

NIACRO
(LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

Directors' Report for year ended 31 March 2024

The Directors (Executive Committee) submit their report and the Audited Accounts of the Company for the year ended 31st March 2024. Below we set out the required standards/Directors' responsibilities.

STATEMENT OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Company law requires the Directors to prepare the financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- * select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- * make judgements 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 financial statements;
- * prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006, and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Principal Activities

The Charity's objects as stated in its documentation are:

- I. To alleviate need and disadvantage through the provision of services, assistance, advocacy and representation to care for, resettle and rehabilitate offenders and ex-offenders, alleged offenders, persons who may be at risk of becoming offenders and to care for the victims of crime and the families of such categories of person.
- II. To work for the prevention and reduction of crime for the benefit of the public in Northern Ireland.

The Directors have reviewed the statements made in the application to the Charity Commission in relation to the Public Benefit test and confirm its continuing relevance.

Organisational Mission statement - The principal activities of NIACRO are to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities. To deliver its objectives NIACRO has in place a five year Corporate Plan 2024-2029 which has priorities under the following Strategic Areas:

- . Support for people affected by crime and imprisonment
- . Support for people in communities
- . Support for Children & Young People
- . Influencing Change
- . Effective Resourcing

Below under the heading Objectives, Activities, Achievements and Performances we detail our achievements for the year.

Structure, Governance and Management

NIACRO was established and registered as a charity in 1970, became a Company Limited by Guarantee in 1984 and most recently has been registered with the NI Charity Commission since October 2015.

Appointment of Executive Committee - NIACRO is governed by its Executive Committee which is elected from the organisation's membership. Annually members are invited to nominate from that group individuals to serve on the Committee by election through postal ballot. Governing documents provide for co-option of up to four individuals if agreed by the Executive Committee. Initial tenure is for three years at which point members stand down and are subject to re-election. As a matter of good practice members rarely serve more than nine years on the Committee.

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Executive Committee Induction and Training - New members are provided with an induction programme and materials that brief them as to their roles and responsibilities and their legal obligations under charity and company law. They are advised of the role of the Committee and the consultative and decision-making processes operational in the organisation. They are also advised of the corporate and operational planning cycles as well as the annual programme of meetings. Strategic documents in relation to governance, sub-committees and core procedures and policies are also available in an induction pack. All members are encouraged to attend regular briefing events on services and key policy considerations and bi-ennially the Executive conducts an externally led review of its performance. Committee members are also required to undertake safeguarding training that covers their safe-guarding responsibilities as trustees, the legal and policy context of safeguarding, regulatory requirements for the organisation, and the procedures that should place.

Organisational Structure - The Executive Committee ensures good governance of the organisation by setting its strategic objectives and policy direction through its Corporate Planning cycle. It monitors progress of the Operational Business Plan quarterly with a focus on adverse variances. The Committee meets 6 times per year. A standing Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FARC) chaired by the Treasurer supports this and meets 4 times each year. In addition to the office bearer roles of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer, there are Executive Committee Champions for Safeguarding, Volunteering and Succession Planning. The Chief Executive Officer, appointed by the Executive, manages the day-to-day operations of the organisation. To facilitate decision-making and organisational efficiency the CEO has delegated authority in relation to a range of agreed matters.

Related parties - NIACRO is an independent organisation and therefore conducts its business on that basis. NIACRO to be effective works closely with its members and external stakeholders to achieve its core objectives. NIACRO has in place a range of robust policies including Conflicts of Interests, Whistleblowing, Fraud Prevention and Reporting, Safeguarding and Risk Management.

Objectives, Activities, Achievements and Performance/ Operation Plan review -

Continued suspension of the NI Assembly until late in the year 2023/24 created uncertainty over departmental budgets and priorities and therefore uncertainty over allocation of funding to Niacro and the wider sector. Despite this, we have been able to continue to deliver 27 services, retain existing funding allocations and develop new services, through successful tendering for funding and the continued support of our core funders.

The numbers of people and families accessing our services grew from 5,581 to 7,080 and we supported 31,978 through our Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) funded Visitor Centre services.

Alongside this, we have significantly raised our profile as a social value delivery partner, exploring how we can support several private sector organisations to bring benefits and positive impact to communities and our service users.

Throughout this year Niacro has continued our contribution to improving policy and practice via - consultation responses, delivery of events and seminars, strategic engagement with statutory bodies and active lobbying on future funding streams. We attracted additional funding to commission several pieces of key research, to be completed and launched into 2024/25.

As our team has delivered our large service portfolio, we have maintained a focus on our people and our Investors in People Gold status through investment in training and development, commitment to staff wellbeing, staff engagement events, and a new accreditation as a Living Wage Employer. Internally we have also invested in a significant upgrade of our IT system to support our operations, staff connectivity and certification as a Cyber-Essentials organisation.

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Overview of Impact

Support for people in communities

- 57 people and 18 organisations supported by Belong 2, across 547 1-1 sessions. 97% reported their needs addressed and 84% reported increased capability around the issue.
- 64 people were supported by APAC ASB, across 1251 support interventions. At closure, 92% (49 people) had maintained their tenancy.
- 45 people were supported by APAC STEM, across 1791 support interventions. At closure, 100% (26 people) had maintained their tenancy.
- 336 referrals to Aspire Community Engagement, who were supported over 5355 support sessions. Out of 145 people completing the programme, exit assessments showed that 125 people progressed in relation to at least one area of the programme, with 94 progressing in relation to their mental health and wellbeing, and 86 towards more positive uses of time.
- 260 referrals to Welfare Advice, with 483 support sessions. 213 people benefited from benefit checks, form filling and maximising income.
- 73 referrals to Insync, providing 3072 support sessions. 20 people completed the counselling course offered through Insync, improving their mental health and wellbeing. 44 are now more linked in with support services and groups in their communities, 35 got additional housing points on their application for housing, and 31 improved their financial circumstances.
- 51 people supported through Counselling across 540 sessions, with an 76% attendance rate.
- 344 referrals to Disclosure Advice, supported across 406 support sessions. At closure, 275 Disclosure Advice clients reported positive outcomes including better understanding of the implications of their conviction, rehabilitation periods and how to disclose their conviction. Additionally, 370 professionals were trained on how to support someone to disclose or how to recruit people with convictions.

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Overview of Impact

Support for people affected by crime and imprisonment

- We conducted 2,070 one-to-one support sessions to first time visitors, people requiring emotional support, practical support with children or travel, families needing changes of clothes to meet NIPS requirements. In addition, we received 30,978 visits to Maghaberry, Magilligan and Hydebank Visitor Centres.
- 1,414 referrals to Family Links and 47 to Family Links+, with 1,659 info packs sent to families with guidance about the prison experience and where to get support, and 1,950 1-1 support sessions.
- 423 referrals to FAMM, who visit prisons 2 days a week to give advice sessions. 65 bank accounts were opened for those who would not have otherwise been able to due to lack of ID or their conviction.
- 716 SkillSET participants, across 2,844 employability and support sessions. SkillSET supported 126 people into employment, 256 people into education, and 161 were job searching at exit. All outcomes are recorded when the participant is closed – 567 people have been closed from the programme.
- 199 people supported on Aspire Mentoring, across 4472 mentoring sessions. Out of 143 people completing the programme, exit assessments show that 109 people progressed in at least one area, with 74 improving their living skills & self-care, and 66 stabilising their accommodation.
- 54 referrals to Transitions, supported across 971 mentoring sessions. Out of 45 people completing the programme, exit assessments show that 39 people progressed in at least one area, with 27 improving their mental health & wellbeing, and 18 progressing to better managing strong feelings.
- 99 referrals to Connections and 690 support sessions. Out of the 27 women that have completed the programme, progression was noted in the following areas: 27 improved connections to family/communities, 22 health, 15 housing, 12 parenting, and 9 their finances.
- 28 women attended 45 Women's Group meetings, learning various skills and knowledge through the group sessions, including self-care, DIY, crafts, history, and a trip to St James Community Farm.

Overview of Impact

Support for Children & Young People

We have supported 868 Children and Young People, over 1,120 referrals and 11,103 support sessions including:

- 70 young people supported by IR across 283 meetings, with 83 issues raised. 47 of these issues were resolved within the quarter.
- 166 referrals to EISS Belfast, delivering 1134 interventions. Assessments show 95 families were supported to improve their family circumstances, ability to manage their child's emotions and behaviour, and routine.
- 200 referrals to EISS Southern, delivering 1237 interventions. Assessments show 109 families were supported to improve their family circumstances, ability to manage their child's emotions and behaviour, and routine.
- 34 young people have been assigned a volunteer with IV, meeting 339 times, benefiting from a constant supporting relationship.
- 65 referrals to CAPS, delivering 1742 support sessions. 100% of families completing (49) showed progress in their exit assessments.
- 365 referrals to Family Support Hub, referred onwards to the most appropriate service for their needs at (12) monthly meetings. 100% of families received an offer of service, 90% took up this offer of service.
- 220 children referred to Family Links, with 50 children receiving more intensive support through SCOPE, over 276 one-to-one sessions to cope with the imprisonment of a family member.
- 5,727 uses of Visitor Centre creche services in Maghaberry, Magilligan and Hydebank.

Influencing Change

Consultation Responses 2023/24

- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy Consultation Response in May 2023
- Endorsed the Cliff Edge Coalition Response to Discretionary Support
- Responded to the Consultation on a Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls Foundational Action Plan in October 2023
- Responded to the Consultation on a Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls Foundational Action Plan in October 2023
- Review of Specified Offences Consultation in October 2023.
- Recommendations arising from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Services in Northern Ireland in November 2023
- Work Capability Assessment: activities & descriptors consultation in November 2023
- A response to the Review of List of Specified Offences in October 2023
- Response to the DfC draft proposals for future Infrastructure support of the Voluntary and Community Sector NI in February 2024
- DoJ & DfC Consultation on proposals to amend the legislation to help tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in March 2024

Overview of Impact

Influencing Change

Consultation Responses 2023/24

We have continued to represent the Voluntary and Community Sector on a number of Strategic Groups including:

- CYPSP - Youth Offending Group.
- Strategic Framework for Youth Justice
- Single Community Order Consultation Group
- Forensic Managed Care Network, Advisory Board, Health Care in Custody Subgroup & Learning and Development Group
- NICVA 3rd Sector Joint Forum Meeting
- DoJ Restorative Justice Working Group
- Restorative Practice Forum
- NICVA - Inclusive Labour Market Steering Group
- NIPS Voluntary Sector Forum

Highlights across 2023/24 included:

- Continuing to work with Children's Rights organisations on MACR
- Input to Ray Jones' Review of Children's Services
- Disclosure Seminar in November 2023 and lunch of new Disclosure NI Website and Calculator
- All Island Seminar with IPRT on Criminal Justice in November 2023
- IPRT event March 2024
- Hosting ASFO meetings
- Hosting Homeless Prevention Forum
- Re-launch of Early Intervention Support Services
- Annual AGM

Effective Resourcing

Staff and Volunteers

- We continued to meet and implement Year 1 of our IIP Action Plan; and collected our Gold Award. The Wellbeing Group meet regularly and provides a Weekly Bulletin to all staff.
- Work was progressed on re-accreditation for Investing In Children Award and Investing in Volunteering Award.
- We had 128 members of staff across all activities and departments at the end of Quarter 4 and we have 30 active volunteers.

Training

- A comprehensive suite of training was delivered internally and from external sources.

Funding

- Core funding from DOJ remained in place.
- Year 1 of The UKSPF was implemented for our Employability Programme in Prisons and the Community.
- A Full set of Financial Results and Audited Accounts are set out later in this report.

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Executive Committee

The Executive Committee meets six times per year, and Finance Audit and Risk Committee meets at least four times per year in line with our Articles of Association. Reports for the Committee included Risk, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Internal Audit as well as reports from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

Annual returns are submitted to the Charity Commission for NI and Companies House.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 13th of December 2023.

Allocation on spending across the organisation's strategic operational areas

Children and Young People	£950,929	19%
Adults in Prison and the Community	£2,747,911	55%
Families Affected by Imprisonment	£1,132,161	22%
Fundraising and Governance	£184,706	4%
Totals	£5,015,707	100%

Plans for Future Periods

2024/25 will see NIACRO continue our active engagement in discussions with third-sector colleagues on the future of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to ensure sufficient employability resources are available to support the people who need our services. We will also work with Department of Justice colleagues to ensure sufficient resources are available to support resettlement and rehabilitation for service users and families impacted by the criminal justice system.

RESULTS

The following is a summary for the year 2023/24.

	Balance at 01-Apr-23 £	Surplus/(deficit) 31-Mar-24 £	Balance at 31-Mar-24 £
Projects	430,596	31,508	462,104
Contingency Fund (Appendix 46)	1,532,552	48,369	1,580,921
Project Account Accumulation Fund	1,963,148	79,877	2,043,025
Administration Account	-	-	-
	1,963,148	79,877	2,043,025

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Risk management

The Executive Committee oversees the regular review of risks. The CEO provides an update of live risks to the Executive in the quarterly reporting framework as well at Committee meetings. An overarching register of key risks is maintained, which allocates risk ownership and details the likely impact on NIACRO if risks materialised, as well as mitigating actions in progress. NIACRO has in place an internal audit service to deliver ongoing independent assurance on the effectiveness of the system internal controls, risk management and governance.

VAT- We have commissioned a comprehensive review of our VAT status in light of HMRC Brief 10/2022 VAT – business and non-business activities. At the date of this report that review has been completed and adjusted accordingly in these accounts.

Insurance for the Directors of the Company – The Company has purchased insurance to indemnify it's Directors against potential legal actions which they may face while carrying out their duties.

Investment Policy- The Executive Committee with the advice from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee has considered the most appropriate policy of investing funds and has decided on a mixture of accounts; current, deposit and investment accounts in line with ethical considerations. This ensures the requirements to generate a return on investment. The Finance, Audit & Risk Committee review the investment practice quarterly.

Reserves Policy- The NIACRO Reserves Policy is based on the need to cover current risks and to maintain the delivery of current objectives. An in-year feature has been the need to have liquid cash to fund the process of payment in arrears by funders. The target is to hold £2.2 million of reserves, to include the cost of redundancies, provision of notice to staff and the wind-up costs associated with programmes. The Executive will approve any use of reserves. The Reserves Policy will be reviewed annually . Exceptionally the policy may require adjustments during the year if there are material changes to the risks NIACRO faces or its business plan.

AUDITORS

Miscampbell & Co offer themselves for re-appointment in accordance with an elective resolution made under Section 386(1) of the Companies Act 2006.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD



Fiona Greene
Secretary

Date :- 30 September 2024