

# RAMS (NI) LTD

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

#### Year ended 31 December 2019

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2019.

#### Reference and administrative details

**Registered charity name** RAMS (NI) LTD  
**Charity registration number** NI101381  
**Company registration number** NI22025  
**Principal office and registered office** 94/95 City Business Park  
The Cutts  
Dunmurry  
Belfast  
BT17 9HU

#### The trustees

Mrs P Crawford  
Mr W J Beck  
Mrs M Wilkinson  
Mrs K Gervin (Retired 24 May 2019)  
Mr S Mcerlean  
Mrs R Gillis (Appointed 24 May 2019)

**Company secretary** Mrs Penny Crawford

**Independent examiner** John Magee  
631 Lisburn Road  
Belfast  
BT9 7GT

# RAMS (NI) LTD

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 December 2019

#### Structure, governance and management

##### **Governing Document**

Race Against Multiple Sclerosis (RAMS) is a company limited by guarantee (Company No: NI22025) and is a registered charity with the Northern Ireland Charity Commission (NIC 101381). The charity was incorporated on 12th October 1988. It was founded under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed by its Articles of Association, which were amended and approved by Special Resolution on 27th April 2015 to enable individuals with both MS and other debilitating conditions to avail and benefit from its services.

##### **Organisational Structure**

The charity is managed by the Trustee Management Committee comprising the company directors and meets at least quarterly. The Committee sets the strategic direction, budgets, policies and practices of the charity and monitors its successes and performance. Day to day management of the charity is delegated to the Centre Manager, including training and supervision of staff.

##### **Recruitment and Appointment of Management Committee**

A minimum of 3 and maximum of 10 Board Members are appointed by election at each Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the charity. Board Members must retire from office at each AGM and are eligible for re-election. The charity can appoint an employee to the Committee where this is in the best interests of the charity; the advantages of this clearly outweigh the disadvantages; conflicts of interests can be adequately managed; and the employee receives no additional pay or benefits as a direct result of becoming a Trustee.

The officers of the company are appointed by the Board at their first meeting following the AGM.

##### **Trustee Induction and Training**

New Trustees are briefed on the objectives and activities of the charity and the environment within which it operates and on their duties and responsibilities to the charity, its supporters and beneficiaries. All Trustees are required to familiarise themselves with the charity's policies and procedures and with The Northern Ireland Charity Commission's 'Running your charity: support for charity Trustees on key aspects of running a charity effectively'.

##### **Risk Management**

The Trustees have conducted a review of the risks to which the charity is exposed and assessed their relative significance. Where appropriate, systems and procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of staff, volunteers, users and visitors of the Centre. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law.

The trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit. The trustees are confident that RAMS' aims and objectives are in accordance with the regulations on public benefit.

# RAMS (NI) LTD

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 December 2019

#### Objectives and activities

##### Purposes, objectives and activities

RAMS' main purpose, as set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association, is to aid and improve for the public benefit the health, well-being and quality of life of those living in Northern Ireland with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and other debilitating health conditions.

This is accomplished by:-

- providing a range of holistic and beneficial complementary medical therapies
- offering specialist support to individuals, carers and families
- providing professional information, guidance and advice
- providing a community therapy centre where individuals and their families can meet to help and support one another people affected by lifelong debilitating illnesses still have a meaningful role within society- to family, work, spiritual, social and community life.

We believe they should have access to treatment and support services that are:-

- holistic in their approach
- useful and impact positively on health and well-being
- additional and complementary to any existing services
- of high quality
- delivered by staff with specialist expertise
- affordable
- conveniently located
- easily accessible
- community based

We aim to help those with MS and other chronic debilitating conditions to feel and function better; stay as active and independent as possible; remain living in their own homes; continue in education and paid employment; carry on caring for their children and dependants; feel more confident and able to cope and less isolated, stressed and depressed; think positively; plan ahead; look forward to the future; and enjoy participating in family, leisure, spiritual and community life.

We support people living across the entire province of Northern Ireland.

##### Ensuring our work delivers the charity's aims

The Trustees refer to the guidance provided by the Charity Commission on public benefit when planning any activities to ensure they conform with the charity's purpose and fundamental ethos and contribute to the achievement of RAMS' aims and objectives. In addition, RAMS has a general policy to bring together persons living with MS and persons interested in MS, and those living with other debilitating conditions, to form a member based community, in which the treatment and support delivered by RAMS benefits the well-being and quality of life for everyone in that community.

##### Principal activities

The charity exists to support people with Multiple Sclerosis and other debilitating conditions and to ease the impact of suffering on their, and their loved ones', lives.

MS and other chronic illnesses are unpredictable, incurable and widely variable. Chronic diseases cause a variety of unpleasant and incapacitating symptoms, affecting movement, mood and bodily functions. Their devastating and complex nature means that specialist support is essential to help people cope; manage their symptoms; stay as healthy and well as possible and improve their quality of life.

Without our Therapy Centre the availability of holistic treatment and support services would be gravely limited in the local and wider area, and in many cases would be non-existent.

# RAMS (NI) LTD

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 December 2019

The principal activities of RAMS can be split into three broad elements:

- Therapeutic holistic treatments including hyperbaric oxygen therapy; physiotherapy and massage therapy; electromagnetic stimulation therapy; vibration therapy; and flowtron therapy.
- Counselling, information, advice & nutritional guidance.
- A supportive facility and network for individuals and families affected by MS and chronic illness.

Our work complements that provided by the NHS and other voluntary organisations. With the addition of our services, hospital visits and admissions can be avoided and hospital discharges accelerated and supported. Where the focus of other charities is largely on financial support, befriending, respite relief, political lobbying or research ours is fixed exclusively on health and wellbeing as these underlie every aspect of a person's life.

#### **Therapeutic Treatments**

The charity offers a range of holistic treatments that are designed to help people feel and function better. These treatments are largely unavailable, inaccessible or unaffordable elsewhere in the province.

A number of medical treatments are available on the NHS, however these are not suitable for everyone and some support services can have lengthy waiting lists and a finite number of appointments. Treatments for advanced, progressive and degenerative conditions are often more limited and many drug therapies are associated with intolerable and unwanted side effects.

RAMS offers a range of subsidised holistic therapies that are designed to complement and enhance any other medical treatments people are receiving and to assist those for whom NHS treatments are unavailable or unsuitable. People can 'walk-in' and self-refer to our centre and can avail of our services on a daily basis, when and as they need them, particularly at critical times and traumatic events during diagnosis, relapse and disease progression.

Access to the charity's services is available to everyone, subject to treatments being suitable and beneficial to the individuals concerned and the charity's available resources.

Any financial contribution made by those attending for treatment is used towards the costs of running the Centre.

Our holistic therapies and services include:-

**Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT)** – this treatment involves breathing pure oxygen within a pressurized chamber. It helps to provide some symptom relief and assist with the rehabilitation and recovery process. Patients report a number of positive physical and mental health benefits. HBOT can help to relieve pain and inflammation; reduce fatigue, infection and depression; aid sleep and relaxation; improve mood, mobility and concentration; promote tissue regeneration and boost immunity and energy levels.

**Physiotherapy, Exercise & Massage** - individually tailored programmes are provided to improve strength and mobility; promote independence; and prevent deterioration and permanent disability.

**Electromagnetic Stimulation Therapy** - has analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, regenerative and relaxant effects and can help to provide some symptom relief for many chronic ailments.

**Whole Body Vibration Therapy** - to enhance physical fitness, muscle strength, blood circulation, lymphatic drainage and bone density. It is particularly useful in enabling people with physically debilitating conditions such as MS, Spinal Stenosis, Stroke, Osteoporosis, Arthritis,

# RAMS (NI) LTD

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 December 2019

Parkinson's Disease and back pain to exercise safely and easily.

**Flowtron Therapy** - used to help in a variety of vascular, circulatory and lymphatic conditions to boost blood flow and circulation in persons after trauma, orthopaedic surgery and neurosurgery and is particularly useful for those who are unable to mobilise due to illness and/or disability, helping to prevent blood clots and complications of venous stasis.

**Counselling, Information & Advice** - helps people and their families to live with an incurable and unpredictable condition and the many challenges it causes. Our friendly, professional and understanding staff offer great encouragement and support to everyone. We provide positive and practical expert information that is up to date and readily available; and constructive advice, counselling and group support that help to make everyday life less of a struggle.

**Nutritional Guidance** - evidence based in the context of MS and neurological disease to help relieve muscle weakness, spasms, bowel problems, fatigue and other symptoms.

**Support Network** - we offer a welcoming and inclusive community centre, where people in similar circumstances can meet to share experiences; exchange ideas and solutions; make friendships; and support and help one another.

# RAMS (NI) LTD

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 December 2019

#### **Achievements and performance**

##### **Achievements and performance**

During the year we delivered 1384 treatments, helped more than 450 people and welcomed 71 new patients. We also recruited and supported 11 new volunteers. We answered more than 900 enquiries, performed 376 health assessments, undertook 116 consultations and carried out over 100 support sessions.

We continued relationships with many of our long-term devoted friends, local businesses and organisations and enlisted the help of several new funders who saw the valuable contribution and difference we are making to the lives of disabled individuals in Northern Ireland. We also teamed up with a local cancer charity to provide holistic treatments to people with secondary metastatic disease.

We were very kindly granted funds to purchase new physiotherapy and hyperbaric oxygen therapy equipment that will enable us to extend our range of physiotherapy treatments and cater for additional patients.

Our service users were very satisfied overall with the staff, Centre and services provided. There were no accidents, injuries or adverse incidents reported throughout the year. 99% of patients said the centre had made a difference to their quality of life.

They reported less pain, stress and fatigue; better mood; more energy; better sleep; better bladder control; less chest and urinary tract infections; fewer trips and falls; sharper memory, better focus and greater concentration; fewer visits to GP and hospital and less reliance on painkillers and other medications.

More than 2/3 of those accessing treatment had progressive disease.

All those using the centre would recommend it to others with similar illnesses.

Patients found it was easy to contact the centre and arrange timely appointments.

Patients travelled from all 5 counties, demonstrating that comparable services are not available nearby and our centre is well situated to serve the entire province.

Patients trusted and valued the experience of staff and their ability to listen, explain and advise. They felt welcomed, encouraged and supported. 82% of patients remained in paid employment. 99% remained living in their own homes.

91% reported feeling emotionally stronger.

More than 1/3 had been visiting the centre for more than 5 years and attended weekly, indicating that we are providing long-term continuous support.

##### **Committed Team**

Our team of staff and volunteers is a holistic multi-disciplinary team sharing extensive knowledge, skills and expertise. Our staff have more than 30 years experience in their dedicated fields of specialist healthcare, management and holistic therapy.

##### **Contribution of Volunteers**

The success of fundraising events and public collections are dependent on the ongoing support of many volunteers. The Trustees are extremely grateful for all who have generously provided their skills and time for the benefit of the charity throughout the year.

# RAMS (NI) LTD

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 December 2019

#### Financial review

##### Voluntary Income

We are a small, independent and completely self-funding charity. We do not receive any financial help from the government or NHS. To finance the provision of our activities, the charity is dependent upon voluntary income from the following sources:-

- Fundraising activities
- Public collections
- Subscriptions & donations from members and supporters
- Donations & grants from charitable trusts, companies, councils and voluntary groups

Our income for the year neared £72,000 and comprised £19,507 from fundraising events and collections; £16,806 from member and supporter donations; £26,690 from grants and company donations; and £8,486 from Gift Aid. This money was spent directly on the £73,000 required to run the centre and deliver its charitable activities throughout the year. We are delighted to have raised sufficient funds in 2019 to meet our modest and necessary expenditure.

Thank you to everyone who fundraised, donated and supported our work throughout the year. Your support helps to make a real difference to the lives of individuals who might otherwise have difficulty walking, talking, eating, writing and dressing; develop problems with their sight, swallow, continence, memory and concentration; be forced to give up their jobs and relinquish care of their children; require nursing home care; and potentially decide to take their own lives.

##### Reserves Policy

The charity is authorised within its constitution to set aside funds for special purposes or as reserves against future expenditure. Ideally the Trustees aim to maintain a prudent level of free reserves at between 6 and 12 months of operating expenditure to provide an immediately available resource should the Centre experience a significant adverse event. Since the unforeseen and devastating flash flood of 2012 and the significant costs that were incurred in refurbishing the Centre as a consequence of the extensive damage caused, the charity's free reserves are currently sitting at approximately 3 to 4 months of running costs.

##### Investment Policy

The charity is permitted under its constitution to deposit and invest funds for the purposes of furthering its aims and objectives. The charity's year on year annual incoming resources have however been used to meet annual running costs.

##### Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



Mrs P Crawford  
Trustee