

# **TinyLife**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

## **REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

TinyLife is Northern Ireland's premature and vulnerable baby charity, dedicated to reducing premature birth, illness, disability and death in babies.

The directors present their report and the audited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) “Accounting and Reporting by Charities” (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in notes to the financial statements and comply with the charity’s governing document, the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2013, The Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, 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 SORP 2019 (FRS 102).

### **TRUSTEES OF THE CHARITY**

The directors of the charitable company are its trustees for the purposes of charity law. The terms “director” and “trustee” are used interchangeably throughout the financial statements. The trustees who have served during the year were as follows:

A Elliott  
 S L McKay - Treasurer  
 S Nurse – resigned 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024  
 K Craig – resigned 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023  
 A L Bartlett – resigned 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023  
 L McKeaveny – Chairperson  
 M McGowan  
 C Faraday  
 C Creagh  
 E McEneaney  
 C Humston  
 C McVeigh – appointed 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023

V Craig and B Boyle were appointed as trustees on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

### **PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT**

The Board of TinyLife confirm that they have had due regard for the guidance produced on public benefit by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and are pleased to report that during the year the charitable company has continued to provide public benefits through the programmes and services we offer. In particular, the directors consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set out.

# TinyLife

(A company limited by guarantee)

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (Continued)

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Charity's objectives are specifically restricted to advancement of health or saving of lives and advancement of education to reduce premature birth, illness, disability and death in babies born in Northern Ireland and include the following:-

- provision of a range of support services offering practical support, information, advice, emotional and social support and comfort and a befriending service to parents, families and carers including home and hospital based support and parent support groups
- provision of training and information for health professionals concerned with the needs of premature or sick babies and their families;
- provision of funding for research and conducting research to promote and develop understanding and disseminate knowledge of:
  - illness, disability and causes of prematurity in babies;
  - medical problems affecting pregnant women;
  - effect of these problems on family and carers; and
 ultimately, being, committed to increasing survival rates, improving quality of life and quality of care for premature babies; and
- provision of tailored awareness programmes such as presentations, health education workshops and information leaflets for the benefit of the wider public including both schools and community groups to increase awareness of infant prematurity and its effects on family as well as the importance of healthy lifestyle choices for pregnant women.

### STRATEGIC REPORT

#### Structure, governance and management

TinyLife is a charitable company limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association and the liability of each member is limited to an amount not exceeding £1.

The Articles of Association provide that the number of directors shall not be less than six and shall at all times comprise not less than three in number from relevant health care professions. Each director appointed to the board retires every three years but can offer themselves for re-election. Directors are appointed by nominations by any existing director. New directors are briefed by the Chief Executive and the Chairman of the board on their legal obligations and receive a handbook which includes the role of trustees and the skills set of board members. A trustee may not appoint an alternate trustee or anyone on his or her behalf at meetings of the trustees. Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events.

The Chief Executive carries out the day-to-day management of the charity and has delegated authority for operational matters including finance and staffing. The directors manage all other business decisions and meet on a quarterly basis.

# TinyLife

(A company limited by guarantee)

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (Continued)

### Risk management

The directors have overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has in place an appropriate system of controls, financial and otherwise, to provide reasonable assurance that:

- the charity is operating efficiently and effectively;
- its assets are safeguarded against unauthorised use or disposition;
- proper records are maintained and financial information used within the charity or for publication is reliable;
- the charity complies with relevant laws and regulations; and
- the charity's systems of financial control are designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The major risks, to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the trustees, have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

### Achievements and Performance

The 2023 – 24 performance year has been challenging and rewarding in equal measure for TinyLife. We saw the departure of our esteemed colleague Alison McNulty who provided unwavering leadership as CEO for 10 years. Our new CEO, Joanne Morgan, took up post in November 2023.

Like most organisations in the sector, we are still dealing with the consequences of Covid. For example, impact on opportunities to fundraise and on the ways in which we deliver our services. Whilst our fundraising levels have increased, we are yet to reach pre Covid targets. In addition, whilst we are seeing a return to face-to-face support, there is still a need to retain an online presence with the use of Zoom and WhatsApp to deliver alternative forms of support.

Our Advocacy and Policy work goes from strength to strength with TinyLife represented on all key groups and forums relating to infant and family support, in Northern Ireland and participating in a European network EFCNI. The profile of the organisation continues to expand with significant growth on Facebook interactions in particular, this remains an important way for us to connect and facilitate our parents in a safe but convenient way.

Once again, we need to record our immense gratitude to colleagues and volunteers throughout the organisation. They have responded to the ongoing challenge of the pandemic magnificently, tirelessly and with great personal sacrifice in ensuring that families continue to receive the support they need.

It has been a team effort, ranging from the colleagues delivering front line support to families, to staff who were flexible to work when needed, to the Board and Senior Management team providing outstanding leadership in the face of unrelenting pressures.

We would like to thank all of those who supported us in whatever way they could this past year for without it TinyLife would be facing a very different future.

This 2023-24 report presents the work of TinyLife over the past year.

# TinyLife

(A company limited by guarantee)

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (Continued)

### STRATEGIC PLAN

**Pillar 1 TinyLife Care - Embed a family centred approach engaging with parents in the cocreation process to support premature babies by providing relevant responsive services.**

#### Referrals

The relationship that the **Family Support Officer (FSO)** builds with both families and professionals is crucial to the number of referrals we receive. This year our referrals increased slightly by approximately 10%. We continue to see the majority of referrals come from families directly, as a result of their interaction with a Family Support Officer in a neonatal unit. The remainder come from neonatal and hospital staff demonstrating the importance of our staff being present in a unit to build these relationships.

### HOSPITAL BASED SERVICES

#### Neonatal Units

As we emerge from Covid restrictions, our **Family Support Hospital visits** have increased by 12% and we continue to find creative solutions to connect with parents during times of ward restrictions due to infection outbreaks.

#### Breast Pump Loan Service

Health professionals and families continued to make referrals to TinyLife for our **Breast Pump Loan** service. 289 loans were processed in the reporting year. All pump loans are processed in accordance with PHA Protocols, and we were pleased to receive additional funding from the PHA to support administration costs.

### COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

We are seeing a renewed interest in engaging in face-to-face activities. Not only does this increase the likelihood of peer-to-peer support and connection, it gives our Family Support Officers an opportunity to promote the many relevant services offered by TinyLife, leading to a better, more holistic experience.

#### Parent Support Groups

Our **Parent Support Groups** remain popular, with attendances on a par with previous years. We continue to incorporate the **Five To Thrive model**<sup>1</sup> and are seeing a significant interest in the provision of sensory play as part of sessions.

#### Baby Massage

**Baby Massage** is one of the most popular programmes delivered by TinyLife with over 140 sessions delivered over the course of the reporting year. Baby Massage provides a unique opportunity to promote bonding and connection and facilitates discussion on all aspects of care for the premature baby.

---

<sup>1</sup> Five to Thrive is a flexible approach that offers learning for practitioners and parents. It is designed to enhance awareness of the central ingredients for healthy brain development in babies, with five key activities – Respond, Cuddle, Relax, Play, Talk – described as the 'building blocks for a healthy brain'.

## **TinyLife**

(A company limited by guarantee)

### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (Continued)**

#### **TinyGym**

20 **TinyGym** sessions were delivered across the Northern HSC Trust Area. This innovative model is a great example of multidisciplinary working between a specialist Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and TinyLife Family Support Officer leading to better outcomes for premature babies and strengthened relationships between the professionals and parents who avail of the service.

#### **Closed Face Book Community**

Families told us that the closed **Facebook Community** has been invaluable and provides opportunities to engage in peer support which is wider than that of the Tiny Time Groups. Parents are also able to easily engage with other families whose child has a similar condition, or when they have had a similar neonatal journey. With over 900 members this continues to grow and represents an almost 30% increase in membership on the previous year.

#### **HOME BASED SERVICE**

##### **Growing Child Program**

The **Growing Child / TinyStart Programme** is now being fully implemented with all targets on track. During the reporting year, 149 families were supported in their homes with this evidence-based programme.

An evaluation will be undertaken in the next financial year to determine the impact on families.

#### **OTHER SUPPORT PROVIDED**

In this reporting year we have seen an increase of 35% in demand for financial support from our parents. This is due to the impact of the cost of living crisis and increased cost attached to caring for a premature baby.

**PILLAR 2 - TinyLife Advocate - Amplify and be the voice for parents and premature babies to secure change in policy and practice.**

##### **Engagement with Government**

We worked closely with the Department of the Economy in relation to the potential introduction of the **Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act** which has already been introduced in England. With cross party support, we are confident it will feature in the newly proposed package of workers' rights legislation due for consultation in late 2024.

The CEO continues to co-chair the **NI Children's Health Coalition**. As a result of securing a small amount of funding the Coalition appointed the NI based communication and research consultancy, MW Advocate, to support our advocacy work for the **Young Patients Fund**. We have also secured all party support for the Fund.

We continued to lead and advocate in the area of **Infant Mental Health**. Through the **Stronger From the Start Alliance**, we continue to promote our joint manifesto with many of the recommendations adopted by all the political parties in NI. We have convened a number of roundtable meetings with politicians and senior civil servants.

Our newly developed **Parental Engagement** group is slowly expanding and has played a very important and productive role in supporting TinyLife's response to consultation on hospital parking charges.

## TinyLife

(A company limited by guarantee)

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (Continued)

Some of our parents also attended a meeting with DoH staff and Professor Mary Renfrew to feed into review of midwifery services and care along with some of our Family Support staff who were excellent advocates for TL families, and their contributions to the meeting were very insightful.

#### Representation on Committees

During the reporting period TinyLife continued to sit on a number of government networks and committees, namely the

- Neonatal Network for NI,
- Regional Infant Mental Health Group, several
- Health Trust Infant Mental Health Committees,
- South Eastern Health Trust ABC Pips Project and
- The Breastfeeding Strategy Implementation Group.

The CEO chairs a number of subgroups and committees which report on key strategies, working closely with committee members and representing the voice of parents of premature babies.

#### European Work

The CEO continues to support the work of the **European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI)** whilst the Head of Operations was asked to represent TinyLife in the European Standards of care for Newborn Health Parent, Patient and Public Advisory Board (PPPAB).

#### PILLAR 3 -TinyLife Educate - increased awareness and knowledge about needs of parents of premature and sick babies by using evidence to co design early interventions and improve services.

The **Professor Jim Dornan Award** was made to Dr Niamh Kennedy, Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology, Ulster University and Dr Tammy Morgan, Psychiatrist CAMHS, Belfast Health and Social trust to carry out research on the following topic: “Exploration into parental psychological wellbeing in Northern Ireland Neonatal Units.”

**In November, as part of our World Prematurity Day** advocacy efforts we collaborated with the **Irish Neonatal Health Alliance** to hold another All-Ireland Conference. The conference was hosted online and with keynote speaker Professor Nils Bergman from Sweden to present on Neuroscience and Zero Separation. We had 190 participants with additional viewing of the recording afterwards.

TinyLife facilitated the delivery of training to almost 60 Health Visitors in October,

During the year staff have had access to the online training program FLICK and have completed both mandatory training in GDPR, Health and Safety, Risk Assessments and Manual Handling. The systems also provide opportunities to access a range of many relevant programs for continued on line learning.

Staff also completed **Mental Health First Aid** training.

Members of the Fundraising Team have attended a number of one off seminars to support them in their roles primarily on marketing and the use of social media.

# TinyLife

(A company limited by guarantee)

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (Continued)

### Income Generation

This year has seen some notable achievements in income generation and fundraising.

We had a very successful Premvember campaign during November. The Gala Ball highlighting 35 years of TinyLife was a key highlight for the team, with £46k raised. General support from community fundraising throughout the month was very strong, with £10k raised through Tea for Tots Parties and general Premvember fundraising. We also held a very successful hike to the summit of Slieve Donard which raised over £10k. We are grateful for the support from the Jaq Group who made a £10k donation as well as the McCollum and Barr family for raising £10k through their events.

Whilst traditional fundraising has been challenging, we have maintained all service delivery contracts and attracted additional funding through 5 successful **Clear** project applications to support service delivery across Northern Ireland.

Again, this year we must thank our funders, Northern Health & Social Care Trust, Southeastern Health & Social Care Trust, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, Western Health & Social Care Trust, Southern Health & Social Care Trust, PHIA, Dormant Accounts, Awards for All, The Big Lottery and Cash for Kids for their continued financial support.

### Financial review

The charity's income increased from £747,516 to £924,361 in 2024. This is a result of increased income from restricted funding and fundraising income. Principal sources of funding are from events, grants and donations. The net deficit for the year amounted to £77,071 (2023: £112,833). Restricted monies brought forward from previous years, increased the total expenditure this year and accounted for the deficit, with unrestricted reserves increasing by £10,977 for the year. The accumulated funds at 31 March 2024 amounted to £378,329 (2023: £455,400). £85,000 was invested in a 1 year fixed term account with the option to withdraw funds earlier.

### 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 reserves required should be sufficient to meet research costs and the running costs for a period equivalent to six months annual expenditure. Overall, the current levels of reserves are lower than the expected level, being the equivalent to 5 months expected expenditure. However, with the return in growth of our fundraising this year after the effects and investment in a new team, TinyLife anticipates that unrestricted reserves will increase again in the coming year. 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.

### Taxation

As a charity, the company is able to recover most tax deducted at source from its investment income and is not liable for corporation tax on its other income or on capital gains. Recovery is therefore made of tax credits and tax deducted from income received under deed of covenant or gift aid.

### Equal opportunities

The charity is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for its staff, and for organisations with whom it works in partnership.

# TinyLife

(A company limited by guarantee)

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (Continued)

### STATEMENT OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of TinyLife for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the directors 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 these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue to operate.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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 Companies Act 2006, Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 and The Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. 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.

### Disclosure of Information to Auditors

So far as each of the directors in office at the date of approval of these financial statements is aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as directors in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable company's auditors are aware of that information.

### Small companies' exemption

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

**TinyLife**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (Continued)**

**Independent Auditors**

GMcG Belfast have indicated their willingness to remain in office and a resolution for their re-election will be proposed at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Registered office:  
Unit A5, 17 Heron Road  
Belfast  
BT3 9LE

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024

Signed by Order of the Board



J Morgan  
Company Secretary