

Atlas Women's Centre

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

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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

Objectives and aims

To promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of women and their families in Northern Ireland, particularly the greater Lisburn area and nearby rural locations, including the advancement of education, the preservation and protection of health, and the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupation, with regard to equal opportunities for all, in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said beneficiaries.

To establish or secure the establishment of a Centre, and to maintain and manage the same (whether alone or in co-operation with any local authority or other person or body) in furtherance of these objects.

In furtherance of the above objects but not further or otherwise, the Group has the following powers:

- * To develop a network system between agencies and relevant groups in the area.
- * To make the Centre available to all sections of the community to promote understanding, reduce fear and develop a bond between communities to work together for peace.
- * To provide information and support as required by individuals.
- * To provide access to courses and the opportunity for individuals to identify what they require educationally and to have an input into the design and development of such courses.
- * To refer women, if necessary, to agencies offering specialised help and counselling.
- * To develop a comprehensive database, collating and disseminating information on relevant issues in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1988).
- * To promote better support structures and facilities within the local and wider community.
- * To address issues on Health, Community Safety and Crime Prevention in a positive manner, by open contact with Statutory and Voluntary Agencies in the area.
- * To work for and with all interested Women's Groups and other disadvantaged groups in the local community and encourage women to take a more active role in improving their lives and that of their community.
- * To co-operate to such an extent as may be necessary with statutory authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above objectives or any one of them.
- * To raise and accept money by way of grants, donations, bequests, legacies or other lawful method in the best interest of Atlas.
- * To purchase, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any property and any rights and privileges necessary for the attainment of the said objectives and construct, maintain and alter any buildings or edifices so necessary as aforesaid.
- * To sell, let, or mortgage or to turn to account all or any of the property or assets of the Group.
- * To employ and pay any person or persons, not being members of the Committee, to supervise, organise and carry out the work of the Group and make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of remuneration to employees.
- * To do such other lawful things as are necessary for the attainment of the said objects.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Public benefit

The objects of the company shall be to:

Promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of women and their families in Northern Ireland, particularly the greater Lisburn area and nearby rural locations.

Advancement of education, through provision of community education, support, life skills training, soft outcomes training and accredited training.

Preservation and protection of health, through community information sessions and workshops, healthy lifestyle courses, positive mental health education, advice and support.

Provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupation, through community education and support. With regard to equal opportunities for all, in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said beneficiaries.

Establish or secure the establishment of a centre and to maintain and manage the same (whether alone or in co-operation with any local authority or other person or body) in furtherance of these objectives.

The direct benefits which flow from the purpose include:

Improved education

Increased confidence, improved health, reduced stress, anxiety, isolation and increased life skills

Volunteering and job opportunities

Achievement and personal development

These benefits are demonstrated through feedback, focus groups, progression charts, surveys, discussion groups, evaluations and progression.

The purpose of our charity will not lead to any harm. The charities beneficiaries are for women and all disadvantaged families and individuals living in Lisburn and the wider community. A private benefit flowing from this purpose is that directors gain training and skills that are transferrable.

These benefits are incidental and necessary to promote and sustain this charities service provision.

Volunteers

Volunteers play a key role in the day to day activities of the Centre. The primary contributions are their time, combined skills, networks and knowledge of other resources.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

The company had net outgoing resources for the year of £23,425 (2023 net outgoing resources of £82,605, which reflected the completion of a number of projects during the year. Unrestricted funds increased by £4,895 while restricted funds decreased by £28,320.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The charity's policy is to retain a level of free reserves, which matches the needs of the organisation both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. The charity has developed a plan to establish and maintain this agreed level of free reserves. The charity will continue to monitor compliance with this policy on a regular basis and the Board will review the appropriateness of the policy annually.

FUTURE PLANS

- * Source funding to secure premises, staffing levels, continuation and development of all services
- * Minor alterations within the centre to enhance accessibility and user-friendliness
- * Continue and develop partnership working
- * Further policy review and development work
- * Explore and develop corporate training to encourage sustainability
- * Continue fundraising activities and develop a proactive fundraising committee

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The Charity follows an appraisal process to identify the skills required for the Trustee Board and to identify any skills gap on the Board. Members of the Trustee Board receive a full induction programme on joining the Trustee Board and thereafter receive ongoing training and briefing sessions. The board completes an annual evaluation of its effectiveness. Actions arising from this process are integrated into the corporate workplan. The Trustee Board uses open recruitment and strives to ensure that there is adequate local representation on the Trustee Board.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Organisational and Decision Making Structure

The Board of Directors are elected at the annual general meeting and presently meet monthly. They monitor the progress and the finances of the Centre. In consultation with staff, volunteers and users they make decisions on the development of the Centre and relevant policies and activities.

Atlas Women's Centre does not operate in isolation and is involved with both larger women's organisations and local and regional groups. This allows us to access information, training and support, develop cross community links and use our collective voice to lobby for change and to feed into strategy formation.

At present we work with the following:-

- * Access NI
- * Acre Project
- * Action Mental Health
- * Age NI
- * Apex Housing Association
- * Ark Housing Association
- * ASCERT
- * Awards for All
- * AWARE Defeat Depression
- * Barnardos
- * Belfast Metropolitan College
- * Belfast Works Connect
- * Big Lottery
- * Bryson
- * Caring & Sharing Group
- * Cedar Foundation
- * Celtic Kindness
- * CFNI
- * CINI
- * Choice Housing
- * Chrysalis Counselling
- * Community Addiction Team
- * Community Advice NI
- * DfC
- * DoF
- * Early Years - the organisation for young children
- * Early Years Day-care Providers
- * Early Years Intervention Lisburn
- * Education Matters
- * Emerge
- * Empowering Youth
- * Epilepsy Support Group
- * Executive Office - Central Good Relations
- * Fibromyalgia Support Group
- * Finance Ireland
- * Groundwork NI
- * Halifax Foundation
- * Helping Hands
- * Hillhall Community Association

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

- * Homestart Lisburn
- * Hygiene Bank Moira
- * Informing Choices NI
- * Island Arts Centre
- * Job & Benefits
- * Keeping Safe Initiative
- * Lagan Valley Vineyard Church
- * Lagan View Enterprise Centre
- * Lifeline
- * Lisburn City Centre Management
- * Lisburn City Church
- * Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
- * Lisburn Enterprise Organisation
- * Lisburn Foodbank
- * Lisburn Health Centre
- * Lisburn Outlook
- * Mencap
- * Mermaids
- * Mindwise
- * NICMA
- * NICVA
- * NIHE
- * PCSP
- * People First
- * Play Resource Centre
- * Police Service Northern Ireland
- * Probation
- * Profile Tree
- * Progressive Building Society
- * Queens University
- * Resurgam Healthy Living Centre
- * Resurgam Trust
- * Resurgam Youth Initiative
- * Resurgam Womens Network
- * Sainsburys
- * Scoil Na Fuisseogie
- * Simon Community
- * SHIP
- * South Eastern Regional Colleges
- * SEHSCT
- * SECCP
- * Spar Lambeg
- * Stepping Stones
- * St Patricks Pastoral Centre
- * Surestart
- * Tesco
- * Ulster Bank
- * Volunteer Now
- * Welcome Project
- * Wildlife Trust

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

* WINI

* Women's Centres in Northern Ireland including; Footprints, Shankill, Falls, First Steps, Ballybeen, Greenway and Windsor

* Womens Aid

* Women's Centres Regional Partnership

* Women's Support Network

* WRDA

* YMCA

Our partnerships with other organisations serve to assist in avoiding duplication, establishing need and providing specialised and tailored services to meet that need, as well as influencing good practice and performing information sharing.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Major risks include funding and sustainability, with risk of losing staff and premises.

Steps taken to mitigate include the set-up and adherence to a sustainability strategy, which included lobbying government for mainstream funding and identifying potential business opportunities for development, making projects more self-sufficient and intensive fundraising. This intensive lobbying has yielded the results we had hoped and the strategy will be revised in the coming year.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Atlas Women's Centre for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

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 charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They 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.

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Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

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

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 7 May 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Eileen Irvine

Eileen Irvine - Trustee