

**FAMILY CARE ADOPTION SERVICES  
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)  
TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

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The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charitable company's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the 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 (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

**Objectives and activities**

The main objectives of Family Care Adoption Services (FCAS) are:

- To provide a comprehensive range of specialist services to anyone affected by adoption;
- To provide these services directly to individuals and on behalf of Health & Social Care Trusts;
- To contribute to the development of adoption service provision throughout Northern Ireland;
- To develop innovative services for children and young people in care or adopted.

The principal activities of FCAS are:-

- To recruit and prepare families in adoption for children offered to the charitable company for adoption placement;
- To provide a comprehensive range of adoption support services in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987;
- To provide a range of ancillary support services for adults and children involved in care or adoption proceedings.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland in deciding what activities the charitable company should undertake.

**Achievements and performance**

The achievements of the charitable company during the year included:-

- Projected targets for post adoption and support services and updated projections were met for the year, with adoption placement numbers increasing on the prior year.
- The charitable company continued to assess and approve prospective adoptive parents for placements. Most were also dually approved as foster carers to as to be available for those children whose legal proceedings were not complete at the time of placement.
- The charitable company continues to work with Adoption Routes and Adopt NI to deliver birth family counselling. This partnership has been in place since 2009, with Adopt NI joining in 2015. The programme was funded by the Health and Social Care board to September 2023 and continues to be funded on a rolling basis.

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**Achievements and performance**

FCAS provides services to the five Health and Social Care Trusts in relation to providing family placements for children from care in need of adoption. This is a core service for the charity and is key in providing and maintaining financial stability as each placement generates an inter-agency fee. In a time of financial constraint however, the Trusts are increasingly likely to seek placements within their own resources as a first preference, which may present some uncertainty in future periods.

The charity continues to engage with the five Northern Catholic Diocese on an annual basis in relation to their contributions towards service provision to adopted and fostered adults, and to adults historically raised in children's homes which were regarded as operating under the auspices of the Catholic Church. This is an oversubscribed and increasing area of work for which the charity is active in seeking additional funding support, which to date have been unsuccessful. Ongoing service provision is therefore at risk due to the limited and uncertain nature of funding in this area.

The Next Step Project is a service that provides support to birth parents, and other relatives, whose children are going to be placed or have already been placed for adoption. This service continued in the year but is due to be retendered with future funding therefore uncertain.

The charity receives core funding from the Department of Health towards salaried posts within the charity. This core funding is vital for the charity.

The charity's Life Story Project has been funded by the Lottery Community Fund for a five year period beginning in April 2019. This Project works with Young People aged 11-22 who are in Care, have left Care or who have been Adopted, and who have questions about their lives and experiences, in the past and in the present.

**Financial review**

The charitable company's financial results are set out in detail on pages 11 to 28.

There is an overall surplus on funds this year of £126,270 (2022 - £19,547). The charitable company has maintained an overall strong financial position.

The accumulated funds (unrestricted and restricted) now stand at £507,378 (2022 - £381,108). This comprises restricted funds of £155,928 (2022 - £117,838) and unrestricted funds of £341,450 (2022 - £263,270).

The trustees acknowledges the ongoing support from the Department of Health, the Health and Social Care Board as well as other funders and supporters.

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**Structure, governance and management**

The charitable company is a company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 20 September 1989.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mrs M Frawley  
Ms J Coulter  
Mr S Small  
Mrs J Crowe  
Mrs P McGrogan

As set out in the Articles of Association, the existing Directors may appoint any person willing to act as a Director. There is no maximum number of Directors, but there is a minimum of two.

The members of the Board of Directors are drawn from a variety of disciplines as it is considered that a varied membership provides the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to exercise good governance of the charitable company.

**Directors induction and training**

The charitable company has an induction programme for new Directors. This comprises of an information pack containing details of operation aspects of the charitable company, annual reports and audited accounts, an orientation session with Board of Director members and senior staff and observation of Board of Director meeting.

**Organisation**

The trustees administer the charitable company and appoint a Chief Officer to manage the day to day running of the charity. The Board meets approximately 5 to 6 times per year.

**Risk management**

The charitable company has produced a risk management schedule as part of a formal process to identify risks to which the charitable company is exposed. This is monitored and steps taken as appropriate in order to mitigate those risks. The main risk the charitable company faces is in relation to the availability of future funding, the directors continuously seek sources of funding for the charitable company.

**Reserves policy**

Reserves are necessary to bridge the funding gap between remunerating staff and the receipt of the funds generated by the professional services provided by those staff members. Whilst core and Diocesan support some of these costs, the charitable company has to rely on the use of its services by the Health and Social Care trusts and others, if it is to remain viable.

In view of the uncertainty over the extent and timing of the flow of such work, the trustees consider that an ideal level of unrestricted reserves to be between 3 to 4 months of running costs. The current level of reserves is £507,378 of which £351,450 is unrestricted.

**Plans for the future**

The charitable company will continue to develop specialist adoption and childcare services in partnership with statutory and voluntary bodies. Some of which include:

- Funding for The Life Story Project, which provides services to young people in and from care, is secured until March 2024.
- The charitable company has engaged with the Rank Foundation for the employment of a position until March 2025.

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**Statement of trustees' responsibilities**

The trustees, who are also the directors of Family Care Adoption Services for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' 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 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 year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees 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. 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.

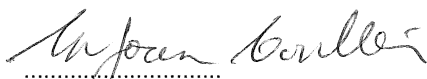
**Small companies exemption**

In preparing this report, the directors have taken advantage of the small companies exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

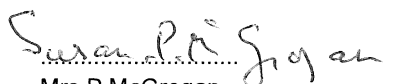
**Disclosure of information to auditor**

Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



Ms J Coulter  
Trustee



Mrs P McGrogan  
Trustee

Date: 19/9/23