

## **Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

### **Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2024**

**The Directors who are also Trustees under provisions of the Companies Act 2006 present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024**

#### **Governing Document**

Kinship Care Northern Ireland (known as 'Kinship Care NI') is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on the 27th April 2010 and accepted as a charity by the Inland Revenue. The company was registered with the new Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (Regulator of Charities in Northern Ireland) on the 4th December 2014.

The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up, members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1. The number of members at the 31st March 2024 was 9.

The charitable objects of the charity are, i) the advancement of support to kinship carers and their children; ii) the prevention and relief of poverty; iii) the advancement of education amongst children and young people in kinship care; iv) the advancement of citizenship and community development, and; v) the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability and financial hardship.

#### **Principal Activities**

Kinship Care NI's mission is to help and support children who cannot be cared for by their own parents to live safely and securely within their own families and communities. Kinship Care NI plays a key role in the development and delivery of services for kinship families and is the only organisation in Northern Ireland which focuses exclusively on helping and supporting kinship carers and the children they care for.

#### **Objectives and Activities**

Kinship Care NI believe kinship carers, both formal and informal should have access to the help and support they need to assist them in the care and upbringing of their family and friends children. Kinship Care NI responds to the needs of kinship carers and the children in their care through the provision of advice and information and a range of support services. These services are aimed at reducing the stigma and isolation many kinship carers experience in their day to day lives and building the confidence, self esteem and resilience of children in kinship care. It is our commitment that children in kinship care receive the very best start in life, and children who have experienced the loss or removal of their parents achieve personal happiness and well being, and fulfil their potential.

Our long-term commitment is that every kinship carer, irrespective of where they live, or the legal status of the arrangement will have access to a range of support services to help and support them in their kinship role. We will continue to evaluate our services alongside our stakeholders, funders, volunteers, kinship carers and their children and continue to offer kinship carers and their children a voice and choice as to how services can meet their needs.

## **Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

### **Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2024**

.....continued

#### **Services Delivered**

- 2,424 people came through our 5 Kinship Care Centres.
- Handled 656 calls via our tCaring for Kin telephone helpline.
- Provided emergency food packages and essentials via our KIND and Good Help Projects to 158 carers/individuals and 179 children and young people..
- Secured £74,124 in social security benefit/other financial support for kinship carers, lifting them and the children they care for out of situations of severe poverty.
- Provided advice to 105 kinship carers on their legal and financial entitlements.
- Engaged 9777 children in group activities.
- Engaged 59 young people in structured activities via our THRIVE Project.
- Delivered 52 Summer Activities to 404 carers and 647 children and young people.
- Provided advice, information and support to 77 children via our Advocacy Service.
- 428 kinship carers and 542 children engaged in services via our 'Kinnections' Project.
- Distributed 418 Helping Hand Grants in respect of 846 children and young people.
- Engaged 78 children in one to one support.
- Engaged 80 children in play based activities via our Children's Support Service
- Engaged 15 sibling carers and 31 children in our Together Forever Project for older brothers and sisters caring for their younger siblings and a further 79 children in sibling time activities.
- Provided toys and gifts to 901 children in kinship care and 152 children in the community at Christmas and distributed £4,425 in vouchers to 52 families in respect of 87 children.
- Set up Helping Hand Project and provided immediate and practical support to 278 carers/households and 401 children.
- Opened new Kinship Care Centre in Belfast (Unit, 1B 471-473 Antrim Road).
- Continued our School of Confidence Futures Project and engaged 341 young people in CPD accredited training, workshops and work taster sessions.
- Engaged 63 children and young people from different backgrounds and communities in a Kinship Care Good Relations Project.
- Engaged 38 children in weekly Grandparent and Toddler sessions and delivered 12 Confidence Building Programmes to 91 young people ('Youth Champions', Kreative Kins and . Mini Kins')
- Engaged 161 kinship carers in 'Kin Together' support group meetings and activities.
- Delivered training, workshops and information sessions to 127 kinship carers.
- Delivered befriending and emotional support to 129 kinship carers/children in their own homes.
- Supported 103 carers via our Caring for Carers Project for carers in Strabane and L'Derry. engaging 85 carers in Kin Together Support Group sessions, training and family recreation.
- Engaged and delivered structured interventions to 77 children and young people via the MACE Project (Dungannon, Strabane and L'Derry).
- Recruited and trained and supported 41 volunteers and 7 sessional workers.
- Provided 284 individuals and families with free items via our Kindness of Strangers shop.
- Set up new Kindness of Strangers shops in Claudy and Belfast.

## **Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

### **Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2024**

.....continued

- Held Information Days, Coffee Mornings and fundraising events to raise awareness of kinship care and attended numerous Cost of Living events.
- Commissioned Dr. Katrina Collins (Collins Consultancy) to carry out a 3 year evaluation of our Children's Support Service and Kinnections Project.
- Commissioned Consult NB to carry out an external evaluation of our Community School of Futures Project, funded by the UK Community Renewal Fund.
- Shared our learning of kinship care through various workshops and groups, including Family Support Hub Meetings, Helplines Network NI Awareness Day, Good Help Workshops and articles in the Belfast Telegraph, Mid Ulster Mail, Derry Journal, Your Magazine and Families First Magazine.
- Worked alongside Global Film Makers to capture the voices, views and experiences of young people engaged in our Community School of Futures Project.
- Celebrated International Women's Day, Social Value Week, Volunteer Week, Small Charity Week, Entrepreneurship Week and #socialaturday.
- Increased our social media presence on Facebook and Twitter.

Our services work in partnership with local organisations, including social service departments. For example, in L'Derry our Children's Support Service and Kinship Care Support Service work closely with the Gateway Team, Family Intervention Service, Family and Kinship Fostering Team to support kinship carers and children and young people who are struggling to come to terms with the loss or removal of their parents. In Magherafelt our 'Caring for Kin' Project works with solicitors, the Social Security Agency, Health Visitors and schools and receives referrals from a range of community sector organisations. Our 'Kinnections' Project receives referrals from social work professionals across Northern Ireland and social sector organisations working with disadvantaged children and families in the community.

#### **Achievements and Performance**

Throughout the year Kinship Care NI continued to provide advice, information, support and family recreation to kinship carers and their children across Northern Ireland. Our helpline and 'Kin Together' Support Groups have been instrumental in engaging kinship carers, particularly grandparents and older kinship carers who feel isolated and overwhelmed with everything that is going on in their lives including dealing with the long-term impact of COVID-19.

Evide Impact Tracker (Case Management Tool) and New Philanthropy Capital's Well Being Measures are used across all our projects and services to measure and evaluate our impact on the outcomes of children, young people and their carers. Surveys, comment

## **Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

### **Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2024**

.....continued

cards, focus groups, video diaries and testimonials are also used to measure the impact of interventions on the overall wellbeing of kinship carers and the children they care for. 'Quizzdom' is also used to gather feedback from children and young people engaged in services.

#### **Helpline**

Over the course of the year 636 calls were handled by our helpline. Following one call made to helpline based on completed helpline surveys (n = 152):-

- 86% of kinship carers said they felt more confident.
- 94% of kinship carers understood their situation better.
- 95% of kinship carers reported feeling less isolated.
- 84% of kinship carers felt that their problem was sorted out.
- 16% of kinship carers still felt unsure.

Based on questions asked at the end of calls to the helpline (n = 152):-

- 88% rated the Helpline as "Excellent".
- 90% said the information they received was useful and of good quality.
- 88% said staff members understood their needs.

#### **Evaluations**

Throughout the year we evaluated our impact on the financial, social and emotional of carers and their children. Carers were asked to complete a short questionnaire and wellbeing to outline how we responded to their needs and the quality of support they received.

Based on questions asked at the end of support sessions/home visits and one to one support via Zoom or telephone (n = 152) 82% of carers said they had experienced an improvement in their overall wellbeing and 226 out of 226 carers who received support via our KIND and Helping Hand Projects said their financial well-being had improved.

#### **Other (Surveys, Focus Groups, Comment Cards, Testimonials)**

- 84% of kinship carers attending Kin Together Support Groups said they felt less isolated and 80% of kinship carers reported an improvement in their emotional/social wellbeing (n = 106).
- 85% of kinship carers said the training they received was of good quality and 88% said they would recommend our training to other kinship carers (n = 125).
- 100% of kinship carers who received a grant reported an improvement in family life (n = 226).
- 86% of children reported an improvement in their confidence and 88% reported an improvement in their emotional well-being (n=162).
- 85% of children said they had had a say in decisions affecting their lives (n=117).

## **Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

### **Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2024**

.....continued

During the course of the year, 59 volunteers made a huge impact on the lives of children and young people – 8,495 hours of their time (worth £95,670 to the organisation).

Volunteering at Kinship Care NI produces a tangible return for society, not only in terms of keeping children within their own families, but also helping children in kinship care fulfil their potential. We are enormously dependent on the contribution of volunteers and extremely grateful for their dedication. We are also grateful to the many trusts, foundations, businesses and individuals who have been so generous in their support of Kinship Care NI. We thank you for the many ways you have shown your commitment to us, for your encouragement and shared understanding of the importance of our work. Each gift, no matter how big or small, whether time or money makes a difference to our work with kinship carers and the children they care for.

During the year we focused specifically on supporting carers and children who were significantly impacted by COVID-19, including helping children catch up with their schooling and engaging carers who were isolated or living in more remote locations in Northern Ireland. Allen and Overy Solicitors provided us with £3,333 to engage young people in opportunities for education and the UK Community Renewal Fund provided us with a grant for our Community School of Futures Project. We also received several grants from Cash for Kids to purchase items for children to help with their schooling and enable children achieve their potential. Support was also provided by the American Ireland Fund and the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (Older People's Fund and ARN Foundation) to allow us support carers and individuals in the community hit hardest by rising food and energy costs.

During the year income from charitable trusts and foundations helped support a variety of programmes and services for children, young people and their carers. We would like to thank the media and members of the public for highlighting and responding to individual appeals, including appeals for food, clothes, toys and household items for children who came to live with members of their extended family in very difficult and traumatic circumstances. Our funders and everyone who gives us gifts in kind and donations for children and young people have helped get us to where we are today. We are extremely grateful for your generosity and support.

## **Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

### **Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2024**

.....continued

#### **Sharing Our Learning**

Throughout the year we collaborated with 86 organisations and shared our learning of the needs and experiences of kinship carers and the children they care for. We are members of the All Party Group for Children and Young People, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Young Carers Sub-Group, the Adoption and Children's Bill Stakeholder Group and CO3's Health and Social Care Special Interest Group. Over the course of the year we further developed our relationship with the Department of Health and 5 Health and Social Care Trusts to raise the profile of kinship care and ensure the needs of children and their carers are not overlooked in forthcoming policy developments.

Kinship Care NI sit on 5 Family Support Hubs in the Western Trust, 5 in the Northern Trust, 3 in the Belfast Trust, 1 in the South Eastern Trust and 1 in the Southern Trust. These Hubs comprise a multi-agency network of organisations working with disadvantaged families. Through our involvement with these networks we share our knowledge and expertise of kinship care and improve awareness of the support needs of kinship families living in the community. Over the course of the year we met with politicians, policy makers and social service professionals and engaged them in discussion about the many challenges experienced by kinship carers and how their needs could be best met moving forward.

Across all our projects and services we use several outcome frameworks to measure, monitor and evaluate our impact in supporting kinship carers and their children. Kinship care can be complex and the support needs of carers and the children they care for are very different to other families. Evidencing our work has raised awareness of the services we offer and provided a better understanding of the importance of kinship care as an early intervention for children and their families.

We seized every opportunity to inform others of our work and the many achievements of children and young people in kinship care. 5,690 copies of our bi-monthly newsletter 'Kinship News' were distributed to individuals and organisations. 8,950 emails/letters went out informing of our services, events, achievements and successes.

## **Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

### **Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2024**

.....continued

#### **Plans for Future Periods**

In 2024/25 we will continue to develop and deliver high quality, responsive and inclusive services to kinship carers and children and young people in kinship care and work with kinship carers to identify the types of support they need and want in a way which promotes the best interests of the children and young people they care for. We will listen to and act on the voices of children and young people and ensure their voices are heard, valued, respected and listened to, and seize every opportunity to celebrate the achievements and successes of children, young people and their carers.

We will further develop our support services and develop a range of awareness raising literature to ensure kinship carers have information on their rights and entitlements when raising a family or friends child. We will continue to consult with children and young people in kinship care to ensure all projects and services are in keeping with their needs and aspirations, ensuring the voices of children, young people are heard. We will ensure risk is well understood and managed and that the charity is operating legally, that we are maximising our income and operating in full compliance with our charitable objectives, ethos and values.

#### **Recruitment and Appointment of Directors**

The Directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law. The traditional business skills, along with service users, community and voluntary groups are well represented on the Board of Directors and the Directors are requested to provide an updated list of skills they are able to bring to the company each year and in the event of particular skills being lost due to retirements, individuals are approached to offer themselves for election to the Board of Directors.  
Directors.

#### **Trustees Induction and Training**

New trustees are invited to familiarise themselves with the charity and the context within which it operates. Briefing sessions jointly led by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive cover:

- The obligations of trustees.
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity, including the memorandum and articles.
- Resourcing and the current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts.
- Future plans and objectives as set out in the charity's Strategic Plan 2021-24.

All Trustees receive an Enhanced Access NI check and training on Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults, Lone Working, Health and Safety, Complaints and Equal Opportunities. Training on Good Governance, Managing Performance, Risk Management, Strategic Planning and GDPR is also provided to Trustees.

## **Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

### **Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2024**

.....continued

#### **Risk Management**

The Board of Trustees conduct on a regular basis a review of major risks to which the charity is exposed. This review is updated annually. Where appropriate, systems and procedures are established or updated to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a new Fundraising Strategy and the establishment of three social enterprises to allow for alternative funding methods for the charity's activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of comprehensive procedures for the authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety rules for staff, volunteers and visitors. All policies and procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure they meet with the needs of the charity and changes to the law.

#### **Organisational Structure**

The Board of Directors meets 6 times a year and is responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. The trustees have ultimate legal and financial responsibility for the affairs of Kinship Care NI, although the management of the organisation has generally been delegated to the staff, through the Chief Executive (Jacqueline Williamson).

#### **Formal Objectives and Activities**

The company's objects and principal activities are to:

- Work for the assistance of persons involved in a kinship care arrangement.
- Promote any charitable purpose directed to alleviating problems associated with kinship care arrangements.
- Advance public education in factors associated with kinship care.
- Provide individual and group support to kinship carers and their children.
- Raise awareness amongst the general public of factors associated with kinship care.
- Provide a support service to those who are currently involved with a person undertaking or involved in kinship care.
- Provide and equip premises and centres required for the purposes of the company to organise, sponsor and conduct educational and training courses and meetings, conferences and exhibitions.
- Publish and distribute materials relating to the work of the company.
- Collect, coordinate and make available (by publication or any form of communication) information relative to the activities of the company.
- Receive and administer and allocate grants and gifts available to the company under the terms and conditions attached to such grants and gifts.
- Act as trustees and to undertake or accept any such tasks or responsibilities which will advance the objects of the company

## **Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

### **Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2024**

.....continued

#### **Winding Up**

Upon the winding up or dissolution of the company, any surplus shall be given to some other body, institution or institutions charitable in law and having objects similar to the objects of Kinship Care NI, which also prohibit the distribution of income or property to its members. No sum whatsoever shall be distributed to members of the company.

#### **Financial Review**

##### **Results**

The company had a surplus on unrestricted funds for the year ended 31st March 2024 of £465,295 (surplus of £145,714 for year ended 31st March 2023). During the year to the 31st March 2024 the company was in receipt of grants from BBC Children in Need, and the Trusthouse Foundation in respect of specified services to be provided to kinship carers and their children in areas across Northern Ireland.

##### **Fundraising**

Most funding to date has come from charitable trusts and foundations via applications made by the Chief Executive with input from Trustees and staff. The Board of Trustees have delegated responsibility for fundraising, including areas of revenue fundraising to the Chief Executive who reports regularly to Trustees on the financial and fundraising performance of the organisation.

BBC Children in Need, the Trusthouse Foundation, Department of Justice, John Moores Foundation, Julia and Hans Rausing Trust, American Ireland Fund, UK Community Renewal Fund, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, RTE Toy Show Appeal Enakalon Foundation, Thomas Wall Trust and Cordis Charitable Trust made a substantial contribution to the work of by funding a School of Confidence Futures Programme for young people, our Caring for Carer's Project', KIND Project, Helping Hand Project and a Good Help Project.

Five key strategies have been identified as priority focuses for the forthcoming year:-

1. Diversification – diversify the fundraising base of Kinship Care NI to reduce dependency on key grants.
2. New Activity – plan, deliver and learn from a new fundraising activity through a Crowd Funding event.
3. Expansion – consider, plan, deliver and develop a strategy for locating in Belfast and the Republic of Ireland.
4. Corporate Donators – grow the understanding of Kinship Care NI's work and identify new corporate donors outside of Derry/Londonderry.
5. Volunteer Support – grow the understanding of volunteers in Kinship Care NI's work and its impact.

## **Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

### **Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2024**

.....continued

#### **Investment Policy**

Any surplus funds and grants received in advance are placed on deposit until such time as they are required for day to day expenditure.

#### **Reserves Policy**

Trustees have established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be 3 months of total cost. Each year the Trustees review the policy for maintaining free reserves taking into account the major risks faced by the charity. The likely impact on income and planned expenditure includes a review of the planned expenditure and expected incomes and an assessment of the ways to mitigate such risks.

At 31st March 2024 the company had reserves of £465,295

#### **Risk Review**

Internal controls are in place to monitor all forms of income, assets, commitment and expenditure. Performance is monitored and appropriate information is prepared and regularly reviewed by the Chief Executive and Board of Trustees. The charity currently produces an annual budget and reports six weekly against that budget. Updated financial forecasting is undertaken during the year to reflect new service developments and their impact on income and expenditure. The principal risk facing the charity is the uncertain external economic environment and the need to sustain services once funding from the Big Lottery Fund comes to an end. The Trustees confirm that they have identified and fully understand the risks to which the charity is subject and that systems are in place to manage these risks.

#### **Employment of Disabled Persons**

The company is committed to a policy of recruitment and promotion on the basis of aptitude and ability without negative discrimination of any kind. Kinship Care NI actively pursues both the employment of disabled persons whenever a suitable vacancy arises and the continued employment and retraining of employees who become disabled whilst employed by the charity. Where a current employee or volunteer becomes disabled due to illness or injury the charity, wherever possible and reasonable, will provide assistance with rehabilitation, adaptation to premises, modification of equipment, provision of special aids, job structuring, retraining and/or redeployment

#### **Employees**

Kinship Care NI is lucky to have an exceptional team of 9 dedicated staff, whose support has been invaluable in developing and delivering services to children and young people, their carers and families. Over the year, Kinship Care NI made great efforts to ensure employees were kept informed about and involved in the direction of the charity.

#### **Plans for Future Periods**

The charity plans continuing the activities outlined above in the forthcoming years subject to satisfactory funding arrangements.

**Kinship Care Northern Ireland Ltd**

**Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2023**

.....continued

**Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities**

Company law requires the Directors of Kinship Care NI to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources, including income and expenditure for the financial year.

In preparing those accounts, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 (FRS 102);
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that Kinship Care NI will continue on that basis.

The Directors are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the relevant Companies legislation. The Directors are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities

**Members of the Board of Directors**

Members of the Board of Directors who are directors for the purpose of company law and trustees for the purpose of charity law, and who were directors at 31 March 2024 are set out on page 3.

**Auditors**

L Duffy & Co. have expressed their willingness to continue as auditors.

**Approved by the Directors on the 11th November 2024 and signed on their behalf by:-**

  
Brenda Stevenson (Chair)

  
Paul McMinn (Treasurer)