

YouthAction Northern Ireland Limited

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022.

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

YouthAction Northern Ireland Limited ('YouthAction NI') is a highly respected youth charity, with nearly 80 years' experience in inspiring young people, tackling inequalities and investing in communities and transforming the lives of young people.

YouthAction NI is renowned for its work in improving the life chances of young people with different abilities, who live in deeply challenging circumstances.

Throughout 2022, our charitable vision was to make young people happy, healthy and hopeful.

The Strategic Plan (Inspiring young people; tackling inequalities; investing in communities) sets out five high level goals for 5 years (2018 - 2022).

What we said we would do:

1. **Raise 2 million pounds** each year to achieve high quality youth work and value for money outcomes.
2. **Invest in 300 local communities per year** to embed quality youth work to support young people's development.
3. Improve the mental health, wellbeing, aspirations and opportunities of **15,000 young people** aged 10 – 25 per year.
4. Increase the skills, qualifications and employability of **1,000 young leaders** each year.
5. Build local and strategic **partnerships**, with charities, business, academia, government and civic society across UK and Ireland to meet the needs of young people.

Summary of Achievements:

The achievements of the charity against the five high level goals of the Strategic Plan (2018 – 2022) are impressive this year, especially during the continued challenges of COVID-19 on public health and increasing economic challenges. They are summarised as follows:

1. **Raised £2,778,325** in 2022 to achieve high quality youth work and value for money outcomes.
2. **Invested in 215 communities** to embed quality youth work to support young people's development.
3. Improved the mental health, wellbeing, aspirations and opportunities of **13,890 young people** aged 10 – 25.
4. Increased the skills, qualifications and employability of **1,364 young leaders** in 2022.
5. We maintained local and strategic **partnerships**, with charities, business, academia, government and civic society across UK and Ireland to meet the needs of young people. For example, we lead a new partnership with UK Government (Community Renewal Fund) and 4 local youth work partners in a £312,500 project "to pilot imaginative new approaches and programmes that unleash their potential, instil pride and prepare them to take full advantage of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund." (UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus 2022.) We also worked across our Cross Nation Partnership to develop a new 3 year strategy to support youth mobility across the Irish and British isles.

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Feedback from our membership support survey in 2022 says:

- 99% of those we worked with were satisfied with the services offered
- 85% were more favourable to people from different backgrounds
- 10% of young people who engaged with us in 2022 gained a qualification.

Our concerns for young people in 2022 include:

1. COVID

The legacy / impact of COVID -19 continued into 2022. With the ending of all COVID – 19 restrictions, young people became more able to move freely. However, the lasting impact of COVID is likely to be "long-lasting" and "severe" according to NI's Mental Health Champion Professor Siobhan O'Neill (2022) "*Young people as whole were more heavily impacted by the pandemic and the restrictions than any other age group*". It led to "*an increase in the symptoms of mental ill health, behavioural, emotional and attention difficulties.*"

Research by Princes Trust (2022) found that "*the impact of the past few years has had a scarring effect on young people ... young people are now presenting with greater complexities such as trauma, addiction, mental illness, health risks, homelessness and poverty.*"

The pandemic exacerbated already existing inequalities, "*not all children and young people had been affected equally .. as children with SEN and from low-income households had not "shown the same level of recovery."* The implications for youth work is increasing the need for one to one work, feeding an individualised agenda rather than a focus on collective and group working.

"I believe that SPEER has been an essential to improving my mental health as well as giving me resources on how to better my stress management. I have also gained new friends and I able to feel less stressed about starting a conversation."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many young people experienced overwhelming anxieties and challenges to well-being. We also know the active role of young people in helping others, in preparing and delivering food package to other's who were struggling, isolated or worried has been lost to some extent during the pandemic. There is evidence to suggest that when you help others, it can promote physiological changes in the brain linked to happiness. (Post 2014).

2. Cost of Living Crisis

In 2022, 1 in 4 children and young people were said to be living in poverty according to The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (March 2022) "*pre pandemic 1 / 14 households were said to face food insecurity and with the recent spike in energy prices and wider inflation this figure is set to get worse.*"

The Trussell Trust (2022) between 1 April and 30 September 2022 distributed 32,000 emergency parcels to people in Northern Ireland, including 13,400 for children. This represents a 25% increase from 2021 and a 194% increase compared to the same period five years ago.

Young people are aware and affected by poverty and food insecurity.

Quotes from Young People on Level 4 Certificate in Youth Studies.

- "*My house is always cold and more and more we are all having to get cold showers.*"
- "*We had no heating for over a week, the oil run out and we had to wait until the end of the month to get it – I hated it I didn't feel clean or warm or anything. My nanny had to dry the uniforms, I was walking them down to her at night and picking them up again in the morning before school.*"
- "*My ma runs about the house turning everything off after us – no more keeping the light on at the side of the bed at night. It does annoy me but it makes me think about what I am using too. I am thinking about it more.*"
- "*I told the dole I had no money, they told me go to the foodbank.*"
- "*I didn't ask for much this Christmas – I just knew my mum doesn't have it so I'm wearing the same gutties to school and outside.*"

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- *"I felt depressed and low because I could not provide things for myself and my house."*
- *"Didn't want to leave the house - no money for basics like the bus."*
- *"I'm only guaranteed one meal a day at home now – we always get dinner, but there's not what we used to have – like stuff for snacks, or breakfast or lunch."*
- *"Isolated didn't know where my money was coming from - embarrassed to ask family for support."*

Our programmes in 2022, provided subsistence and food for young people. This quote from a young person on YouthStart highlighted the impact and support for young people.

"It was the light at the end of the tunnel for me" and "this has been a lifesaver because the road I was walking down was quite dark."

3. No Government

Political instability in the global and local context continues to impact young people's lives. Brexit and the implications of the NI Protocol looms large as Northern Ireland has been without a functioning Executive. This means that important decisions affecting young people's lives are left unresolved. The community and voluntary sector has been significantly impacted by this, with uncertainty as the year 2022 drew to a close. The lack of funding certainty and the increased costs associated with running an organisation have been very challenging.

The charity sector is *"under extreme strain"* without a functioning Executive. Valerie McConville, the new Chief Executive of CO3 (representing charity and voluntary sector leaders) said the sustainability of the sector is threatened by the recent collapse of the Executive. Concerns over the match funding of the European Social Fund is also putting several groups and the services they provide across Northern Ireland at significant risk.

"After two years of firefighting due to the pandemic, our third sector groups are stretched to the limit, with resources and reserves severely depleted." she said.

"While the Northern Ireland Executive, in particular the Department for Communities, have provided important funding during COVID through schemes like the COVID-19 Charities Fund which have helped the sector stay afloat, it is simply not enough."

Continued uncertainty over the future of Stormont is also deeply concerning

Many young people and youth work organisations, such as YouthAction NI, are greatly impacted by the lack of governmental decision making. Young people who have already cited frustration with political processes have been further dissatisfied and distant from any trust in political decision making.

Reductions in government budgets and associated funding will be greatly felt by young people most in need, with reduced project costs to support childcare for young mothers, rural transport costs and language costs.

The briefing paper - YouthAction Northern Ireland navigating the current crisis (9/6/20) outlined the charity's immediate response to COVID-19 and subsequent actions. This clear strategy continued to guide us in 2022, as restrictions were removed in stages.

- Continue to provide essential services to young people (educational and emotional) and assist other youth work charities to adapt.
- Demonstrate to funders and key stakeholders that our work continues to be essential; communicate regularly to protect funding.
- Manage finances, mitigate against loss of income and strive to keep staff employed, to provide essential services. Concerns for young people, staffing, financial planning, IT security and safeguarding underpinned the strategy from the outset.

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Achievements and performance

1. Youth Employability:

While figures for 2022 indicate a welcome upward turn in employment rates this does not necessarily translate into positive outcomes for young people. From July – September 2022, 17,000 young people aged 16-24 in Northern Ireland were not in education, training or employment. 11,000 of these young people were deemed “economically inactive” according to the Labour Force Survey.

Influencing factors such as the 2008 economic crash, Brexit and the uncertainty around it and the Covid – 19 pandemic, mean that there are several demographics that are particularly vulnerable. Young people as a whole are identified by Department of Communities Northern Ireland as being vulnerable to unemployment and economic activity, and this is exacerbated for those with low / no qualifications and those with poor mental health, those experiencing addiction and homelessness.

According to the Natwest Youth Index 2022,

“Young people who face disadvantage and unemployment consistently report having worse wellbeing, with ¼ reporting they always feel anxious.”

This year the charity continued to tackle youth unemployment through the delivery of its ESF Priority 1, Call 2 contract, valued at over £1.9 million (2018 – 2022) **GET SET** is a collaborative youth and business sector partnership working together with local communities to support **900 (300 per year)** young people get ready for work, further training and education.

On completion of the project **GET SET** exceeded all performance targets across all areas. Overall project expenditure was £1,784,340 with a budget underspend of -3% representing an investment of £1,889.34 per person, well below the set unit cost of £2,131.91.

GET SET shows the value and impact of a youth work approach in delivering positive outcomes for young people furthest from the labour market - building their life, learning and work skills.

‘The participants are encouraged to be proactive in addressing their needs and realising their goals with encouragement, challenge and affirmation from the mentors.’ (ETI report June 2022.)

GET SET had a retention rate of 98% and 93% of young people achieved a positive outcome - well above our target of 65%.

Our Youth Empowered Digital Hub - an online platform to meet the life, learning and work needs of young people continued to be used by young people in 2022. The target was to exceed our reach by 300 new users in 2022 – we exceeded this target and reached 897 new users.

From April 2022 – March 2023 the **GETSET** Project continued with funding from European Social Fund Call 3 valued at £1,541.59 (2022 – 2023) The project aimed to work with 225 young people to build life, learning and work skills.

On completion of the project 275 young people had benefitted from the programme, with 63 progressing into employment, and 83 progressing into further education or training.

In March 2022 YouthAction lead on the YouthStart Pilot Programme, funded by the UK Government via the UK Community Renewal Fund at a cost of £312,500. YouthStart is a partnership between 5 leading youth work charities in Northern Ireland, to recruit train and support 125 economically inactive young people aged 16 – 25 furthest from the labour market to progress into education, training or employment.

On completion of the project; 148 young people had benefitted from YouthStart. All 148 gained life / health skills, employability skills, confidence, resilience, and had a plan for their future. 120 young people achieved a total of 202 qualifications. 140 young people gained job search skills and 118 progressed into training, further education or employment.

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An independent review by Hewitt (2023) "*The youth work approach adopts flexible and innovative methods, developing trusting relationships between the youth worker and young people. It starts with a strengths based approach, building on existing skills and talents and utilises group work processes to facilitate learning and contributes to personal, social and financial development.*"

The YouthStart programme delivered excellent value for money. From an investment of £312,500, 148 young people benefitted from the project. This represents a unit cost of £2,111 which is well within the project unit cost of £2,500.

"This was the best thing that ever happened to me ... it has sparked something in me to get back out there again." (Becky YouthStart participant.)

Peace –building

In 2022, we continued to work with SEUPB and project partners to close down our Peace IV funded programmes, with the exception of "Our Generation" which finishes in September 2023. We submitted concept note papers to the 3.2 Peace Plus Youth Programme (as project lead with 6 additional delivery partners); to the 3.1 Shared Learning through Youth Work (as project lead with 8 additional delivery partners); to the 1.3 Building Positive Relations at the regional level (as lead partner with 8 delivery partners.)

In 2021 we were supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs as a strategic partner through The Reconciliation Fund. This fund has enabled us to grow a strong and collaborative youth work sector across the Irish and British Isles; to train and support emerging peacebuilders, to further develop grass roots peacebuilding and reconciliation programmes, to pilot action research, and to share learning.

We partnered with The Hume Foundation to plan and facilitate a range of youth Peace Summits with 350 young people across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

Youth Arts

The charity's prestigious Rainbow Factory School of Performing Arts, with 672 young members aged 10 – 25 years, and runs over 40 weekly dance and drama classes, as well as delivering a huge portfolio of activities including outreach programmes; minority ethnic classes; festivals; gig nights; high quality productions; and issue based theatre.

In 2022 a mix of live classes and Virtual Rainbow Factory, continued for young members.

"Rainbow Factory has changed my daughter's life, she didn't even leave the house and now she has brilliant confidence, so many friends and has learnt so much. Thank you." (Rainbow Factory parent May 2022.)

The Virtual Rainbow Factory is an extensive platform of artistic and well-being activities sponsored by Phoenix Natural Gas and supported by Comic Relief COVID emergency response. The platform hosts a Calendar of daily events; a Main Stage for dance, drama and musical theatre live classes; Back Stage to provide technical training; a Green Room, to connect friendships; Daily News, prepared by young members; a Front of House section to assist building hospitality skills; Fringe for outreach live classes, specifically for young people with disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds; and Spotlight on your Mind, with daily positive mental health activities. This continued to be well received throughout 2022 with 8,785 views for the year 2022.

A new Technical Theatre Assistant (under 25) was appointed in June 2022. This resulted in 20 young people having access to intensive technical theatre training. The majority of this group is made up of young women, who have traditionally been excluded from the field of technical theatre. This is challenging gender stereotypes and opening up new employment opportunities.

Mixed Ability Outreach went from strength to strength in 2022. Partnerships with Foyle Down Syndrome Trust, Cedar Foundation, RNIB meant a further 88 young people living with challenges such as autism, down syndrome, visual impairments had access to the arts, and created a performance, attracting an audience of 185 supporters in March 2022.

"The Rainbow Factory Ballymena classes cater directly for an underrepresented group of young people who may not otherwise come into contact with the arts and its associated social benefits. The workshops connect the young people of this often overlooked community and create a space in which these young people can grow, learn and have fun ... it is an honour to be a tutor here." (Rainbow Factory Tutor.)

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For the first time in Rainbow Factory history, two summer shows were held; a Junior Show for young people aged 10 – 14 "A Tale As Old as Time" and a Senior Show "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat" where young people sang on stage for a total of 70 minutes. The shows attracted an audience of over 1,000 people.

"I love Rainbow because it's a safe place where I feel happy and it's a comfort zone where I can be myself and no one will judge me for it." (Young person).

Membership Services

In 2022, support to our member group was made an organisational priority, with Sheila Morris appointed as a new Senior Leader with responsibility for maintaining and growing our membership base and services. The link between membership and finance for the organisation became more pronounced with the organisation being awarded money from EA for those organisations that nominated YouthAction NI as their designated RVYO. In 2022, 16 organisations had nominated YouthAction equating to an award of £48,000 per year. A programme of work began in 2022 to increase this number of member groups who nominate YouthAction and its currently standing at 53 groups.

General membership rose from 138 to 165 by the end of 2022, with an increasing number of services offered to local member groups experiencing financial hardship. A contract to deliver 30 Inspire Grants of £800 to local organisations was secured through UK Youth, roll out started in 2022 and will continue into 2023.

A new membership support package was developed with a range of training and support offered from governance training to creative youth work approaches. "The governance training was excellent. It was a great opportunity for the committee and the leader in charge to explore our mission, vision and what values we want to promote in the youth club. It gave us a safe place to be aware of all the positives and what we have achieved as a staff, committee and community in the face of adversity. We also had the chance to highlight areas that we need to work on in order for the club to reach its full potential. A very worthwhile evening with Sheila being an excellent, competent facilitator."

At the end of 2022 87.5% of members completed a satisfaction survey with 100% reporting that they are satisfied with the services we offer.

"Kingdom Youth Club relies on and is appreciative of assistance, advice and support we receive as a member. YouthAction NI are conscious of the localised difficulties that exist in a rural setting and tailor their support to meet the needs of staff, volunteers and young people."

College Square North

The charitable company plans to maximise the resources at College Square North to more effectively meet the changing needs of young people and contribute to the development of the youth work and arts sectors in Northern Ireland, following the impact of COVID-19. In 2022, a new Youth Café "Beans and Dreams" was created and designed with young people staff and Big Box Interiors. The café is run by and for young people and is a multipurpose space; firstly a social space for young people to avail of a free hot drink and bite to eat, and secondly as a dedicated training facility for young people who wish to train as Baristas or work in the hospitality industry.

"I love coffee, everything about it making it, drinking it, I'm here to get an OCN in Barista Skills so after a few weeks I was basically a professional... Its going to help me especially with getting a job." (Barista Thomas).

The building is slowly returning to a well-used, creative hub, communication centre and civic engagement point for young people in 2022.

A building review group made up of young people, staff and senior leaders has been meeting to maximise the potential of the building and to plan for a sustainability policy throughout the organisation.

In October 2022, our tenant on the 5th Floor moved out, which will mean a loss of £30,000 per annum. It is a priority to get a new tenant for the 5th floor. In the interim it is a bookable space to generate some income through room bookings.

Capital expenditure to 31 December 2022 on the building totalled £3,235,992 (2021: £3,219,420).

Since the building is an asset of the charitable company, the expenditure against this appears on the balance sheet. It should be noted that the income used to fund this expenditure is no longer available to the charitable company, as it has been spent on College Square North.

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Workforce Development

The charitable company's most important resource is its people; their knowledge and experience is crucial to meeting charitable objectives. Retention of key staff is critical and the charitable company has invested increasingly in employment, training and development opportunities. A total of 8 collective staff training days were run in 2022, with a further 181 individual training opportunities taken up by our staff.

The organisation has introduced appropriate incentive and career progression arrangements. Three new Senior Leaders were appointed in 2022, following a competitive recruitment process, opening up opportunities to progress within the organisation.

The organisation was recently awarded a silver standard Investors in People Award with the report stating *"People display a high level of dedication to their work, feel empowered and want to do a good job. They have a clear understanding of their own role and know how they contribute to the bigger picture through defined objectives, tasks and priorities. Harnessing this passion and expertise is key to making the right decisions and co-creating plans for the future, aiming to continually improve and innovate to meet young people's evolving needs."*

"Trust, empowerment and delegation are part of your culture. This is shaped by the clear understanding that your people are valued and respected, involved in decisions about the future, and are consulted and listened to."

"Teams share a collaborative spirit. Everyone has clarity about how they need to work together and have the right level of responsibility, freedom and autonomy to work effectively. They are proud of what they do and believe that they really make a difference to the lives of young people."

"Continuous learning is embedded. People are encouraged to continuously develop skills and knowledge and make best use of opportunities available. Your provision reflects a balanced use of internal experience and peer support, alongside access to external expertise and resources. There is a great deal of knowledge sharing, mentoring and coaching."

"You encourage engagement, which is open, honest and supportive. People are given the space and support they need to speak up and share their views and opinions. You work hard to ensure two-way, effective communication so that people not only receive the right information, at the right time in a way that is accessible to all, but are asked for their views, encouraged to provide feedback and help shape plans and objectives."

YouthAction NI contributes to the workforce development of the wider youth sector, by providing recognised youth work training from level 1 to level 4 (including Ulster University qualifications) and 234 youth work qualifications were achieved in 2022 through face- to-face delivery.

The Critical Youth Work Network, established in Autumn 2020, and supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation offers non formal workforce development opportunities across the youth work sector. The Network involves training, research, resources, connections, insights and the sharing of the most up to date innovative youth work. In 2022 we hosted 16 events, including explorations of the Incel Movement and Reflections on the legacy of the Good Friday Agreement.

YouthAction NI is committed to tackling youth unemployment by investing in young people, delivering bespoke employability programmes, providing qualifications, work placements and structured volunteering opportunities, with impressive results. Jobs for young people continues to be a priority of the Board of Directors.

In 2022, the charity provided paid work placement/ internships for 3 young people in growth industries (PR / communications, technical theatre and event management), supported by the government Job Start scheme and Ulster University.

Staff feel valued, feedback from scorecards stated *"This quarter a lot of my work focused on autism, having the courage to take opportunities to stand and present in front of my peers."*

"I have learnt about about co-working."

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Environment

The charitable company recognises its responsibility to carry out its charitable operations whilst minimising environmental impacts. The Trustees' continued aim is to comply with all applicable environmental legislation, prevent pollution and reduce waste wherever possible. Sustainable development actions are identified by the Building Review Group and in 2022 submitted an application to The Big Lottery Awards for All to carry out a sustainability survey of all our offices throughout the region. It is hoped this will inform a larger application to The Dormant Accounts Fund to make all our spaces more sustainable and follow a green agenda, while also supporting and training our membership services about sustainable development goals.

Health and Safety

The charitable company is committed to achieving the highest practicable standards in health and safety management and strives to make all sites and offices safe environments for employees and visitors alike. The COVID Risk Assessment and Action Plan details all aspects of COVID health and safety requirements, in line with NI Executive latest advice for youth work, governance, buildings and communication and made available to staff as restrictions changed.

The Health and Safety at Work policy and procedures document was reviewed in February 2022 (available on the Public Folder). All staff completed recognised health and safety training in February 2022.

A Health and Safety staff sub-group operates under the auspices of the Assistant Director, to oversee events in College Square North and young people involved in running the theatre also benefit from health and safety training. A risk assessment is prepared for every large-scale event. An entertainment's license is in place from Belfast City Council.

To ensure the highest standards of safety across the sector YouthAction NI has a team of Designated Safeguarding and Adult Safeguarding Trainers, who deliver Child and Adult Safeguarding Training to member organisations. In 2022 24 Keeping Children and Adults Safeguarding Training were delivered with 266 gaining a certificate of completion.

We provided Enhanced Access NI Checks to 442 volunteers / youth workers across the sector.

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Financial Review

The financial statements are presented in the standard format required by the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard and covers the activities of YouthAction NI. The statement of financial activities (SOFA) shows the gross income from all sources.

Results

The charitable company had net outgoing resources for the year, before transfers of £99,292 (2021: net incoming resources of £119,228) of which £nil (2018: £nil) relates to capital grants received in the year.

The charity had total funds of £3,978,519 (2021: £4,077,811).

The charity continues to work tirelessly to secure income from private trusts, donations and public sources to finance its ongoing activities with young people. A strategic fundraising plan is continually implemented and updated, alongside annual budgets of income and expenditure to address the challenges in the current financial climate.

The main sources of funding are grants received from various bodies as disclosed in note 6 in the financial statements. YouthAction NI sincerely thanks all donors and ensures effective and efficient use of resources.

Key Performance Indicators The charity's key performance indicators are as follows:

	2022	2021
Total Incoming Resources	2,778,325	3,062,405
Employee Numbers	41	44

The charities achievements against its charitable objectives are set out within the "Achievements and performance" section above, and is their key measurement of success.

Financial risk management

The charity's operations expose it to a variety of financial risks that include the effects of changes in liquidity risk and interest rate cash flow risk. The charitable company has in place a risk management programme that seeks to limit the adverse effects on the financial performance of the company by monitoring levels of cash and maintaining no debt. The policies set by the Board of Directors are implemented by the charity's senior management team. A high level Trustee Risk Register is in place to mitigate against the risks to the charity (Finance; Reputation; Governance and Management) and a report is presented at each board meeting.

Reserves

At 31 December 2022, the charity had total reserves of £3,978,519. Of these reserves, £415,326 were restricted by donors for specific purposes. The charity had general reserves of £3,563,193 of which the Board have designated £2,542,164.

The charitable company's policy is to retain a level of reserves which matches the needs of the charitable company both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. This also allows the charity to plan for future developments. This is estimated at a reserve level of £900,000. The reserves policy is reviewed annually. Free reserves are those unrestricted reserves not designated for, nor invested in fixed assets and which are available for general use and can be designated for future developments. The Trustees intend to designate a portion of reserves for College Square North future developments. The Trustees are striving to secure reserves (which include restricted and unrestricted funds) in the future sufficient to meet committed expenditure and the running costs for a period equivalent to 6 months annual expenditure. The Trustees believe that the period of 6 months is necessary in order that there is continuity of service and will continue to work towards the implementation of this policy.

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Taxation status

The charitable company is a registered charity, and as such is entitled to certain tax exemptions on income and profits from investments, and surpluses on any trading activities carried on in furtherance of the charitable company's primary objectives, if these profits and surpluses are applied solely for charitable purposes. The charitable company is not registered for VAT and accordingly, all their expenditure is recorded inclusive of any VAT incurred.

Risk management

The Trustees have actively reviewed the major risks to which the charitable company is exposed and have implemented systems to mitigate those risks. Internal financial risks are minimised by procedures outlined in the Financial Policy and Procedures document (reviewed Jan 2021) which authorises all transactions. These controls are reviewed regularly to ensure that they still meet the needs of the charitable company. A risk management strategy is in place which is aligned with the operational plans. This includes targets for working with young people, finance and governance. A review of the strategic plan takes place against an analysis of the external environment, potential sources of income and risks faced by the charitable company. A Risk Register is in place and a summary reported to the Executive Committee at each meeting.

YouthAction NI has held the Investors in People quality standard award since 2004 and operates a comprehensive HR Policy and procedures (reviewed annually). A comprehensive review of the organisation's "Protecting children, young people and young adults (including Adults at Risk)" ~ policy and procedures including good practice guidelines" has been carried, fully implemented and reviewed in April 2022 by the Board of Directors. The Board is advised of all child protection training, vetting and reporting at each meeting, through the Risk Register. As a regional voluntary youth organisation, YouthAction NI also continues to provide Access NI vetting and Child Protection training to local groups across Northern Ireland, to assist in keeping young people safe in youth, arts and community environments. We have 3 designated officers (including a Board member) and 5 Keeping Safe trainers. In 2022 we vetted 443 youth leaders, through Access NI and trained 266 in Safeguarding, to protect children and young people in our local member groups.

Plans for future periods

The charity has completed the final year of the 5 year Strategic Plan for 2018 – 2022 (Inspiring young people; tackling inequalities; investing in communities), in extremely challenging circumstances. Performance and achievements are monitored and reported against the goals of the charity. Each year the Board of Directors hold a youth governance conference to share achievements with young people and plan ahead.

YouthAction NI is recognised by the Department of Education as a regional voluntary youth organisation and a charity; by the Arts Council for NI as a high quality youth arts charity; the Department for the Economy as a high performing, European Social Fund provider; and the Department of Finance as a lead partner in significant Peace 4 initiatives.

To meet these functions YouthAction NI will continue to:

- Deliver direct front line services to improve the life chances of young people.
- Provide training and support to local groups to improve their services for young people.
- Contribute to the strategic development of youth work and youth arts through publications; curriculum materials; partnership working and learning events.
- Maintain, support and grow our local membership services.

In 2022, young people, member organisations, staff, senior leaders and the board informed our new 5 year strategic plan for 2023 – 2027 "Young people leading change for a fair and inclusive world."

The 4 outcomes to be achieved for young people, through a wide portfolio of programmes, are:

1. Build and improve their health well-being;
2. Increase their creative expression;
3. Improve their life and work skills; and
4. Demonstrate leadership, activism and peace-building.

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Organisational / Strategic Goals for 2023 – 2027

1. Strive for a sustainable and robust financial base for our work, **raising 2 million pounds** each year to achieve high quality youth work and value for money outcomes.
2. Invest in **250 communities** each year to embed quality youth work to support young people's development.
3. Improve the health, wellbeing and aspirations of **10,000 young people** aged 10 – 25 each year.
4. Increase the skills, qualifications and employability of **1,000 young leaders** each year.
5. Demonstrate the highest levels of governance and operational excellence within a clear constitutional and legal framework.
6. Inspire, build and nurture an effective supportive and healthy leadership team at YouthAction NI and through our membership network.
7. Build local and strategic partnerships with charities, business sector, academia, government and civic society across the UK, Ireland and Internationally.
8. Work with Sectoral representatives as courageous change makers to transform how charities are recognised, valued and supported.
9. Raise quality standards in youth work through partnerships, research, training, resource development and impact demonstration.

The priorities for 2023 are:

1. To secure new funding opportunities through Peace Plus consortiums to further include young people in building peace and reconciliation.
2. To secure, manage and implement a new YouthStart employability consortium of 7 leading youth work charities through the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund.
3. To target young people who experience multiple barriers in their lives such as Young travellers and young people from asylum seeker and refugee families (including an inclusive peacebuilding project.)
4. To actively contribute to and shape wider youth work sector policy and strategy developments including repairing and rebuilding the voluntary youth work sector.

Locations

The charity maintained the regional offices in Armagh, Enniskillen, Kilkeel, Newry and Derry/ Londonderry. College Square North continues to be developed as the leading youth venue, creating a shared space for a shared future in the heart of Belfast. It connects communities, young people and organisations to the city and has become a centre of excellence for youth work, youth democracy and youth arts.

Public benefit

The Trustees believe that the charitable company provides a public benefit in a number of ways to complement the twelve descriptions of charitable purposes as laid down in the Charities Act (NI) 2008(13). This includes the advancement of youth; education; citizenship and community development; the arts; reconciliation; equality and diversity; and relief of poverty. This is achieved through helping to provide support, guidance and educational opportunities to the youth of Northern Ireland and those who work with them. The Trustees are fully aware of the requirements of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and are operating entirely within the legislation. YouthAction NI registered with the NI Charities Commission on 16 May 2017 (Charity Number NIC106365). Alongside the wider youth work sector, we will undertake research that promotes the economic value of youth work, demonstrating the social return on investment.

YouthAction Northern Ireland Limited

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Structure, governance and management

YouthAction NI 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 charitable company, which is governed by a Board of Directors, is recognised as a charity by the HM Revenue and Customs. The Chief Executive drives the strategic direction of the charitable company and carries out the day to day management with the assistance of the Senior Management Team. 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:

Professor Ann Marie Gray - Chairperson

Mr Jim Nicholson OBE - Vice Chairperson (Resigned March 2023)

Replaced by Ms Susan McCullough.

Mr Cathal Maneely – Treasurer

Mr Liam Hannaway - Honorary Secretary

Ms Pamela Ballantine

Ms Alex Barnett

Mr John Hannaway

Ms Susan McCullough

Ms Gillian Shields

The Trustees who are also Directors of the charitable company as at 31 December 2022 and have been members for the whole year then ended, unless otherwise noted, are as outlined on page 1.

The appointment of Trustees/Directors is laid out in the constitution of the charitable company. The Human Resources Policy (reviewed annually) contains a volunteering policy and a conflict of interest policy; which apply to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors meet at least four times per year. Upon election each Trustee is introduced to the legal and operational aspects of the charitable company to ensure they have an understanding of the nature of charity trusteeship, the responsibilities and duties that go with this position and to see the role of Trustee in action.

Collectively we commit to self-evaluation and continuous improvement throughout all areas of the organisation.

YouthAction Northern Ireland Limited

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of YouthAction Northern Ireland Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Annual report in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have prepared the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the 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.

Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102, 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 in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and 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. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions. In accordance with Section 418, Directors' reports shall include a statement, in the case of each Director in office at the date the Directors' report is approved, that:

So far as the Trustees' are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware; and they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditor

The auditors, Harbinson Mullholand, have indicated their willingness to continue in office, and a resolution concerning their reappointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

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


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Professor Ann Marie Gray - Chairperson
Trustee

Date: 20/9/23