

**Community Restorative Justice Ireland
Company Limited by Guarantee
Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)
Year ended 31 March 2024**

The Trustees, who are also the Directors for the purposes of company law, submit their report together with the audited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Reference and administrative details

Registered office: 199 Falls Road,
Belfast, BT12 6BE
Company Registration number: NI 042773
Northern Ireland Charity Commission No: NIC 103318

Board Overview

The appointed Office Bearers and Board Members who held office

M O'Hara (Chairperson)
A Hughes (Resigned 3 November 2023)
Fr G Donegan
K McEvoy
C Poland
B Wright
R McLernon

The Board recognised the need to build further capacity and begin to examine the additional skill-sets that would be required to support strategic development of the Board in order to fully execute on roles and responsibilities.

Structure, governance and management

The organisation is a charitable organisation recognised by HM Revenue & Customs and registered with the Charities Commission for Northern Ireland. As of March 2002, the organisation has been registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objectives and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

Appointment of trustees

No person shall become a member of the company unless:

- (a) that person has completed an application for membership in a form approved by the directors; and
- (b) directors have approved the application.

Any person who is willing to act as a director, and is permitted by law to do so, may be appointed to be a director:

- (a) by ordinary resolution, or
- (b) by a decision of the directors.

1. In any case where, as a result of death, the company has no members and no directors, the personal representatives of the last member to have died have the right, by notice in writing to appoint a person to be a director.
2. For the purposes of paragraph (2), where 2 or more members die in circumstances rendering it uncertain who was the last to die, a younger member is deemed to have survived an older member.

Risk management

CRJI have a number of policies in place to protect staff and clients. Updates are given on the change in policy on a regular basis. We adhere to our Standards & Values and all legal requirements expected of us as an organisation to mitigate all harm. CRJI:

- is a member of NIVCA and avails of all its support
- outsourced HR to Peninsula Business Services for review of policies, staff contract and HR advice
- registered with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, monitored annually
- puts in place 'Risk Assessments' for all its projects

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Risk management cont'd

- sends quarterly monitoring & finance reports to all its funders and completes Verification Reviews quarterly & annually
- is an accredited organisation with the Department of Justice
- is inspected by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate for NI
- is the Lead Partner for the Outer West Family Support HUB through the Belfast Trust
- has won the Department of Justice - Justice in the Community Awards – 'Rewarding Justice Champions' –
- has secured the Investors In People standard award in 2018
- has been recognised as a 'Robust' organisation with the Department of Communities - Social Development Programme and is a Lead Partner for the Social Environment Programme - Crime
- has been recognised as a 'Robust' organisation by The Executive Office
- is accredited by Skills for Justice Awards as a Centre for Restorative Justice Training and undertakes EQA assessments annually
- is registered with ICO
- Is registered as an Equal Opportunities Employer

Objectives and activities

The charity's objectives and activities continue to be:

- To promote a non-violent approach to crime and anti-social behaviour.
- To raise awareness of and develop within communities an acceptance of the principles of Restorative Justice to create Restorative Communities
- To create an environment where the community/victims of crime and/or anti-social behaviour would feel free to express their feelings.
- Work with the community for a safer community and to ensure full inclusiveness and participation of all communities
- Provide a conflict mediation/resolution and others services/programmes designed to promote good citizenship in the area of benefit to both individuals and community organisations which could not otherwise avail of such services
- Train volunteer practitioners in a variety of techniques which will enable them to deliver programmes of restorative justice.

Operational Overview

Operationally the organisation continued to grow and diversify at pace as evident from the financial turnover. Despite restrictions new funding streams had opened up and the STARS (Striving To Achieve a Restorative Society) which is funded by the Executive Office as part of the Communities in Transition programme and delivered in partnership with NIA, continued to thrive. Also, in this year as part of the same TEO initiative, we successfully tendered a bid to deliver the Community Safety in North Belfast, following on from our success from previous years in Lurgan. CRJI continues to provide community support and services through the following programmes which we have successfully attained funding from TEO, NIHE, NIACRO, DoJ, SSGT, BHSCT, DfC, and BCC to continue these services.

Whilst CRJI rose to the challenge of leading on new projects, this was in addition to CRJI's primary work; mediation and community support, CRJI are placed at the heart of our communities and continue to deliver restorative interventions and support to those who need it most.

DFC programme outcomes are to complement a reduction on overall recorded crime rates, reduction in anti-social behaviour, reduction in theft crime rate reduction in violent crime and increase community pride. The restorative medium that underpins the work of CRJI places the needs of the victim at the heart of the process. Consequently, victim support is central of CRJI's approach. Referrals can come from police, community and others. Clients may have been the victims of any of a wide range of offences perpetrated against them, including anti-social behaviour, burglary and theft physical attack, punishment attacks etc. This achieved by our practitioners offering community support to the victims by way of safety plans, distribution of home CCTV equipment, leaflets and social media posts on how to stay safe personally, at home or on line. By raising awareness of ASB and how to report such activities. Cross community networking and community engagement workshops. Signposting networks to support people with community issues i.e. Mental Health, Substance Misuse, Hate Crime etc.

CRJI continue to work in partnership with BHSCT on delivering a number of programmes which offer support to families and young people.

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Family Support Programme this early intervention service offers practical and emotional support to families over a 6-9-week period through home visits. The programme is designed to help families build confidence and independence during challenging times. All referrals are processed through the Belfast Family Support Hubs. *Referrals accepted via Belfast Family Support Hubs only. A minimum of 12 Home Visiting Programmes to be delivered per annum over 480 hours to 1 family unit per programme*

Family Support HUB support access to early intervention family support services for families and children/young persons aged up to 18 years. A Family Support Hub is a multi-agency network of statutory, community and voluntary organisations that provide early intervention services, or work with families who need support. The network accepts referrals and uses their knowledge of local service providers to signpost families with specific needs to an appropriate service.

Traveller Programme raise awareness of existing services that can offer support to families and individual members of the travelling community. The sessions are intended to provide support, encouragement and sometimes gentle challenge, in order to support participants to achieve positive change and increase awareness. We offer family support sessions, inclusion support and personal development sessions to support families and enable them access additional support for themselves and loved ones.

GROW project supports young people aged from 12+ in LAC, residential, and aftercare settings within the Belfast Trust Area. The project offers a person-centred and trauma-informed approach and wrap around services addressing various needs. Mentors provide weekly contact and access to professional support like therapy, education, employability, and family support. The aim is to ensure the best outcomes for young people. The project is presently supporting young people with a variety of complex needs and issues. Support is required around issues of addiction, poor mental health, adverse childhood trauma, displacement as well as risk taking behaviour and criminality.

Mentors work on an individualised approach using a variation of restorative approaches/ interventions. Mentors will have contact with young person and/or family for up to 6 months. Based on the individual needs of each referral, mentors will liaise with statutory services and any other agencies involved to complete an individualised support plan offering a holistic approach.

ASPIRE programme (funded by NIACRO) which encourages and guides young males to lead productive lives by realizing their ambitions and aspirations. It offers a wide spectrum of support including well-being, substance use, restorative work, education and employment, the Criminal Justice System, accommodation and more. We use a holistic approach and tailor the support around the needs of the individual.

MACS project delivers and provides crucial services to those clients who wish to engage in the CRJI process, this service is delivered geographically throughout the Greater West Belfast and South and East Belfast communities. Our aim is providing crucial services to our clients who wish to resolve their issues and concerns through mediation, it is important for this to take place within a neutral, confidential and safe place for all who present to our offices. This service is offered to NIHE tenants and extends to other housing providers and home owners. We offer and assist our MACS clients and Communities in many issues that may be impacting on them or others:

- **Mediations**
- **Victims Support**
- **Advice**
- **Advocacy Support**
- **Community Support**
- **Neighbours or families in dispute**
- **Anti-Community behaviour**
- **Addiction issues**
- **Re-integration**

- **Youth related issues**
- **Housing**
- **Threat related issues**
- **Hate Crime**

RAP (Restorative Approach in Prison) provides restorative support to their clients, primarily ex-offenders, but also to those at risk of offending. To help them from re-offending and reintegrate themselves into society. CRJI will link with housing providers and job placement services. To create stable family relationships to help alleviate some of the emotional and mental health impacts associated with incarceration through restorative interventions. Supporting these families to improve outcomes for children, reduce the likelihood of intergenerational crime, and, ultimately, lead to the successful resettlement of ex-prisoners. Our service aims to act as a bridge between prisons and families, supporting the transition back into the community and family setting.

The Restorative Approach in Prisons program (RAP) restoratively support's individuals who have come into contact with the Criminal Justice System, assisting them to engage in restorative activities, reflect on harm incurred and explore ways they could make reparation or prevent reoccurrence. This work requires varying degree of exploration and as a result I also help individuals to manage underlying issues to promote and enable meaningful change. Within a restorative process we focus on a range of key themes which can determine the direction of the work; accountability, reintegration, and housing needs. I work on a strength-based practice that works with the individual to promote their wellbeing. Through dialogue, clients are supported with the aim to divert them from re-offending and reintegrate back into society and community.

Health & Wellbeing offers support and holistic mentoring aimed at enhancing the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of individuals within the Communities in Transition areas. The programme delivers tailored support in response to the needs of the individual. The programme is structured around three core components: mentoring, volunteer training, and awareness raising. Each mentoring participant is allocated a specific budget named 'Enabling Positive Change' to support their goals and needs.

Training and Development

CRJI continue to support CPD of all our staff and volunteers and continue to deliver training to Community representatives and statutory agencies we work in partnership with. This year we have invested in our training centre approved and regulated by Skills for Justice awards to deliver Skills for Justice Level 3, Understanding the Principles of Restorative Practice to PSNI NPT in North Belfast, new staff members and volunteers. We envisage this rolling out this training for every PSNI NPT across Belfast and Derry and other community and statutory bodies we work in partnership with in the next 12 months.

We have delivered a number of OCN RP/RJ accredited training programmes across Belfast, Newry and Derry this year with 245 certificates issued to participants for successfully completing OCN's Levels 1-3. We will continue to deliver training workshops and accredited training to community groups, schools youth clubs and sports clubs.

The range of accredited training in this programme included but was not limited to;

- Understanding Restorative Practices
- Choices and Consequences
- Skills for Justice
- Community Safety
- Coaching/Mentoring Skills
- Trauma Informed Practices/ACE's
- Community Resilience
- Community Safety
- Suicide Awareness/ Mind Skills
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
- Domestic Abuse, Bystander

Delivery of these programmes not only raised awareness and defined benefits of restorative practices across community and statutory bodies, it also helped build capacity within communities to take control of issues and develop inclusive and collaborative solutions.

Trustee/Senior Management Joint Initiatives

CRJI continue to engage in the RJWG and relevant subgroups, through attendance and participation at meetings, completing feedback and input into working documents. To date the CEO attended these meetings. The CEO led on this and attended on behalf of the organisation. CRJI have been liaising with key stakeholders outside of this meeting framework where appropriate to ensure collaborative working across restorative justice themes to avoid duplication; Victims support, NIA, NIACRO and PSNI.

CRJI have shared a menu of training with DoJ and are open to deliver SFJ training with prison staff, CRJI can pilot the delivery of restorative training. This menu was shared in May 2023, however CRJI and NIA have developed a CPD in restorative practices course with the University of Ulster, however given that this course is co-delivered there may not be the same level of flexibility around the delivery of this and this is designed to be delivered on campus.

Our CEO has been leading on the establishment of Community resolution pilot with the PSNI on behalf of the organisation. to date the following actions have been completed

- Process Map agreed for CBRJ and establishing an agreed referral pathway
- Draft referral form
- Draft Engagement and update form
- List of Applicable offences
- Signing of finalisation documents in March 2024
- CRN's to go live 11th April 2024

CRJI have support the DoJ and Interim Protocol Lead (IPL) in the development, promotion and adherence to standards set out in the new NI Protocol for Restorative Justice. Assistance has been given at several meetings around the training Framework and standards

Achievements and performance

After the purchase of Time Out Assessment Centre, CRJI Assessment Centre for Restorative Practice has been approved by Skills for Justice Awards to offer access to a range of regulated qualifications in community justice and learning and development. The Centre has been externally quality assured annually and was most recently affirmed as an exemplar and fully compliant Centre on 30th August 2024. CRJI have structures for management, support, assessment, and quality assurance of regulated qualifications. CRJI will continue to grow this training department of the organisation and will thrive to be a centre of excellence for Community Restorative Practice. CRJI are the only approved Assessment Centre for Restorative Practice in the North of Ireland and will continue building on our breadth of training to increase the capacity and sustainability of Restorative Justice.

Continuation to support the DoJ and Interim Protocol Lead to increase the capacity and sustainability of Restorative Justice and establish the new framework for community RP/RJ training and standardisation of practices.

CRJI have worked with PSNI, Community and statutory bodies to address a wide range of community safety issues, from violence and crime prevention to specific threats against vulnerable individuals and groups. The collaboration has provided targeted support, improve safety, and address the underlying issues contributing to crime and antisocial behaviour within communities.

Social Media

The development and embedding of a Social Media & PR strategy, has been transformational. It has succeeded in significantly raising the profile of CRJI both nationally and internationally. It has also been greatly received by our funders, community groups and statutory agencies.

Conclusion

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Through the commitment and dedication of staff and volunteers the organisation actually over-achieved on some initiatives and evidenced the need for the ongoing work at a local community level.

I would like to record my and the trustees thanks to the CEO, Senior Management Team and all the Staff and Volunteers of CRJI for their continued commitment to the organisation.

Michael O'Hara
Chairperson CRJI

Reserves policy and going concern

CRJI state that unrestricted funds if accrued should be used for the purposes which meet the aims and objectives of CRJI:

- To provide funds which can be designated to specific projects to enable these projects to be undertaken at short notice and
- To cover any potential shortfalls without which the CRJI could not function
- To allow for redundancy
- Reserves can be used to borrow from re: cashflow of CRJI i.e.: if funders are late in paying grants - this will be paid back to the Reserves bank account as soon as the grant is received.

The Procedures for allocating reserved funds.

- The board should note the amount of unreserved funds monthly and the level of the reserves are monitored and reviewed by the Board of Directors twice a year.
- The Finance Subcommittee should receive, discuss and agree proposals for use of reserve funds. All proposals and discussions will be documented.
- Said Proposals should be brought to board meetings for consideration

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Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes 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 charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for that period.

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 applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity 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 charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

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 23rd December 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



M O'Hare
Trustee