting residents and service users through the pandemic, meeting the challenges of the times for staff and beneficiaries. The return

to more normal practices has been welcomed. During this year, 21 young people were referred for support, of which 5 were offered a service in our fully furnished supported accommodation. 8 young people moved on from our furnished accommodation, 3 moved into private rental housing, 3 into NIHE housing and 2 were evicted.

· Nine SLATE service users benefited from in-house counselling, facilitated by our volunteer counsellor, Stephen Maguire. This reflects an increase in numbers compared to the previous year.

· Following a review of the former office at SLATE, the NIHE confirmed that the flat could be restored for domestic use, and it could be included as an additional accommodation unit in the StepUp part of the service. Supporting People has asked for a review of the service delivery and a revised proposal was prepared and subsequently submitted for approval by Supporting People. A review of the rents is also proposed.

· We believe that support extends beyond the outcomes outlined by our service contract with Supporting People, so for example Shelter allocates funds for social and recreational activities to enhance community connections and personal skills among residents. Food donations from ASDA and M&S, are distributed when donations are received to all service users. Cooking demonstrations in the office were held to provide our young people with meal preparation skills throughout the winter months and staff made sure that service users received a hot meal each week.

· We appreciate the supplementary funds provided during the Christmas season, facilitated by the Department for Communities and administered through Homeless Connect. A BBQ was held in August to promote service user engagement/community involvement, this was a social event well attended by all service users.

· As part of an ongoing refurbishment of all our leased property, three more flats underwent upgrades, including new flooring, a full internal repaint, and the provision of new sofas, bedding, and soft furnishings. These refurbishments were implemented to ensure that the overall living conditions of residents remain at a high quality.

· SLATE recently implemented In-Form, a software system provided by Homeless Link, which has significantly improved efficiency by enabling quick and effective tracking of individual outcomes for our service users. Hosted in the cloud, this platform is accessible from any device. Launched in August, staff underwent training in advance, and it has proven to be successful. Staff members now feel confident in utilizing it effectively, and the In-Form team promptly responds to any issues that arise.

· In November 2022, Sheila Eeley brought her extensive experience in working with young people and the homeless sector to our SLATE team. We also welcomed Alex Burke in March 2023, who not only became a valuable staff member but also contributed unique insights as a former service user, showcasing his lived experience in supporting our service users.

· In March 2023, Supporting People conducted an audit at SLATE, and we are pleased to report that it was a success. The dedicated efforts of our staff were recognised with a positive result, affirming their hard work and commitment.

· SLATE staff engaged in various training courses aimed at enhancing their skills, including Mental Health First Aid, Walk Leader Training, Child Sexual Exploitation, LGBTQI+ Awareness, Keeping Children and Adults Safe, Gender Awareness, and Motivational Interviewing.

· In April 2022, Debbie organized a successful fundraising BBQ, generating an impressive £2800 in support of SLATE. We had the opportunity to meet with Carley McMahan, ASDA Community Champion, to discuss SLATE's impactful work in the community. Subsequently, we submitted an application for funding, and as a result, we were granted a generous £1500. Moreover, SLATE was selected as a chosen charity for ASDA's Just Giving initiative, securing an additional £300 in February. Street collections further bolstered our fundraising efforts, taking place in both June and December 2022.

· In terms of publicity and awareness, Homeless Connect, the representative body for homeless organisations, visited SLATE in April to discuss our work and hear about the impact of homelessness in the local area. Staff actively participated in the Southwest College Freshers Fair in September, raising awareness about SLATE's role and services for young homeless people. A presentation took place at Loretto Convent Omagh in October aimed to educate young individuals about homelessness

and our efforts to address it. In November, drama students from Dean Maguire College visited our office, conducting interviews that were featured in a school documentary covered by the Ulster Herald in December. SLATE staff also engaged in discussions with Ramona House in December to address homelessness and housing challenges in Omagh. Participation in the NIHE homeless awareness fair, a stall at Omagh Community House, and attendance at ASCERT's Dry January/Feel Good Friday event in Cookstown further showcased our services. In March, SLATE had a presence at the Neighbourhood Renewal Health and Wellbeing Fair hosted by Omagh Leisure Centre, a highly popular event.

. Shelter NI is funded by Supporting People to provide services at its GABLE project, based in Strabane, one of only two Home Improvement Agencies (HIA) in NI. In the financial year 2022/23 186 households were referred to the HIA for support by the NIHE's grants department.

. Most applicants for adaptations are identified by the Occupational Therapy Service of the Western Health and Social Care Trust. All are households with older or disabled adults or families with disabled children. Also, they must be homeowners or private tenants needing to make changes to their home to make it suitable for living by using a means tested Disabled Facilities Grant. Although this is lower than the previous year, by March 2023, staff at GABLE were supporting over 316 older and disabled households. These home adaptations help residents to remain independent in their own homes and prevent the risk of homelessness.

. We asked service users to complete satisfaction forms and, in the year, of those service users who gave their opinion of the service they received; from a possible score of 10, all gave full marks for meeting their needs. All said that the service made their life easier, was trustworthy and user friendly. All found the staff helpful and would use the service again.

. Shelter NI also provides other services such as GABLE's Helping Hands. This project is aimed at older people in the Derry City and Strabane and in Fermanagh and Omagh Council Areas, who own their home or who rent from a private landlord, who have urgent repairs, other home hazards or minor adaptations which need to be carried out quickly and at a fair price. The type of jobs carried include the provision of Bannister Rails, Grab Rails, Handrails, Keys Safes, Power Washing, Gutter Cleaning and other tasks.

. Despite the end of the funding contract from the Community National Lottery, Shelter has continued to provide this important service through a combination of achieving small pockets of grants and using its unrestricted reserves. Shelter is continuing to seek for a more sustainable funder and to expand the reach of the service.

. The need for the service is reflected in the number of requests received. The number of requests is higher than the previous financial year- 519 requests, resulting in 314 modifications completed between April 2022 and March 2023. Some households would have made more than one request over this period. While there has been an increase in referrals in this financial year there were fewer completed jobs. Many of these referrals come from the Occupational Therapy Service but households are signposted by other agencies and some people make direct application. Most people who used the service said they would use it again and were very satisfied with the quality and commitment of the HH team.

. At the GABLE project we have a Trusted Trader Scheme (TTS). There has not been much activity on this platform due to significant issues with the building trade. There are 73 traders who have registered on our TTS site. Continuing challenges persist due to the escalating cost of materials and the overall demand for contracting services. The reduced value of Disabled Facilities Grant payments has made such projects less appealing to contractors. Consequently, attracting interest in registering for the TTS has proven difficult. This situation has also resulted in clients having to make multiple requests for quotations to find a trader willing to undertake the works at a cost aligned with the grant's value. Despite these difficulties, user feedback for the website has been consistently positive.

. Shelter NI has been fortunate to host Ellie Mills, who participated in a 15-day placement as part of our long-standing partnership with the Insight Programme at Queen's University Belfast. This placement was a crucial component of Ellie's BSc Hons Psychology Undergraduate Degree, as she was near completion of her final year of study. The primary objective of her research project encompassed gathering information on various aspects, including social and intermediate housing, housing demand/stock, housing schemes/programmes, homelessness in Northern Ireland, and strategies/programmes addressing homelessness.

. Shelter has continued to outsource services such as Information Technology, Human Resources and

Funding Support as well as the previously mentioned In-Form Software hosted by Homeless Link. In relation to maintaining a digital presence, Shelter began a project to upgrade its website, that is aimed at completion in 23/24.

· Shelter NI participates in the Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE), an independent, multi-disciplinary and multi-sector consortium of academic and non-academic stakeholders. CaCHE is UK-wide in coverage (across all four nations and at different spatial scales within), as well as UK-level in focus. It intends to advance knowledge and improve the evidence base for both housing policy and practice in all parts of the U.K. The local hub meets several times each year to receive presentations and to discuss relevant research objectives and outcomes.

· Shelter NI continues to work closely with the People's Kitchen, a volunteer led charity which provides a nightly outreach service to people on the street in the centre of Belfast. From its base on the Antrim Road, it provides a foodbank and a drop-in centre for people in need of support as well as supporting homeless people in temporary accommodation.

· Shelter continues to support community led housing projects including co-housing. A rural cohousing project in Portaferry has applied for planning permission. The Belfast Co-Housing Mutual Home Ownership Society (BCHMHOS) which is headed by a management committee continues to actively seek a site to develop up to 20 new homes and a community hub. When completed, the project will provide permanently affordable housing for sale or rent.

· Interest has been growing in possible Community led housing initiatives and have been considered with the Department for Communities Housing Supply strategy. Shelter remains hopeful that support for Community led housing would be included as an outcome in a future Programme for Government.

· Co-operative Alternatives is the only specialist organisation with the sole aim of developing and supporting co-operatives on the island of Ireland and Shelter NI is a member. CA is supporting the development of a student Housing cooperative and Community Farming among other cooperative programmes and plans.

· Shelter NI remains an active member of and contributes to Homeless Connect, the Committee Representing Independent Supporting People Providers (CRISPP), Co-operative Alternatives and the Belfast Co-Housing Mutual Home Ownership Society and is actively partnering with the Peoples Kitchen charity.

· The Management Committee met 13 times in the year including several special meetings. As part of the ongoing strategic review of the organisation, an application was made to the Dormant Accounts Fund to support the appointment of a new position to support the growth of the organisation to meet the growing needs of homeless people and people in need of housing and support.

· Shelter NI also made statements to politicians, gave television and radio interviews and press releases on a variety of housing and homelessness topics during the year.

· The Shelter NI Fundraising Committee, consisting of staff representatives from each office, has remained committed to advancing fundraising initiatives and organizing events. Despite the challenges posed by increased workload pressure on staff, traditional street collections and the use of collection boxes have successfully taken place this year. The committee's resilience has allowed for the continuation of these important fundraising activities.

· We acknowledge the continuing support of generous donations from the public and community groups.

Reserves policy

The Company holds a minimum of 3 months working towards six months running costs as a reserve to ensure the orderly run down of the organisation in the situation of an unforeseeable terminal event.

Structure, governance, and management

The Directors who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

R Cashell

H Cox

M Fenton
R Mahaffy
J Whyte (Resigned 10 August 2022)
P Loughran (Resigned 4 October 2023)
A Hettmannsperger
E Evans
T Taylor (Resigned 8 February 2023)
E Ferrin (Appointed 1 November 2023)
L Neill (Appointed 1 November 2023)

Funds held as custodian trustee.

The charity does not hold any funds as custodian for any other trustee body.

Auditor

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

Taxation

Under Section 485 and 486 of Corporation Taxes Act 2010, Shelter, Campaign for the Homeless (Northern Ireland) Limited is entitled to charity tax exemption.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The Directors' report was approved by the Board of Directors.....

A McQuillan



Secretary

Date: 26th January 2024