

THE AIR AMBULANCE NORTHERN IRELAND

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

As Chair of Air Ambulance Northern Ireland, it is always an honour to reflect on our achievements each year, but this year holds special significance as we completed the creation of our ambitious new five-year strategy: Saving More Lives Together. This plan for 2024-2029 solidifies our vision for the future, with a focus on reaching more patients, advancing care beyond the point of trauma, and supporting not only patients but also their families. This vision relies heavily on collaboration, with our Partners NIAS and the NHS central to our success.

Our Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) continues to stand at the forefront of out-of-hospital critical care across Northern Ireland. The impact of our service on countless lives speaks volumes, as our highly trained team works tirelessly to save lives and improve outcomes. Between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024, we were tasked on 690 occasions, reaching a major milestone with our 4,000th tasking in December 2023. Since our inception, we have been tasked 4,600 times. I am particularly proud of our team's ability to provide helicopter support 365 days a year, with 100% pilot availability. Our dedicated trustees, charity staff, and volunteers are privileged to be part of such a lifesaving mission.

To support our service's continued success, we have placed significant focus on expanding our funding. Over the past year our fundraising efforts generated £3,301,228, with a further £765,064 received in legacies, enabling us to invest in staff and strengthen our income streams through Gifts in Wills and Corporate Partnerships. We also extended our calendar of signature events and expanded our volunteer support base, which is vital for sustaining our increasing operational costs.

Community engagement remains a key priority, and this year we launched Helimed Ed, our primary school education program. Through this initiative, 6,000 children and young people have learned about Air Ambulance NI and the life-saving work we do. Additionally, we have bolstered our digital presence and expanded our social media following, strengthening our communications with the public.

We were also pleased to host numerous patients, fundraisers, and volunteers at our airbase. A highlight was welcoming Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in February 2024. His visit offered a unique opportunity to showcase the dedication of our patients, volunteers, and staff, and he expressed deep appreciation for the essential work they do. The visit also afforded Air Ambulance Northern Ireland to be showcased across Scottish and Welsh broadcast media channels highlighting the high standards already achieved in our relatively short existence by our excellent Teams.

Our Trustees have been instrumental in advancing our governance, with a particular focus this year on exploring options for a permanent centre of excellence for Air Ambulance NI. While these plans are ongoing, we have also made strides in governance training, established an audit committee, and appointed an independent aviation consultant to advise on our future requirements.

Our future success depends on the unwavering dedication, courage, and compassion of everyone involved with Air Ambulance NI. I extend my heartfelt thanks to our entire team and to our supporters for their commitment. Together, we will continue to stand ready for those who need us most.

To those who continue to support Air Ambulance Northern Ireland, thank you on behalf of the patients we serve now and in the future.



Dr Gerard O'Hare DL, CBE
Chair

Date: 28 November 2024

THE AIR AMBULANCE NORTHERN IRELAND

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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 charity's governing document, 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

Noting Charity Commission Northern Ireland's guidance on Public Benefit, the trustees remain confident that through the development and operation of an air ambulance service the charity has met all the necessary provisions.

The objects of the charity are to relieve sickness and injury, preserve health and save lives through the operation of the air ambulance service. The Charity fulfils its objectives by fundraising for and managing the helicopter operations working in partnership with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) to provide Northern Ireland's Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS). The HEMS serves the lives of 1.9million people across all age groups, supporting the regions diverse community base comprising of rural and urban environments. In the reporting period 2023-2024 it fulfilled its objectives by securing the funding needed to provide the helicopter service and deliver the operational infrastructure.

Air Ambulance Northern Ireland fulfil its objectives by flying doctors and paramedics straight to the scenes of injury and illness, allowing for first class pre-hospital emergency care to casualties, as well as potentially considerably reducing the time required to transfer the patient to the appropriate hospital. The service is operational 365 days a year, for 12 hours per day.

The charity operations are based at Lisburn and we can reach the furthest point of Northern Ireland within approximately 25 minutes by air. It manages the aviation contract awarded to the helicopter operator. It procures fuel and other consumables related to the operation of the aircraft. AANI have representatives on the HEMS Management Group which brings together NIAS and all the operational stakeholders in the provision of the HEMS service. It also equips and maintains the HEMS Operations Office which houses the medical teams at its primary operations base.

As a charity, it is responsible for fundraising for the operations of the service, and with a view to ensuring its long-term sustainability. The charitable activities focus on providing lifesaving pre-hospital emergency medicine across Northern Ireland.

The service is delivered by consultant doctors and paramedics who are delivered to the scene of the emergency via helicopter or rapid response vehicle, along with specialist medical equipment. The clinicians bring hospital-level procedures and medicines to the patient at the scene of the incident. These include sedative techniques and anaesthesia, plus interventions such as intubation when required, which enables the doctors and paramedics to take over a patient's breathing to help stabilise their condition, giving them the best possible change of survival and recovery.

Each year the charity sets a business plan for the forthcoming financial year, as approved by the Board of Trustees. Performance against the business plan is monitored by the Executive team and reported to the Board of Trustees at each Board meeting.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Achievements and performance

Significant activities and achievements against objectives

(i) Helicopter Operations

Between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024, AANI were tasked 690 times to incidents including Road Traffic Collisions, Falls, Agricultural accidents, Industrial and Sporting incidents. The Doctor and Paramedic teams work extremely effectively together delivering lifesaving pre-hospital intervention at the scene of each trauma. The medical crew travel from the base in Lisburn to scene by helicopter on 75% of occasions and rapid response vehicle on 25% of occasions. The helicopter can reach anywhere in the province within twenty-five minutes. Air Ambulance NI have a contract with Sloane Helicopters Ltd to provide aviation services which include two AW109 Helicopters, permanent base engineer and two pilots, together with a relief pilot as and when required. The annual Crew Resource Management training is provided by Sloane, with Technical Crew Member training being provided for any new HEMS Paramedics. Pilot availability was 100%, and helicopter availability was 99%.

(ii) Charitable Operations/ Activities

This year saw Air Ambulance NI finalise its strategic plan, Saving More Lives Together for 2024-2029 which solidifies the direction of travel for the service and charity in the next 5 years.

As a charity, Air Ambulance aims to inspire support from the people of Northern Ireland to sustain the HEMS. During this year, the charity team continued to manage and grow income from seven income streams, oversee and develop the volunteer network and raise awareness about the charity and service. The charity team was strengthened with investment in a new post of Fundraising and Donor Supporter who commenced in September 2024 and a previously vacant role of Area Fundraising Manager for North Coast and Glens commenced in January 2024.

Patients are at the centre of the service and charity and during this year the charity hosted 43 patient visits as well as developing a new patient video to share the impact of the service.

As well as patient visits, Air Ambulance NI embraces supporter engagement at the airbase and this year hosted in excess of 500 supporters. In February 2024 Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visited the base to thank all involved for their efforts.

Air Ambulance NI continues to be well supported by the community through events and activities this year including sponsored walks, tractor runs, gala dinners, personal challenges and celebratory as well as in memory initiatives. The charity proactively developed and delivered an events calendar which included a supercar event Dragon Boat Race, three abseils across Derry and Belfast and an increased number of participants doing skydives.

Income from donations in lieu of flowers continue to be a strong source of support and the charity team continue to develop relationships with funeral directors in recognition of their support.

Over 60 companies contributed in various ways including employee fundraising, gifts in kind, sponsorship and corporate donations across numerous sectors, notably agriculture, manufacturing, transport, insurance, retail and hospitality.

The charity Helimed Ed primary school programme was launched and saw 40 schools take part with 6,000 children informed about Air Ambulance NI.

This was year 1 of a three year charity partnership with Belfast City Marathon which commenced in April 2023. The charity succeeded in securing 1,250 participants across the Belfast City Marathon and Half Marathon events.

The charity's membership base of regular givers has now grown to 1,419 with 300 members attending the annual member event held in June 2023.

Research was carried out with the agri-sector into a possible product for ease of access to farm sites, with the resulting 'what three words' proving most beneficial.

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The charity grew the number of volunteers helping to circa 200. Volunteers have been able to grow the footprint of collection boxes across NI as well as support at many large volume events such as Belfast City Marathon and Supercar Weekend. This year saw our volunteers recognised at the Institute of Fundraising Awards ceremony in Belfast.

Awareness of the charity continues to be developed with social media profile growing to 70k followers this year.

(iii) Operations Base

The charity operates from a base at 94 Halftown Road, Lisburn, with a lease arrangement in place with The Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation.

Building a fit for purpose permanent base continues to be a priority for the Board of Air Ambulance NI. A Development Sub Committee of the Board of Trustees continue to focus on identifying suitable land for the permanent operations of the base. The charity has identified options which are currently being explored.

A successful funding application allowed the charity to install two EV charging points and solar panels in June 2023, with the solar panels assisting offsetting the costs of electricity at the base.

Financial review

The business plan for 2023/24 outlined an income target of £3m with an expenditure target of £2.5m. During the financial period ending 31st March 2024 the charity's total income was £4,482,740. AANI received £4,205,834 in charitable donations and legacies. Furthermore interest income of £267,099 was earned from deposit accounts. During this period total expenditure was £2,361,623 which in the main was made up of aircraft lease, operational base set up, staff and running costs.

During the year, the Trustees have set aside additional funds in the amount of £2,000,000 as designated funds for the purpose of funding the costs of a permanent operations base and other potential future capital expenditure.

On the 31st March 2024, AANI held funds of £13,013,054 which is represented by unrestricted general funds of £5,707,830, unrestricted designated funds of £7,300,000 and restricted funds of £5,224

AANI do not hold any material financial investments.

Reserves policy

The Trustees have established a reserve policy which is reviewed annually. The policy is intended to ensure the charity can continue to accomplish its aims and to make certain the sufficient funds are held.

The Trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation and established a formal policy which stipulates that free reserves be maintained at a level which ensures that the charity's core activity could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty. Free reserves are defined by the Trustees as unrestricted income funds freely available for use as the charity so determines and thereby excludes any funds committed, invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity and restricted or designated funds.

The charity's objective is to build up and maintain unrestricted reserves at an amount equating to a minimum of 24 months' operational costs. Based on current activities and expected costs, this equates to a reserves requirement of approximately £5,700,000. The Trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities and meet existing contractual agreements while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. Free reserves as at 31st March 2024 are £5,646,990. The Trustees continue to strive to maintain a general level of reserves in accordance with their policy so that they will be able to continue the current activities of the charity.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Major risks

The Trustees, in conjunction with the Executive Leadership team, are aware of the risks to which the charity is exposed. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Internal control risks are minimised through the procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the group. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations. These procedures are reviewed periodically to ensure that they meet the needs of the charity.

Risk is managed through the maintenance of a risk register in partnership with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, under the aegis of a joint HEMS Management Group.

Plans for future periods

Financial year 1st April 2024 – 31 March 2025, marks Year 8 of the AANI Business Plan with objectives across six strategic goals:

- 1: Delivering Pre-Hospital emergency and critical care in partnership with NIAS
2. Our People and Culture
3. Organisational Governance
4. Financial Stability
5. Connecting with our Community
6. Operational Centre of Excellence

The budget for 2024/25 is to achieve income of £3.5m and expenditure of £2.6m. The fundraising environment this year is expected to be challenging, during which we will strive to ensure funding levels reach at least £3.5m across our seven income streams.

Air Ambulance NI will have a focus on developing the skills, expertise and dedication necessary within our team to ensure we can maintain relationships with key supporters and patients, maximise income opportunities and progress underdeveloped income streams. Extending the footprint of our corporate supporters will be crucial as well as developing a strategy to ensure Air Ambulance NI is a charity that people are inspired to leave a gift for in their Will. Growing membership of our Club AANI and Junior Club continue to be a focus to help improve recurrent income. We will also increase our events portfolio, continuing our partnership with the Belfast Marathon, organising absails across 3 locations, 2 dedicated skydive dates and investing in new events.

The charity will continue to develop its volunteer network to ensure regional reach and maximise fundraising income and profile. Marketing of the HEMS impact is a key priority with an increased need for further digital marketing and annual plan including key campaign periods and showcasing patient impact and outcomes.

Structure, governance and management

Air Ambulance Northern Ireland (AANI) is a Private Limited Company by guarantee without share capital and with use of 'Limited' exemption, and was registered on 22 July 2015. It was registered as a charity with the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland on 9 September 2015. It is governed by its Articles of Association and Memorandum of Understanding.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Air Ambulance NI Board of Trustees is made up of eight Trustees, which includes two of the founding Trustees. The Board is headed by the Chairperson and two Vice-Chairs who are appointed by ordinary resolution, which itself can be no fewer than two in number and no greater than ten. Each trustee's term of office is three years, and they can be re-elected for two additional terms at any general meeting following the expiry of their term. Formal board meetings occur monthly.

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:

Dr Gerard O'Hare DL, CBE (Chair)

Dr David McManus (Vice Chair)

Mr Ian Crowe, MBE (Vice Chair)

Mr Mark Beattie

Mr Barclay Bell

Ms Alison Kerr

Ms Marianne Johnston

Ms Fiona Hanna FCA

(Appointed 25 May 2023)

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The existing board of trustees has been convened to take account of the skillsets required to develop an air ambulance charity. These skillsets include fundraising, administration of non profit organisations, strategic business planning, public private partnership management, marketing and aviation compliance.

Organisational structure

The Board of Trustees administer the charity. An Executive Team is appointed by the Trustees to manage the day to day operations of the charity. To facilitate effective operations, the Executive Team has delegated authority, within terms of delegation approved by the Trustees.

Representatives from the board of trustees meet regularly with principal contractor Sloane Helicopters Ltd, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and sponsoring department, the Department of Health to coordinate operational activity and enhance external cooperation.

The Board has four sub-committees, with meetings held as and when appropriate under the committee Terms of Reference:

- 1) Reward and Remuneration (Chair plus two Trustees)
- 2) Aviation Sub Committee (Vice Chair, two trustees and Executive Team)
- 3) Development Sub Committee (Chair, plus three trustees and Executive Team)
- 4) Audit Sub Committee (Four Trustees, Chair by Invite)

The charity is a member of the Fundraising Regulator, Institute of Fundraising, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action, as Air Ambulances UK, the representative body for Air Ambulance charities in the UK.

Induction and training of trustees

After being formally appointed, all new trustees are provided with a Trustees' Handbook and undertake an induction process. This includes an orientation briefing of their legal obligations under charity and company law, the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee and decision-making processes of the charity, the annual budget, the strategic plan and the most current financial information contained within the Annual Report and Accounts.

Forming part of their induction, new trustees meet with the individual members of the Senior Management Team and other key employees within the charity to learn more about each business area and their roles and responsibilities. Trustees are also invited to visit the airbases to meet with aircrew and paramedics to see the operational delivery of the service at first hand.

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Related parties and co-operation with other organisations

None of the trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity. Any connection between a trustee or senior manager of the charity with a contracted supplier must be disclosed to the full Board of Trustees in the same way as any other contractual relationship with a related party. In the current year, no such related party transactions were reported.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of The Air Ambulance Northern Ireland for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these accounts, 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;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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 charity and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. 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

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Moore (NI) LLP be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

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.


Dr Gerard O'Hare DL, CBE (Chair)
Trustee


Dr David McManus (Vice Chair)
Trustee

28 November 2024