

**Advice North West**

**Registered number: NI056135**

**Trustees Annual Report (including Directors' & Strategic Report)**

The trustees have pleasure in presenting their report and the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 March 2023.

**Objectives and activities**

The principle objectives and activities of the charity during the year continued to be the relief of poverty, sickness and distress in all sections of the community, the advancement of education and protection of health thereby ensuring people do not suffer through ignorance of their rights or services available to them.

The principle of Advice North West is that we provide free, impartial, confidential and independent support and advocacy over a number of areas of law including social security benefits, money advice/debt, employment legislation, consumer issues, health, housing rights and other legal matters.

The charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is governed by a memorandum and articles of association.

During the year, the charity carried out a number of activities and projects in the furtherance of its objectives:

1. Provision of advice services across a range of issues such as social security benefits, money advice, employment legislation, consumer rights, housing rights etc in our four main office sites plus outreach advice provision in identified rural and urban areas of Derry and Strabane.
2. Specific focus on new welfare reform regulations and advising claimants on the impact on their financial well-being of new Universal Credit Migration and Disability Benefits.
3. Influencing Policy and legislative change via Commissioners Hearings.
4. Operation of Money/Debt advice project to advise users on issues relating to personal debt and implementation of legal debt remedies to assist our clients.

**Strategic Report**

**Achievements and performance (including principal risks and uncertainties, development and performance and key performance indicators)**

The main achievements of the charity during the year were as follows:

- 1 Increasing service deliverable models to ensure no accessibility barriers for our clients – to include face-to face appointments, Telephone Advice , Email Advice and provision of Information talks to Communities.
- 2 Further Investment in new digital technology, with new linked telephone system and Teams transforming how we interact with our clients Funders and each other.
- 3 Delivery of Enhanced Specialist Training for all staff facilitated via CPAG, Law Centre, Advice NI.
- 4 Retention of Specialist Debt Unit and Tribunal Rights Unit.
- 5 Retention of funding and collaborative partners in the delivery of our aims, values and objectives.

The directors are satisfied that the performance of the company during the year, in terms of both financial and operational results, is in line with the charity's constitution and key objectives.

**Financial review (including reserves policy)**

The net income for the year was £24,421 (31 Mar 2022 – net expenditure £23,785). The surplus for the year will be added to funds brought forward. Total funds and reserves at the end of the financial year were £283,957.

The charity aims to ensure that liquid funds held at any point in time are sufficient to cover expenditure equivalent to 3 months of all ongoing operating costs (excluding depreciation).

At the year-end date, the charity held cash at bank (on current or short term deposit accounts) of £227,856. Total expenditure for the year was £836,888 (excluding depreciation). The charity, therefore, held funds equivalent to 3.3 months of ongoing operating costs (excluding depreciation).

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#### **Plans for future periods**

There are no significant changes planned for the forthcoming financial year. The directors will continue to govern the company in line with the constitution in order to achieve the objectives noted above.

#### **Structure, governance and management**

The charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee.

The company is governed and managed by the board of directors. The directors who served the company throughout the year are shown on pages 1 and 2, together with details of the registered office and other professional advisors.

The company is managed on a day-to-day basis by Mrs J Gallagher, who oversees all operational and financial matters on behalf of the board and reports directly to the board on all such matters.

The board of directors carry out their governance role throughout the year by way of meetings on a monthly basis to review the performance of the company and to make decisions regarding the company's financial and operational matters. The directors govern the activities of the company in line with the objectives set out in the governing documents of the charity, namely the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the charity's constitution.

#### **Directors**

The directors (also the trustees) who served the company during the period were as follows:

Mr P Gray	Ms S Duffy
Mr S McPherson	Ms B Heery
Mrs J Harte	Mr K Bradley
Mc C McKeone	Mrs M Quigley
Ms WA Kirk	

#### **Trustees' responsibilities**

The trustees, who are also the directors of the company, are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The financial statements are required by law to 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 these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the 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 company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

#### **Disclosure of information to the auditors**

We, the directors of the company who held office at the date of approval of these financial statements as set out above each confirm, so far as we are aware, that:

- \* there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware; and
- \* the directors have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

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**Auditor**

SJK Chartered Accountants are deemed to be reappointed under section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

**Small company exemptions**

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

In approving the Trustees' Annual Report, we also approve the Strategic Report included therein, in our capacity as company directors.

By order of the Board

  
Jacqueline Gallagher (Dec 1, 2023 12:51 GMT)

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Mrs J Gallagher  
Company Secretary  
1 December 2023