

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: NI021741 (Northern Ireland)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 106451

Report of the Trustees and
Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

for

Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Lynn Drake & Co Ltd
Statutory Auditors
1st Floor
34 B-D Main Street
Moira
Co. Armagh
BT67 0LE

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

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for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

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for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

TRUSTEES	Patricia Frances Lyness Eleanor McGuckin Claire Allen Jane Elizabeth Kremer Adele O'Grady Catherine McMinn Niamh O'Maolain Traci Kimber Kerry Anne Malone (resigned 9/1/2025) Hilda Elizabeth Hope Ruth Curran
COMPANY SECRETARY	Eleanor McGuckin
REGISTERED OFFICE	The Annex 30 Adelaide Park Belfast BT9 6FY
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	NI021741 (Northern Ireland)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	106451
AUDITORS	Lynn Drake & Co Ltd Statutory Auditors 1st Floor 34 B-D Main Street Moira Co. Armagh BT67 0LE
SOLICITORS	McCartan Turkington Breen Chancery House 88 Victoria Street Belfast BT1 3GN
BANKERS	AIB (NI) 11-15 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB

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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER**

Sarah Mason

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
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**Report of the Trustees
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The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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).

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland (WAFNI)

This year continued to see significant progress for Women's Aid Federation NI (WAFNI) against all six high level outcomes (big ideas) presented in the strategic plan, Unlocking Potential, Building on Success, Road Map of Change 2022-2025 which was launched in 2022. The strategic plan seeks to build on strengths, harness opportunities and provide clear direction to the organisation in line with changes in the external environment including government policy, legislation and funding constraints. This was another busy and productive year where we continued to strengthen our collective approach and worked collaboratively in response to government policy, education and training and public awareness campaigns.

WAFNI's strategic plan was due to end in March 2025, however the current format and approach has been incredibly successful, and little change was needed going forward. Therefore, following on from a WAFNI Staff Team Operational Planning Day held on 8th January 2025 it was decided and approved by WAFNI Board that an additional operational plan for 2025/26 aligned to the strategy's 6 big ideas would suffice.

All eight Local Women's Aid Groups continued to work to capacity. WAFNI worked to build capacity internally through the Centre for Training Excellence including through the enrolment of several groups onto the NOCN's Certificate in Preventing and Tackling Domestic Abuse. The year also saw the continued development of exciting projects including the See, Hear, Act project funded by Comic Relief and the hugely successful SAY (Social Action Youth) project, funded by Children in Need. As always, all work was informed by the voices of lived experience through our survivor engagement group and young people involved in the SAY project.

Structure, Governance and Management

Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation is a registered charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, NIC 106451, and a company limited by guarantee, registered in Northern Ireland, NI 021741. The organisation was established in 1978 and was built upon our long rich heritage of campaigning and has developed to become the lead expert voluntary organisation addressing domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. WAFNI has a membership of eight autonomous Local Women's Aid Groups across Northern Ireland as outlined below:-

ABCLN Women's Aid
Armagh Down Women's Aid
Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid
Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid

Fermanagh Women's Aid
Foyle Women's Aid
North Down & Ards Women's Aid
Omagh Women's Aid

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The Objects and Purpose of the Federation are outlined in the strategic plan "Unlocking Potential - Building on Success". The Federation's aims and objectives are:

Our vision

The Women's Aid NI vision for the 21st century is the elimination of domestic abuse.

Our mission

Women's Aid exists to challenge attitudes, structures and systems which perpetuate domestic abuse. We seek through our work to enable women, children and young people to live life free from violence and abuse.

Our history

Women's Aid is the lead voluntary organisation in Northern Ireland addressing domestic abuse and providing services for women and children.

The Women's Aid movement in Northern Ireland began in 1975 and is made up of eight local Women's Aid groups and the Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland.

Each local Women's Aid group offers a range of specialist services to women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse. They are all members of Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland.

Our Ethos

Our strong ethos has been built upon our rich heritage of campaigning to end domestic abuse, which began in the 70's and continues to be based upon our working premise of: for women, with women, by women which is inherent in our service development and delivery.

Our principles are:

Survivor engagement: Women, children and young people are at the heart of everything we do and we will ensure our work is informed by their voices and experience.

Collaboration: We will work collectively and collaboratively as a Women's Aid movement, to bring about positive change.

Empowerment: We will encourage women, children and young people to access support which will develop their inherent strengths, helping them to make safe positive choices and determine their own futures.

Equity, diversity and inclusion: We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and will challenge all forms of discrimination.

Trauma informed practice and quality standards: We are committed to quality standards, trauma informed practice, and continuous improvement.

Working with others to influence change: We recognise domestic abuse requires a coordinated response and we are fully committed to working across society, with all individuals and organisations, to end domestic abuse.

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Our Core Aims:

We will work collectively across Northern Ireland to:

engage with women, children and young people, to give them a voice and ensure they inform all aspects of service development and delivery.

provide trauma informed specialised services to women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

deliver preventative education programmes in schools and community settings to promote healthy non-abusive relationships and share key safeguarding messages.

educate and inform the public, private, voluntary, statutory and community sectors of the context and impact of domestic abuse.

provide quality assured education and training to a wide audience, to increase capacity to respond to domestic abuse.

monitor, influence and respond to government policy and legislation as a Subject Matter Expert, giving a voice to survivors of domestic abuse.

work in partnership, sharing our expertise with all relevant agencies to ensure a joined-up response to domestic abuse.

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Significant activities

Current Context

Domestic and sexual violence continues to be endemic across Northern Ireland with PSNI during 2023/24 (most recent recorded statistics at time of publication) attending 33,763 reported incidents of domestic abuse. The third highest since records began. Despite being an under reported crime due to its nature, domestic abuse in Northern Ireland makes up 20% of all overall crime. Since March 2020, 28 women have been murdered, many in their own homes and by a male perpetrator known to them. The youngest of these women was 20 and the oldest 82. It is well documented in research that Northern Ireland has one of the highest incidents of domestic homicide in Europe. These figures highlight the need for services, interventions, ongoing public awareness, development work, partnership approaches and adequate funding for specialist services such as WAFNI deliver.

While this year marks the final year of WAFNI's current strategic plan, it has been so successful that little change is needed going forward. Progressive work has been delivered across all six big ideas (overarching outcomes):

Six Big Ideas (linked to 'Unlocking Potential - Building on Success' A three-year Strategic Plan)

1. Work as a collective - Direct Service provision
2. At the Heart - voices of women, children & young people
3. Unlock Learning
4. Create Social Change
5. Our Brand - Our values
6. Sustain and improve

We cannot deliver this strategic plan without the support and collaborative working with our eight local groups. WAFNI continued to have regular remote and face to face meetings with local groups to work collectively to deliver on this strategic plan. To this end, we have continued a hybrid approach to regional meetings, which has resulted in regular use of online meetings, to make best use of busy diaries for the CEO's across the local groups alongside commitment to quarterly face to face meetings to allow for more in depth discussion and networking.

Women's Aid is committed to working with Government to meet the needs of victims and survivors. There has been a seismic shift in recognition of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls at a government level in the last reporting year, with the launch of the 'Ending Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy' on the 17th September 2024, the 'Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy for Northern Ireland' on the 25th September 2024 and the first Programme for Government for Northern Ireland since 2011, including ending Violence Against Women & Girls as one of the nine key priorities for the first time ever.

Last year WAFNI lobbied extensively for a separate pillar for children and young people to be part of the governments new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy to ensure they are seen as equal victims of domestic abuse with their experiences and needs prioritized. In this reporting year, we were pleased to see the inclusion of a Children's Pillar in the new strategy informed by the children and young people in our services.

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Despite these gains in government recognition, it is with great sadness that WAFNI must report that at the end of this reporting period their Core Funding from Department of Health has been completely cut. The ending of this Core Funding relationship after 40 years is devastating especially given the pivotal role WAFNI played in informing and shaping the above strategies and the opportune position Northern Ireland is now in to address domestic abuse.

Following on from our successful partnership working with PSNI to deliver training in relation to the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme, we have worked with feedback from our SAY group to create 'See, Connect, Safeguard', a capacity building training programme in relation to the PSNI responding to children and young people affected by domestic abuse with rollmop due to take place in the next financial year.

We believe that any emerging government strategy and legislation must have sufficient funding behind it to ensure effective service provision, training, and awareness to wrap around it and ensure effective implementation. To this end, we welcomed the Executive Office's commitment to putting funding behind its Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Framework.

The regional work with our membership has been extremely busy this year and we have continued to work collectively to affect change and highlight the issue of domestic abuse at all levels. This year we have continued to work together to deliver our innovative Strategic Plan - Unlocking Potential - Building on Success Road Map of Change (2022-2025). We have also developed and implemented clear messaging and communication through the work of our regional communications group.

Our WAFNI Board of Directors has continued to meet on a regular basis to oversee the work of the organisation, support management and monitor progress against the strategic plan. The WAFNI AGM, which had been scheduled for December 2024 and had to be cancelled due to a severe weather warning was held in February 2025 and had representatives from six of the eight local groups. We had one Director sadly leave this year due to other commitments, giving WAFNI a total of 10 directors currently. We are satisfied that the Articles of Association are working to future proof and strengthen the regional work of WAFNI going forward.

1. Work as a Collective - Direct Service Provision (Refuge/Floating Support Services)

Demand for services continues with groups working at full capacity in all areas of service provision including both refuge and outreach. This is reflected in the annual statistics which are consistently high. Groups are continuing to experience high levels, and the challenge is balancing demand with capacity, this is achieved through initial triage and risk assessment process. Funding to increase capacity to deliver services continues to be a major issue that must be addressed if demand for services is to be effectively addressed. This is especially relevant to provision for services for children and young people. Women's Aid regionally does not receive any core funding for children's services with posts being subject to short term and "patchwork" funding. This has unfortunately resulted in the loss of key children and young people's staff and services which has devastating impacts for children and young people affected by domestic abuse. Refuge accommodation continued to run on a high-capacity level throughout this year. Statistics clearly illustrate the high demand on all our eight local Women's Aid services during this reporting period which is reflected in the headline figures for the year:-

523 Women and 364 children and young people stayed in our refuges
5,810 Women received community based support
5,354 children accessed outreach support
45 women supported through pregnancy in refuge

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6 Babies born to women in refuge
304 women supported through pregnancy in the community
8,398 referrals made to Women's Aid Services

We continue to work to sustain and develop our vital services. Our refuges remain at full capacity as do our floating support and trauma informed programmes. This is clearly evidenced by the increasing number of women who have been triaged and are waiting on vital support services.

1.2 Change Management

The work with local groups to implement Change Management process in ensuring sustainability, quality assured good practice provision and development of refuge and floating support services continued throughout this year.

1.3 Chair's Forum

This year saw the creation of a Chair's Forum consisting of the Chairpersons of the eight local groups and WAFNI. This was a result of planning days attended by Local Group CEO's wherein discussions took place regarding the future of Women's Aid as a sustainable movement. This prompted further discussion at WAFNI's AGM and the subsequent setting up of the group to provide quarterly dedicated space for Women's Aid Chairpersons to meet to discuss matters at a strategic and governance level. All eight groups are represented and feedback from the meetings shows a great deal of engagement.

1.4 IRIS Test & Review

During this reporting period we entered year five of this project. It is funded by Department of Health and aims to implement IRIS (Identification & Referral to Improve Safety). This is a 'Test & Review' project in Northern Ireland and has been developed on a collaborative basis with MAP, NEXUS and Victim Support NI. This has been a highly successful project with an external Evaluation carried out in 2024 which evidenced the need for the continuation and potential roll out of the project. The two IRISi sites are at full capacity in relation to signed up GP Practices and population targets and have exceeded the recommended population levels. The feedback from GPS and patients has been very positive.

1.5 See, Hear, Act

The regional See, Hear, Act project entered its third and final year of delivery. The project worked to implement elements of WAFNI's ten-year strategy for children and young people, See, Hear, Act which was launched in Stormont in 2019. The overall vision for children and young people affected by domestic abuse presented in this strategy is "A society where all children and young people are safe, supported and surrounded by social guardians who will listen to them, build their confidence and encourage them to be the best they can be".

The See, Hear, Act project worked with staff from all 8 Women's Aid groups to deliver 5 high level outcomes as follows:

1. Practitioners across all local Women's Aid NJ projects are supported to embed models of excellence.
2. Practitioners working with families at risk of domestic abuse (including statutory services, teachers, and early years providers) have good professional awareness of the impact of domestic abuse on children and families and how to best provide trauma informed support.

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3. A network of empowered, informed and motivated See, Hear, Act Champions exists across local Women's Aid services in Northern Ireland.
4. Mothers of young children (0-5) engaged in Women's Aid services across NI are supported and empowered, through practical support and group work programmes, to help their children survive and thrive.
5. Mothers and young children (0-5) have access to good quality, evidence-based services designed around best practice.

The project works collaboratively with our 8 local Women's Aid groups, Health and Social Care Trusts, Government Departments, Children's sector organisations, SBNI (Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland), Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnerships, Universities, Teachers and Early Years Providers including Sure start to affect both internal and external change and raise awareness of the needs of families affected by domestic abuse.

With less than three months to go before the end of this project, we are incredibly pleased to report that not only has the project met all its outcomes but also exceeded targets.

In terms of internal training delivered 168 practitioners have been trained in SBNI's Trauma Informed Practice levels 1 and 2, Connect to Calm and the Solihull approach. Alongside an additional 1,310 external practitioners trained on the impact of domestic abuse on young children and mums.

But perhaps even more importantly it has created a legacy of impact.

In its final year there has been a complete revision and pilot run of the Women's Aid You and Me, Mum programme (originally published in 2007) to take into account new approaches and knowledge especially around neuroscience and sensory play. As well as the foundational elements created to create an Early Years version of the Women's Aid Helping Hands programme which currently runs in primary schools, but which early years practitioners have been eager to have in their settings for many years and which was one of the key recommendations put forward by Helga Sneddon in her independent evaluation of the Helping Hands model.

2. At the Heart - voices of women, children & young people

This strategic theme has a clear focus on amplifying the voices of women, children and young people to inform all other strategic themes. We continue to ensure that all government consultation responses and training programmes developed are informed by the voices of women, children and young people. This year WAFNI continued to facilitate consultations with the Survivor Engagement Group and facilitate the hugely successful SAY project.

2.1 SAY (Social Action Youth)

SAY brought together a diverse range of young people engaged in Women's Aid services across Northern Ireland. While originally funded by Children in Need for a series of workshops between spring and summer of 2023, our partnership with Allstate NI meant that additional workshops were able to be added across 2024 and 2025. The workshops enabled young people to come together, have a say in issues affecting them and work on projects that would bring about change.

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SAY young people worked together on various social action initiatives, aimed at shining a light on children and young people's experiences of domestic abuse, ensuring that lived experience was not only heard but taken into account. The work of SAY was showcased at two high profile events in the Northern Ireland Parliament Buildings in Stormont, including one in December 2024 where the Minister for Education Paul Given and the Chair of the Safeguarding Board of Northern Ireland officially launched the young people's healthy relationships website and the trauma informed SACC animation.

In addition to influencing government strategy including lobbying for and obtaining a children's pillar in the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy for Northern Ireland, this reporting year the SAY young people also informed the commissioning and delivery of much needed research into children's experience of the family court system, undertaken by Queen's University Belfast on behalf of the Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime in Northern Ireland. The SAY group worked in partnership with researchers to co-design the terms of reference and have been key contributors to the research. They are acknowledged as co-authors on the research terms of reference.

The SAY group have also helped WAFNI develop and deliver bespoke training for a range of professionals including the Police Service of Northern Ireland. This training known as 'See, Connect, Safeguard' focuses on the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people and how to respond to their needs and experiences. The SAY group designed content and key messaging for the training ensuring it is focused on the voices of lived experience and informed by children and young people.

The SAY project highlights the important role young people can play as change makers and social activists when they are provided with the right support and opportunities. Overwhelmingly positive reflections from young people in terms of personal learning, acquisition of skills and growth in confidence clearly evidences the need for the project. The journey of personal development is clear and SAY young people openly articulate the positive and seismic shift they perceive in themselves. The SAY project has created such a strong legacy, with the resources created going out far and wide, creating ripples of social change at so many levels. Because of this group and what they have achieved together:

- Children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse are now fully recognized in government policy
- Young people in schools and youth settings will get clear messages about their rights in relationships because of the SAY website
- Training programmes are now informed by the voices of lived experience and will raise professional awareness of children and young people's experiences of domestic abuse.
- The animation will help create a network of SACCs all making a difference in the lives of children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

During this reporting period Children in Need, blown away by the success of the project asked WAFNI to be one of five organisations to take part in a documentary they were creating in relation to the Youth Social Action Fund. Children in Need's Youth Social Action Programme was a groundbreaking £8 million collaboration among BBC Children in Need, the #iWill Fund and The Hunter Foundation, through this fund they invested in 130 projects across the UK, empowering organisations to place young people at the heart of project development.

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2.2 WAFNI's Survivor Engagement Group

In this reporting period, WAFNI continued to facilitate the survivor engagement process to ensure the valued contribution of women, children and young people's voices who have engaged in our services across the region can influence, shape and monitor government policy, legislation and strategy. This is financially supported via the Department of Justice's Asset Recovery Community Scheme.

Over the reporting period, the Survivor Group together with other survivors engaged in Women's Aid Services across NI have contributed to the work of consultations informing government policy and process including:

- Legal Aid Access to Justice
- PPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Stalking
- Safe Leave Act
- Victim and Witnesses of Crime Bill

Regular meetings of the Survivor Engagement Group means that they are kept up to date on recent policy and strategy development including an overview of final consultation responses for their consideration together with other developments in research and policy.

At WAFNI we understand that in order to get our service provision for women, children and young people right, we must consult with them continuously and we are pleased to see this model being adopted by government, this year WAFNI endeavoured to support this process by providing guidance and tools to organisations who use survivors through workshops co-facilitated by members of our Survivor Engagement group.

This year WAFNI held three Survivor Engagement workshops with staff from the Executive Office, Department of Justice, Health and the Victim and Witness Care Unit. Two survivors co-facilitated the sessions.

3. Unlock Learning

Internal and external training continues to be a major focus as we aim to unlock learning and build skills and capacity both internally and externally. We are committed to maintaining our lead position as subject matter experts in relation to domestic abuse training. This year we have seen continued increase in demand for WAFNI's expertise to develop and support external agencies with training requirements.

3.1 External Agencies

This year we have seen continued increase in demand for WAFNI's expertise to develop and support external agencies with training requirements. This year we have developed and delivered training to a wide range of agencies including, Energia, Middletown Centre for Autism, Start360, Women's Aid Ireland, NI Hospice, Allstate NI, Childcare Partnerships, Stranmillis University Belfast, Queens University Belfast, the Education Authority and Sligo, Leitrim Children & Young People's Services. etc.

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This year saw WAFNI heading to Sligo where we trained a variety of workers in the Sligo and Leitrim area who work with children and young people who have been affected by Domestic Abuse including domestic abuse advocacy services and child protection teams. The training provided was an adapted version of the Developing Social Guardians for Helping Hands Model with a focus on understanding domestic abuse, the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people, the current context in terms of legislation etc. and how to apply the helping hands programme. This training programme was delivered to 28 staff over two full day sessions. Feedback was very positive and showed that:

100% participants felt that the training provided me with information and knowledge and will be of future use in safeguarding children

100% participants felt that the training was presented in a clear and organised manner

100% participants felt that the training increased their knowledge on the concept of social guardians

100% participants felt that the increased their knowledge of strategies to safeguard children affected by domestic abuse

91% participants felt that the training helped to create a shared language and tools for myself and the children in my setting to discuss feelings and safety

3.2 Ending Violence Against Women and Girls - Regional Change Fund

WAFNI was delighted to secure funding through The Executive Office, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Regional Change Fund. With our business case 'Shifting the Narrative - Creating the Change' and through this funding, over a 15-month period, WAFNI hopes to make a real and lasting difference, shifting the narrative and creating the change in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls.

The project builds upon WAFNI's successful track record of preventative education and develops this to early years, post primary and third level education. It clearly aligns with the prevention theme in the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls strategic framework which seeks to place an overall emphasis on prevention, tackling the root causes, and stopping the violence before it starts.

Developing a continuous preventative journey for all children and young people, from early years, through to primary, post primary and third level education, ensures they are getting clear messaging about healthy relationships and respect throughout.

Capacity-building plans for professionals including teachers will ensure this journey is supported by Social Action Champions who can support and refer.

The project has four high level outputs which correlate directly to and deliver upon the three outcomes presented under the EVAWG prevention theme as outlined:

Outcome 1

Develop a Helping Hands for Early Years Resource to increase understanding of feeling safe and promote early intervention in statutory and community early years settings.

The successful implementation of Helping Hands across primary schools in NI is a good news story. Teacher training evaluations, feedback from early years practitioners and research by Dr. Bronagh McKee has identified a need for key messages contained in the programme to be heard at an even younger age.

This will include:

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-development of a creative early years resource building upon the core components of the Helping Hands model.

-piloting of the resource as a holistic early intervention capacity building approach with early years practitioners (statutory and community) supported by CPD accredited training.

Outcome 2

Educate young people on healthy respectful relationships using creative youth led tools to challenge attitudes, behaviour and culture, signposting to support.

Work in this area has started progressing with the hugely successful SAY project which includes the development of a comprehensive website. This website is being developed for young people, by young people to raise awareness of healthy relationships, challenge thinking and encourage social activism.

This will include:

-development of a promotional plan to maximise reach of the SAY website (for young people by young people) across NI

-design and produce posters, cards etc with QR codes for youth settings, schools etc

- facilitation of consultative approaches with young people to enable them to have their SAY in issues surrounding VAWG and shape output 3.

Outcome 3

Build capacity for post-primary teachers and other professionals to respond to VAWG through accredited training delivery.

This will include the roll out of a capacity building training model for post primary school teachers which will:

-build capacity to respond to young people affected by VAWG and domestic abuse and support teachers to participate fully in Operation Encompass

- develop confidence to support young people affected by domestic abuse; raise awareness of support pathways for young people

- increase awareness of healthy relationships as a key issue affecting young people

- provide teaching tools to enable teachers to fulfil responsibility under RSE curriculum elements, particularly in relation to healthy relationships with their pupils.

Outcome 4

Embed awareness of VAWG in pre-employment practitioner training, in partnership with third level education providers (teachers, social workers health practitioners and youth and community workers).

WAFNI strongly believes the earlier we build professional knowledge the better. Building upon our strong partnerships with third level education institutions we hope to ensure that knowledge of domestic abuse and VAWG is built into education of teacher, social workers, health practitioners and young and community workers from the beginning ensuring that professionals are not left to learn about domestic abuse 'on the job'.

This will include:

- extending and strengthening partnerships with third level education institutions.

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- working in partnership with university staff to identify relevant courses for input.
- developing and delivering course inputs across identified courses.
- training EVAWG champions in institutions leaving behind a legacy of signposting and robust awareness of legislation and policy for employers including Safe Leave.

Progress against all outputs is ongoing.

3.4 Developing Social Guardians to Deliver Helping Hands - Primary School-based preventative education programme

This year we continued to deliver our two-day teacher training programme "Developing Social Guardians to Deliver Helping Hands". This two-day CPD accredited programme builds confidence and capacity among teachers to deliver our innovative Helping Hands programme in a classroom setting. The programme builds confidence and self-esteem among children and helps them identify the warning signs of abuse and know who to turn to if they need help. Through our capacity building training programme for teachers, we outline the context and impact of domestic abuse on children and create a shared language and tools to build capacity for teachers to support the children in their classroom. This year we worked in partnership with Women's Aid groups to train a total of 77 teachers over 3 two-day events. Since the programme delivery began in 2010 the total number of teachers trained is 1,904. We reviewed and refreshed the two-day training programme to include SAY resources, updated research/legislation and statistics. The programme was evaluated with a pre and post evaluation approach to track learning and increase in confidence. A full evaluation report was produced with the following headlines:

- 100% teachers rated the trainer's style and manner as excellent
- 99% teachers rated the course content and materials as excellent
- 97% teachers rated range of methods used as excellent
- 93% teachers rated working in groups as excellent
- 95% teachers rated time management as excellent
- 99% teachers rated venue and catering excellent (91%)

Analysis of post-programme questionnaires assessed knowledge and understanding across a range of areas:

1. 100% of teachers either strongly agreed (96%) or agreed (4%) with the statement: The training increased my knowledge of the concept of social guardians
2. 100% of teachers either strongly agreed (95%) or agreed (4%) with the statement: The training increased my knowledge of the Helping Hands programme
3. 100% of teachers either strongly agreed (86%) or agreed (14%) with the statement: The training increased my knowledge of strategies to safeguard children affected by domestic abuse.
4. 100% of teachers either strongly agreed (88%) or agreed (12%) with the statement: The training helped create a shared language and tools for myself and children in my classroom to discuss feelings/safety.
5. 100% of teachers either strongly agreed (82%) or agreed (18%) with the statement: I will now feel confident to deliver the Helping Hands programme to children in my setting.
6. 100% of teachers strongly agreed (89%) or agreed (11%) with the statement: The training increased my knowledge of Women's Aid and the services they provide.

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Building on the success of previous years, roll out of refresher training webinars for teachers who had previously completed the Social Guardian training continued. WAFNI delivered this Refresher Programme "Next Steps for Social Guardians" to 122 teachers via 6 online 3 hour webinars. Again, webinars were evaluated using a survey monkey approach and a full evaluation report was produced with the following headlines:

1. 100% teachers rated the quality of delivery as either excellent (83%) or good (17%).
2. 100% teachers rated the structure and flow of the webinar as either excellent (78%) or good (22%).
3. 98% teachers rated capacity to increase knowledge and understanding and build confidence as either excellent (80%) or good (18%).
4. 99% teachers rated relevance to the workplace as either excellent (66%) or good (31%).
5. 100% teachers rated content and materials as either excellent (82%) or good (18%).

Analysis of post-programme surveys assessed knowledge and understanding across a range of areas:

1. 98% teachers perceived themselves to have excellent (49%) or good (49%) understanding of Current NI developments in relation to domestic abuse.
2. 99% teachers perceived themselves to have excellent (56%) or good (43%) understanding of Nature and complexity of coercive control.
3. 99% teachers perceived themselves to have excellent (57%) or good (42%) understanding of Impact of coercive control on children.
4. 99% teachers perceived themselves to have excellent (54%) or good (45%) understanding of Trauma resulting from domestic abuse.
5. 99% teachers perceived themselves to have excellent (70%) or good (29%) understanding of Helping Hands programme and success in Northern Ireland.
6. 94% teachers perceived themselves to have excellent (64%) or good (30%) understanding of Work of Women's Aid in Northern Ireland.

3.5 Helping Hands in Non-Statutory pre-school settings

When it comes to safeguarding children, early intervention and prevention approaches are vital to identify risk, challenge thinking and ensure effective support is put in place for families who need it. This reporting year seen several exploratory meetings between Department of Education and Women's Aid Federation NI which identified perceived needs and gaps within non statutory pre-school settings across NI in relation to domestic abuse, safeguarding and Operation Encompass. WAFNI was commissioned to conduct a scoping study on need for professional capacity building in this setting.

The primary purpose of the survey was to capture awareness and understanding of the extent, context and impact of domestic abuse in early years settings and to identify professional learning and development needs in this area. It also sought to gauge knowledge Operation Encompass and thoughts in relation to whether or not this should be made available to preschool settings.

3.6 'Women's Aid Centre of Training Excellence' - Qualification Centre

One of our key deliverables under Unlock Learning was a 'Women's Aid Centre of Training Excellence' to build capacity and promote best practice. As of this reporting period, the Centre is in its third year and all three tiers of training approaches have been implemented (Induction, Training and Qualification). This includes an online e-Learning platform which offers staff regionally the following CPD accredited training modules:

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- Welcome to Women's Aid Induction Training
- Understanding Trauma & Vicarious Trauma
- Understanding Coercive Control
- Routes to Support: Induction Training (Women's Aid online bed system)
- Understanding Non-Fatal Strangulation in NI
- Understanding Stalking in NI

This year a total of 80 learners from Women's Aid groups across Northern Ireland completed 320 courses.

This year also seen the continued roll out of the Domestic Abuse Practitioner Advocate training to Women's Aid groups across NI, this is a UK-Wide qualification under NOCN which we developed in partnership with Women's Aid England, Welsh Women's Aid and Scottish Women's Aid. The certificate is a nationally recognised qualification and has been endorsed by the Home Office as suitable for the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) role. There are four modules to this Certificate and a dedicated time commitment of a full year to complete the training. This course is an asset to all Women's Aid staff and provides a qualification and recognition of their highly skilled roles within the Domestic Abuse sector. It also provides time for staff collaboration outside of normal work duties.

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland welcomed funding through the Department of Justice's Assets Recovery Community Scheme which allows us to provide the local groups with 12 bursaries a year to supplement the cost of this important qualification.

We are very proud to hold both NOCN and CPD Centre status, which is all part of Women's Aid Centre of Training Excellence goals.

4. Create Social Change - Policy & Campaigning

WAFNI works to create social change in all its core activities including training and awareness raising and through effective partnership working. WAFNI leads regionally on powerful campaigns which are developed in partnership with the eight Women's Aid groups and informed by issues and needs identified through service delivery and the voices of lived experience. Campaigns aim to shift public thinking and raise awareness, not only of domestic abuse and VAWG but of the range of services available to ensure effective signposting and access to support. WAFNI has been instrumental in the development of government policy and strategic frameworks throughout the reporting period. The organisation has shared its unique expertise of over forty years working in this area and brought the voices of lived experience to the forefront in discussions and drafting of these key strategic frameworks. No other organisation can bring this unique insight and contribution.

4.1 Department of Justice - Review of Civil Legal Aid

The review considered the civil legal aid system in its entirety, from how services are procured and how well the current system works for users and providers, to how civil legal aid impacts the wider justice system.

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland completed quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups with staff, women and young people across Northern Ireland and at various points in their recovery journey to inform the two responses we submitted. One on behalf of staff and women and one on behalf of young people.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

"the court system is another form of financial abuse. I have to pay Legal Aid fees to my solicitor every month out of an already stretched budget"

Quote from a women

4.2 Public Prosecution Service of Northern Ireland - Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Stalking

This was a public consultation by the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland to seek views on their new policy for prosecuting cases of stalking. The purpose of the policy is to explain the PPS's approach in taking prosecutorial decisions in respect of stalking, as well as the assistance available to support victims and witnesses in these cases. It also provides guidance in respect of the Protection from Stalking Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, and how legislation will be used by prosecutors.

Once again Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland worked with survivors and staff to examine the policy and report back to the PPS on how they could improve their policy to make it more user friendly for those who may need to use it.

4.3 Public Health Authority - Review on Routine Enquiry by Midwives / Health Visitors / Family Nurses

The Public Health Agency was established as part of reforms to Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland. They are a multi-disciplinary, multi-professional body responsible for providing health protection and health and social care wellbeing improvement to every member of every community in Northern Ireland.

In recognition of the significant public health impact of Domestic Abuse, Routine Enquiry was introduced. Routine Enquiry involves asking all women at assessment about abuse regardless of whether there are any indicators or suspicions about abuse.

The Public Health Agency has undertaken a project specifically to review the current screening processes, consider options in terms of improving potential for disclosure and to improve outcomes for women, children and families. Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland in their capacity as members of the Working Group and Steering Group were appointed to deliver a robust consultation process to capture the views of a diverse range of women who have been through Women's Aid Services.

4.4 Department of Economy - Consultation on Domestic Abuse Safe Leave

Women's Aid have campaigned extensively over recent years to see improvements in legislation to help protect victims and survivors of domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. We greatly welcomed the passing of the Domestic Abuse (Safe Leave) Act in 2022 as a way in which victims and survivors of domestic abuse can be supported by their employer as they try to rebuild their lives following an abusive relationship.

The act will give more protections to individuals going through a very difficult time and will also help inform workplaces about domestic abuse, encourage more employers to implement workplace policies and to be better informed of the impacts of domestic abuse and to look out for signs and symptoms.

Following the collapse of the NI Assembly, this piece of legislation stalled and has not yet been implemented into law although it has gained royal assent. The Department for the Economy put out the consultation to seek views on how to operationalise the provisions in the Domestic Abuse (Safe Leave)

Act (NI) 2022 and WAFNI made sure to include the voices of those who have experienced domestic abuse in our response as they are the experts by experience.

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Despite the delay in implementation, WAFNI are 'Safe Leave Ready' with extensive training and HR tools to support organisations. This has already been rolled out to some organisations including our corporate partner Allstate NI, one of NI's largest IT companies with over 2,400 employees across Belfast and Derry-Londonderry.

4.5 Department of Justice - Consultation on proposals for a Victims and Witnesses of Crime Bill

Department of Justice launched a consultation seeking the views of the public on proposals for inclusion in a Victims and Witnesses of Crime Bill. These proposals included:

- The establishment of a statutory Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses of Crime.
- A provision to compel criminal justice organisations to provide or publish statistical victim information, including evidence of Victims Charter compliance.
- The right to pre-trial independent legal representation for complainants in serious sexual offence cases.
- Enhanced protections relating to disclosure applications in serious sexual offences cases.

4.6 Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy in NI for 2023 - 2030

Led by Departments for Justice and Health, this strategy was initially formed around four key pillars of Partnership, Prevention, Support and Justice. Each pillar has its own expected outcomes and key priority areas. WAFNI lobbied for a separate pillar for children and young people and consulted with the SAY group to respond to design and shape the pillar based upon their lived experience, thoughts and hopes. This Strategy was launched on 25th September 2024 with a children's pillar included.

4.7 Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework

Up until 2021, NI was the only part of the UK and Ireland that did not have a specific VAWG strategy. On the 9th March 2021, WAFNI launched a Call for Action and petition for a VAWG strategy. The Assembly considered a motion to introduce a comprehensive strategy to address VAWG. This was the start of the journey. WAFNI was a fundamental driver, working in partnership with TEO to consult, share expertise and bring the voices of lived experience, including the Social Action Youth (SAY) group. WAFNI welcomed The Executive Office taking forward this initiative and committed time and energy to the co-design process. This Strategy was launched on 17th September 2024.

Its vision: A changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and harm including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them.

It is an ambitious vision that will require buy in from every level of society and require structural, cultural and behavioural change from all who live, work, learn and play in Northern Ireland. It is a vision that Women's Aid Federation NI has held for over 40 years and while we welcome the launch of this strategy which finally brings us in line with the rest of the UK and ROI, we are vigilant of the fact that this is in many ways the start of a journey, not the end of one.

The launch of the EVAWG strategy is timely given that it coincides with both the launch of the new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy for Northern Ireland and the first Programme for Government for Northern Ireland since 2011. For the first time ever, VAWG was recognised as one of the nine key priorities. This is a seismic shift in recognition of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls at a government level.

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Full implementation of this strategy will require full government leadership, with prioritised, adequate funding. With a note of caution on what is adequate because any new funding opportunity opened to the voluntary/community sector will create expectations and will certainly be over subscribed. But without a solid framework of resourcing and support surrounding the strategy it cannot hope to create the lasting change that is required to end this epidemic. This is horizon funding which requires a brave government if we want to take violence against women and girls seriously and create a changed society where women and girls are safe and ultimately everyone is safer.

4.8 Responsible Reporting Matters

On Monday 3rd March 2025, Women's Aid hosted a media conference at the Great Hall, Queen University Belfast, unveiling updated guidelines on responsible reporting of domestic and sexual violence. The event brought together media professionals, MLAs and advocates to discuss the role of the media in shaping public understanding of reporting on sensitive topics including domestic abuse, gender-based violence and suicide.

A central theme of the conference was the media's responsibility in shaping public attitudes toward domestic abuse and sexual violence. Speaking at the event, Sonya McMullan from Women's Aid spoke about the profound influence that journalists and media professionals hold: "The media plays a key role in shaping public perception, influencing social attitudes, and ultimately driving change in Northern Ireland."

However, she also highlighted the responsibility that comes with this power: "This influence does come with great responsibility, especially when it comes to how we report on sensitive and traumatic issues like domestic abuse. Today, as we are here relaunching our Responsible Reporting Matters guidelines, we recognize the critical need for ethical and trauma-informed journalism."

McMullan's speech reinforced the importance of holding the media accountable and the need for journalists to approach reporting on domestic abuse with care, accuracy, and survivor-centered perspectives.

Other speakers included Allison Morris (Belfast Telegraph), Detective Superintendent Lindsay Fisher (PSNI), Frank Mullane (Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse) and survivors of domestic abuse who spoke about their lived experiences.

The updated guidelines reflect recent policy and legislative changes in Northern Ireland, as well as shifts in how we consume media.

Topics covered include:

- > Understanding domestic abuse and violence against women and girls
- > The intersectional impact of domestic abuse
- > Common issues in reporting domestic abuse
- > The Importance of Imagery
- > Engaging with victims and survivors

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4.9 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR)

During this reporting period, Women's Aid NI continued to participate in Domestic Homicide Reviews. A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom they were related or with whom they were, or had been, in an intimate personal relationship, or a member of the same household as themselves. Designed to promote key learning for statutory and voluntary organisations working to address Domestic Abuse. WAFNI's CEO sits on the Senior Oversight Forum which reviews all DHR's prior to release.

4.10 MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

Women's Aid NI has been a committed member and active participant on MARACs in Northern Ireland since their introduction and establishment in 2009/10. Women's Aid NI has invested heavily in MARACs in terms of both time, expertise and resources. Women's Aid NI currently has a representative sitting on all MARACs operating in Northern Ireland. Women's Aid NI is also a key referral agency and currently is the main referral organisation from the voluntary sector.

In 2022, PSNI identified the need for (and commissioned) a comprehensive review of all MARAC operational processes in Northern Ireland. This review was delivered by independent consultancy, Leonard Consultancy. Women's Aid regionally held its own review, facilitated by WAFNI. Findings from the internal Women's Aid review were fed into the overall review. Women's Aid believes that MARAC has the potential to be an effective intervention to safeguard the adult victim of domestic abuse (and subsequently children involved in the household too) however, there are areas that are not currently working as effectively as they could be and there are several areas which require urgent attention and development, these include lengthy delays, repeat cases and lack of representation from key agencies.

Leonard Consultancy has published its report, and the Department of Justice has now established a dedicated multi-agency working group of which WAFNI is part of to consider and respond to the reviews' findings, with a view to strengthening the responses to and protections for victims of domestic abuse. The group's key objectives are to identify costed recommendations for new multi-agency risk assessment arrangements and supporting processes; improve risk assessment and management to increase the safety of victims of domestic abuse; and reduce the risk posed by perpetrators of domestic abuse.

5. Our Brand - Our values - Regional Women's Aid Branding

Promoting a consistent, collective image and brand to ensure clear messaging is inherent in our collective working. We are committed to consistent messaging and regional branding for all Women's Aid comms and promotional campaigns. We believe that standardised marketing for Women's Aid will provide clearer and more efficient pathways to support for women accessing our services. Within our Strategic Plan WAFNI is committed to: Implementing regular regional awareness raising campaigns across all social media platforms. This is a key deliverable which we have consistently delivered on throughout this reporting period.

The implementation of Regional Branding Guidelines is important to ensure consistent messaging and use of design, colour and image. Regular regional communication group meetings and correspondence took place during this reporting period with regular consultation through monthly Forum meetings to ensure clear messaging, social media etc. The result has been a unified consistent brand across Women's Aid NI that is recognisable and has impact.

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At the end of this reporting period all branding is in place and with all social media channels have the same messaging which has created a major impact. WAFNI lead by posting on social media and it is then resent/liked/commented on by our 8 local Women's Aid Groups, increasing our reach across Northern Ireland. The success of our consistent branding messaging is clearly evidenced by our increased social media activity, which during this reporting period shows a Facebook reach of 128,700 (a 57% increase on last year) and an Instagram reach of 465,700 (an amazing 712% increase on last year).

6. Sustain and improve

As the funding situation in Northern Ireland becomes more challenging, and facing a new financial year with no Core Government funding, WAFNI's CEO with Board of Trustees ensured that strong governance and effective board infrastructure was in place again this year to meet all due diligence requirements and ensure organisation is fit for purpose.

Monthly Board of Trustee meetings continued throughout the year (12 in year) together with subgroup meetings to review Finance & Fundraising, staffing issues and policy. Scoping for potential funding opportunities is ongoing throughout the year.

There is a Risk Register which is reviewed by Board of Trustees on a regular basis. The Board are very happy to conclude this report with the knowledge of a robust financial position securing the work of Women's Aid over the next few years. We also continue to income generate to support regional projects for local Women's Aid groups.

6.1 Partnership Working

WAFNI realises the elimination of domestic abuse requires the combined efforts and commitment of a wide range of agencies including government departments and voluntary and statutory organisations. Partnership work is prioritised and has continued to be developed and nurtured across all aspects of the organisation's work. Throughout the year we have supported a range of new partnerships as well as maintaining our established work in this area with all partnership meetings such as Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland, Stakeholders Assurance Group, Police Service Northern Ireland, Probation Board Northern Ireland etc.

6.1.2 Allstate NI

This year we entered the fifth and final year of our Ambitious Corporate Partnership with Allstate NI. This progressive partnership has been hugely successful and has formed a strong connection with a clear vision and ethos, stretching far beyond monetary value and reflecting a genuine commitment to collaborate and drive awareness of domestic abuse in NI.

The Hear Her Voice Conference in the Crowne Plaza Hotel Belfast in November 2021, was the culmination of fellowship for Year One. In year two the focus centred on support for the refugees throughout NI. With funding from the Allstate Foundation, the ANI Corporate Fund and employee

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donations, the priority was improvement projects and fun activities for the women and their children. Support in year three and four focused upon the development of the Financial toolkit, supporting the SAY project. Allstate NI worked with the SAY group to develop their branding and provided venue and catering for SAY workshops and implementing Safe Leave within Allstate NI. Allstate NI and Women's Aid are committed to sustaining this partnership throughout the final year ahead with a focus on data collection and providing data visualisation skills to WAFNI staff to allow them to showcase the work being completed with a focus on preventative education and Helping Hands.

This partnership is an outstanding example of how industry and charity can work together to bring real and lasting social impact to communities, evidenced by our winning the 'Impact in your Community' award and highly commended in the 'Collaborate Action' Award that we achieved together at the Business in the Community Responsible Business Awards on the 5th September 2024.

6.2.2 North South Cooperation to tackle Violence Against Women

In 2024, Women's Aid Federation partnered with National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC), through funding from the Shared Island Fund. This saw Local Women's Aid Groups working collectively and collaboratively with agencies from the Republic of Ireland on the North-South Cooperation to tackle Violence Against Women project which brought together an All-Island Violence Against Women Working Group made up of key organisations working at local, regional and national levels, all of whom have extensive expertise in addressing male violence against women, with a specific focus on intimate partner violence.

The aim of the project was to foster practical cooperation and develop all-island strategies to combat intimate partner violence and support victims and survivors. A report was developed based on the meetings held looking at how the border affects the recognition and consistent response to intimate partner violence including cross border collaboration and its impact on women and children across the island of Ireland. Recommendations for both jurisdictions on the need to increase access to cross-border and all-island supports for survivors along with clear, comprehensive, co-ordinated and adequately funded services, with a victim centred approach were put forward. The report was launched on the 28th November 2024 in the Department of Justice, Dublin.

Public benefit

The trustees confirm that they have had due regard for the guidance produced on public benefit by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and are pleased to report that during the year the charitable company has continued to provide public benefits through the programmes and services we offer. In particular, the directors consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set out.

Overview

WAFNI challenges attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that perpetuate domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and abuse; and, through the provision of safety, support and prevention services and the promotion of healthy and non-abusive relationships, works to end gender-based violence locally and globally. The work of Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland provides a strategic focus on membership development, policy development and review, training provision, preventative education and lobbying and liaison with a wide range of statutory and voluntary bodies.

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Vision

The Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland vision for the 21st century is the elimination of domestic abuse.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

The detailed financial results for the year ended 31 March 2025 are shown on pages 33 and 34 of the financial statements which accompany this report. In summary incoming resources were £1,168,616 an increase of £127,047 on the previous year. Total resources expended increased by £11,542 to £863,324 for the year. This resulted in a net surplus position of £305,292 for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Reserves policy

Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Ltd maintains a prudent level of reserves to enable the organisation to manage financial risk and deliver on our commitments. The objective is that the organisation would be able to carry on its work, even if faced with a combination of difficult circumstances, and have the time to adjust its strategy to meet these changing circumstances. Our reserves policy is set therefore to ensure that there is no disruption to our services at short notice, due to a lack of funds, an unforeseen reduction of income or an increase in expenditure, while at the same time ensuring that reserves are no higher than necessary and not retained longer than required. This gives time in the event of a drop in funding, to seek alternative funds, restructure and cut costs whilst continuing to provide current services.

The charity's policy is to retain a level of free reserves, which matches the needs of the organisation, both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. The reserves required should be sufficient to meet committed grant expenditure, personnel and overheads for a period equivalent to six months annual expenditure. The charity will continue to monitor compliance with this policy on a regular basis and the Board will review the appropriateness of the policy annually.

Future Plans

Plans for 2025/2026 will be in line with a strategic review of 'Unlocking Potential - Building on Success' Three-Year Strategic Plan. This strategic review will build upon strengths of the current strategic plan / operational plan, identify new opportunities and present clear deliverables identified over an agreed timescale.

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Public benefit

The trustees confirm that they have had due regard for the guidance produced on public benefit by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and are pleased to report that during the year the charitable company has continued to provide public benefits through the programmes and services we offer. In particular, the directors consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set out.

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Vision

The Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland vision for the 21st century is the elimination of domestic abuse.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, its Articles of Association, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Charity constitution

Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Ltd is a registered charity with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, registration number NIC106451.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governance of the Charity

Directors and Trustees

The Directors of the Company, as at the year-end are listed below, and are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under Company's Articles are known as members of the Board. The Board comprises of not less than 3 and a maximum of 14 members who meet every month and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. Under the requirements of the Articles of Association the Directors are elected to serve for a period of 4 years by an election of the Federation Members of the Charity at AGM. At AGM Trustees who have served four consecutive years shall retire from office. A Trustee who retires in accordance with this Article, if willing to act, shall be eligible for reappointment for a further term of up to four consecutive years. The Directors' liability is limited by guarantee. The term of office (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary) of a Federation Trustee may not be held for more than a maximum of four consecutive terms.

The trustees who have served during the year were as follows:

Patricia Frances Lyness (Chair)
Eleanor McGuckin (Secretary)
Claire Allen (Treasurer)
Jane Elizabeth Kremer (Vice-Chair)
Catherine McMinn
Niamh O'Maolain
Traci Kimber
Kerry Anne Malone
Adele O'Grady
Hilda Elizabeth Hope
Ruth McAdam

The following Trustees were reappointed during the year end:

Catherine McMinn (appointed by Board members 13th June 2024)

The following Trustees resigned during the year:

Kerry Malone (resigned 13th January 2025)

Board members participate in sub-committees, which meet regularly to ensure that operations policies, procedures and systems incorporate sound management and financial controls in keeping with current best practice. All recommendations made by the sub-committees are subject to ratification by the Board in accordance with documented procedure.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Organisational structure

The sub-committees are as follows:

Finance & Fundraising (F&F) - to support the achievement of the strategic objectives and operational targets, the F&F has responsibility for ensuring the effective and efficient use of the Organisation's financial and other resources. In particular, the F&F ensures that, the internal controls and the financial management systems are adequate to discharge corporate governance responsibilities; there is effective and efficient planning, controlling, monitoring and reporting of resources; full compliance with internal policies and procedures and applicable accounting policies and regulations are adhered to. The F&F is chaired by Treasurer and attended by other members of the Trustee Board.

Human Resources & Policy (HR&P) - The HR&P review employment related issues and make recommendations on employment related decisions such as Contracts of Employment and changes to internal Policies and Procedures. Members may also participate in recruitment of staff and participate in disciplinary/grievance proceedings as required.

Policy & Research (P&R) - The P&R review the Organisations consultations processes and responses to external policy and legislative amendments which are submitted by the Organisation on behalf the Federation Members. Members may also participate in supporting consultation process.

Risk Register (R&R) - The R&R review the Organisations risk register on a 6-month basis (or in the case of a trigger).

On occasion the Board also has the powers to set up ad-hoc time limited sub-committees for a particular purpose should the need arise. The Trustees of WAFNI! adhere to the Code of Good Governance, the standards for governance in the sector, which sets out the principles and practices of good governance for the boards of voluntary and community organisations.

The Trustees and Board are the custodians of WAFNI's vision, mission and values; they approve strategy, structure, annual plans and budgets and ensure the organisation is effective and accountable. A scheme of delegation is in place and day to day responsibility for the delivery of services in line with approved plans and budgets rest with the Chief Executive Officer, supported by members of the senior management team. The Chief Executive Officer and senior management staff regularly attend Board meetings but have no voting rights.

The senior management team currently consists of Chief Executive Officer, Support Services Manager, Strategic Support and Finance Officer.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governance of the Charity

The Board of Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Ltd meets monthly. It is responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation and oversees the management of the organisation. The day-to-day management and operation of the activities are carried out by a staff team, led by the CEO and the Senior Management Team, who also report regularly to the Board. Directors are appointed according to the specific skills required by the organisation to fulfil its responsibilities as outlined in its Strategic Plan.

Members

The members of the company at 31 March 2025 were as follows:

ABCLN Women's Aid
Armagh Down Women's Aid
Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid
Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid
Fermanagh Women's Aid
Foyle Women's Aid
North Down & Ards Women's Aid
Omagh Women's Aid

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

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).

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 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 those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- 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 proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to 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.

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**Report of the Trustees
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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES - continued

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Lynn Drake & Co Ltd, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

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

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 6 November 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Patricia Frances Lyness - Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Trustees and Members of Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Limited

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Limited (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and the provisions available for small entities, in the circumstances set out in note 18 to the financial statements, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Trustees and Members of Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Limited

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Trustees.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Trustees and Members of Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Limited

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. In particular, we looked at where management made subjective judgements, for example in respect of accounting estimates that involved making assumptions and considering future events that are inherently uncertain. We also considered potential financial or other pressures, opportunity and motivations for fraud. As part of this discussion, we identified the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations and how management monitor these processes. Appropriate procedures included the review and testing of manual journals and key estimates and judgements made by management for risk of fraud.

Based on our understanding of the company and industry, we identified the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations as those that have a direct impact on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements and identified the greatest potential for fraud. We communicated the identified laws and regulations throughout the audit team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit. Audit procedures performed included, but were not limited to:

Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;

Reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation;

Review of board meeting minutes of those charged with governance;

In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments;

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:-

Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charities internal control.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Trustees and Members of Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Limited

Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.

Perform analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud or error.

Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charities ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charity to cease to continue as a going concern.

Evaluate the overall presentation, structure, and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Alistair Wells (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Lynn Drake & Co Ltd
Statutory Auditors
1st Floor
34 B-D Main Street
Moira
Co. Armagh
BT67 0LE

6 November 2025

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Statement of Financial Activities
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.25 Total funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	290,608	-	290,608	224,812
Charitable activities					
Grants Receivable	5	8,000	637,346	645,346	697,729
Other trading activities	3	173,038	-	173,038	80,836
Investment income	4	59,624	-	59,624	38,192
Total		<u>531,270</u>	<u>637,346</u>	<u>1,168,616</u>	<u>1,041,569</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities					
Direct Charitable Expenditure	6	282,181	578,733	860,914	843,780
Other		<u>2,410</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,410</u>	<u>8,002</u>
Total		<u>284,591</u>	<u>578,733</u>	<u>863,324</u>	<u>851,782</u>
NET INCOME		246,679	58,613	305,292	189,787
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		1,360,575	124,104	1,484,679	1,294,892
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>1,607,254</u></u>	<u><u>182,717</u></u>	<u><u>1,789,971</u></u>	<u><u>1,484,679</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

Balance Sheet
31 March 2025

	Notes	31.3.25 £	31.3.24 £
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	12	211,112	152,115
Investments	13	1,064,275	1,019,359
Cash at bank and in hand		639,277	453,258
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		1,914,664	1,624,732
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	14	(124,693)	(140,053)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		1,789,971	1,484,679
		<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,789,971	1,484,679
		<hr/>	<hr/>
NET ASSETS		1,789,971	1,484,679
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
FUNDS	16		
Unrestricted funds		1,607,254	1,360,575
Restricted funds		182,717	124,104
		<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS		1,789,971	1,484,679
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 6 November 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

Patricia Frances Lyness - Trustee

Claire Allen - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Cash Flow Statement
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

	Notes	31.3.25 £	31.3.24 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	171,311	165,641
Net cash provided by operating activities		<u>171,311</u>	<u>165,641</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Sale UK Treasury Bills		1,019,359	(1,019,359)
Purchase of UK Treasury Bills		(1,064,275)	-
Interest received		59,624	38,192
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>14,708</u>	<u>(981,167)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period			
		186,019	(815,526)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>453,258</u>	<u>1,268,784</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>639,277</u></u>	<u><u>453,258</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Notes to the Cash Flow Statement
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	31.3.25 £	31.3.24 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	305,292	189,787
Adjustments for:		
Interest received	(59,624)	(38,192)
Increase in debtors	(58,997)	(7,235)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(15,360)	21,281
Net cash provided by operations	<u>171,311</u>	<u>165,641</u>

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1/4/24 £	Cash flow £	At 31/3/25 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	453,258	186,019	639,277
	<u>453,258</u>	<u>186,019</u>	<u>639,277</u>
Liquid resources			
Deposits included in cash	-	-	-
Current asset investments	1,019,359	44,916	1,064,275
	<u>1,019,359</u>	<u>44,916</u>	<u>1,064,275</u>
Total	<u>1,472,617</u>	<u>230,935</u>	<u>1,703,552</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Summary of significant accounting policies

(a) General information and basis of preparation

Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Ltd is constituted as a company limited by guarantee incorporated in Northern Ireland (NI021741). In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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 issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2013, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are presented in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

(b) Funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

(c) Income recognition

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Summary of significant accounting policies

For donations to be recognised the charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled. Voluntary income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when receivable. Income received from collections is recognised when received.

Donated facilities and donated professional services are recognised in income at their fair value when their economic benefit is probable, it can be measured reliably and the charity has control over the item. Fair value is determined on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity. For example the amount the charity would be willing to pay in the open market for such facilities and services. A corresponding amount is recognised in expenditure.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP (FRS 102). Further detail is given in the Trustees' Annual Report.

For legacies, entitlement is the earlier of the charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received. At this point income is recognised. On occasion legacies will be notified to the charity however it is not possible to measure the amount expected to be distributed. On these occasions, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed.

Income from trading activities includes income earned from fundraising events and trading activities to raise funds for the charity. Income is received in exchange for supplying goods and services in order to raise funds and is recognised when entitlement has occurred.

The charity receives government grants which are detailed within the notes to these financial statements. Income from government and other grants are recognised at fair value when the charity has entitlement after any performance conditions have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably. If entitlement is not met then these amounts are deferred.

Investment income is earned through holding assets for investment purposes such as shares and property. It includes dividends, interest and rent. Where it is not practicable to identify investment management costs incurred within a scheme with reasonable accuracy the investment income is reported net of these costs. It is included when the amount can be measured reliably. Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method and dividend and rent income is recognised as the charity's right to receive payment is established.

(d) Expenditure recognition

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis, inclusive of VAT which cannot be recovered and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

Costs of raising funds includes the costs associated with attracting voluntary incomes;

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Summary of significant accounting policies

Expenditure on charitable activities includes those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them; and Other expenditure represents those items not falling into the categories above.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

Grants payable to third parties are within the charitable objectives. Where unconditional grants are offered, this is accrued as soon as the recipient is notified of the grant, as this gives rise to a reasonable expectation that the recipient will receive the grants. Where grants are conditional relating to performance then the grant is only accrued when any unfulfilled conditions are outside of the control of the charity.

(e) Support costs allocation

Support costs are those that assist the work of the charity but do not directly represent charitable activities and include office costs, governance costs, administrative payroll costs. They are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity and include project management carried out at Headquarters. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities on a basis consistent with use of the resources. Premises overheads have been allocated on an insert detail basis and other overheads have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Fund-raising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

The analysis of these costs is included in note 7.

(f) Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Cost includes costs directly attributable to making the asset capable of operating as intended.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value, of each asset on a systematic basis over its expected useful life as follows:

Office equipment - 20% Straight Line

(g) Short-term investments

Short-term investments are recognised at cost, representing the fair value of the consideration paid, including any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent measurement is also at cost, as the trustees consider this to be a reasonable approximation of fair value given the short-term nature and low risk of these investments.

Investment income, comprising interest and other proceeds receivable, is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as investment income on an accruals basis when the right to receipt arises.

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Summary of significant accounting policies

The investment is held for liquidity management purposes and is expected to be realised within 12 months of the balance sheet date.

(h) Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

(i) Impairment

Assets not measured at fair value are reviewed for any indication that the asset may be impaired at each balance sheet date. If such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, or the asset's cash generating unit, is estimated and compared to the carrying amount. Where the carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount where the impairment loss is a revaluation decrease.

(j) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the charity has an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount can be reliably estimated.

(k) Leases

Assets acquired under finance leases are capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the expected useful life of the asset. Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding lease liability using the effective interest method. The related obligations, net of future finance charges, are included in creditors.

Rentals payable and receivable under operating leases are charged to the SoFA on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

(l) Employee benefits

When employees have rendered service to the charity, short-term employee benefits to which the employees are entitled are recognised at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid in exchange for that service.

Defined contributions pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution plan for the benefit of its employees. Contributions are expensed as they become payable.

(m) Tax

No provision is required for taxation as the company is defined as a charity for taxation purposes.

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Summary of significant accounting policies

(n) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist. The trustees have considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from authorising these financial statements. The budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

(o) Judgements estimates

The following judgements including those involving estimates that have been made in the process of applying the above accounting policies that have had the most significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements and that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year:

- (i) depreciation method and asset useful lives
- (ii) valuation of property
- (iii) principal assumptions used to measure multi-employer defined benefit pension schemes' liabilities, sensitivities to changes in assumptions and future funding obligations

The estimates and assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis considering the current and future market conditions.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Office Equipment - 20% Straight Line

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Donations	118,679	81,179
Allstate NI	28,279	4,133
The Allstate Foundation	130,000	120,000
Christmas Cards (Sara O'Neill)	13,650	19,500
	<u>290,608</u>	<u>224,812</u>

3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Local Groups Affiliation Fees	17,600	17,600
Training	116,334	7,952
Sale of Publications and Helping Hands Packs	39,104	55,284
	<u>173,038</u>	<u>80,836</u>

4. INVESTMENT INCOME

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Deposit account interest	12,189	13,516
Investment Income	47,435	24,676
	<u>59,624</u>	<u>38,192</u>

5. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Grants	645,346	697,729
	<u>645,346</u>	<u>697,729</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
DoH Revenue Costs	73,973	73,973
Probation Board Northern Ireland PPRP	60,000	60,000
Education Authority Helping Hands and Early Years	80,000	45,065
BBC Children In Need (YSA)	-	45,000
DoH IRIS Test & Review	100,703	106,891
SBNI SAY Project	3,000	10,350
Comic Relief See, Hear, Act Grant	180,000	200,000
CAF All Feds Training Project	-	104,850
	<u>497,676</u>	<u>646,129</u>
Carried forward	497,676	646,129

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

5. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - continued

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Brought forward	497,676	646,129
Tudor Trust WAFNI Core Funding	35,000	35,000
Oak Foundation Contribution to WAFNI Core Funding	-	16,600
DOJ (ARCS) Survivor Engagement	12,023	-
The Executive Office (EVAWG)	75,000	-
DOJ ARCS Funds (Bursary)	12,500	-
DOJ Small Grants (RRM)	13,147	-
	<u>645,346</u>	<u>697,729</u>

6. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 7) £	Totals £
Direct Charitable Expenditure	<u>845,924</u>	<u>14,990</u>	<u>860,914</u>

7. SUPPORT COSTS

	Finance £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Direct Charitable Expenditure	<u>684</u>	<u>14,306</u>	<u>14,990</u>

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

Finance

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	Direct Charitable Expenditure £	Total activities £
Bank charges	<u>684</u>	<u>651</u>

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

**7. SUPPORT COSTS - continued
Governance costs**

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	Direct Charitable Expenditure £	Total activities £
Auditors' remuneration	4,800	4,500
Trustee and AGM Costs	9,506	3,747
	<u>14,306</u>	<u>8,247</u>

8. AUDITORS' REMUNERATION

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Fees payable to the charity's auditors for the audit of the charity's financial statements	4,800	4,500
	<u>4,800</u>	<u>4,500</u>

In common with many other organisations of our size and nature we use our auditors to assist with the preparation of the financial statements.

9. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2025 nor for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Trustees' expenses

During the year ended 31 March 2025, travel costs amounting to £948 (2024: £1,158) were reimbursed to 3 (2024: 4) directors of the company.

10. STAFF COSTS

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Wages and salaries	277,632	277,158
Social security costs	22,363	22,380
Other pension costs	29,630	23,641
	<u>329,625</u>	<u>323,179</u>

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

10. STAFF COSTS - continued

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	31.3.25	31.3.24
Raising funds	2	2
Charitable activities	5	5
Governance	2	2
	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>

There was one employee with emoluments between £60,001 and £70,000 per annum (2024:One)

The key management personnel of the charity comprise of the Chief Executive Officer and the Finance Manager. The salaries paid to key management personnel during the year totalled £74,164. (2024: £92,226)

11. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office Equipment £
COST	
At 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025	97,239
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025	97,239
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 March 2025	-
At 31 March 2024	-

12. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Trade debtors	199,288	139,535
Prepayments	11,824	12,580
	<u>211,112</u>	<u>152,115</u>
	<u>211,112</u>	<u>152,115</u>

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
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**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

13. CURRENT ASSET INVESTMENTS

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Listed investments	1,064,275	1,019,359
	<u>1,064,275</u>	<u>1,019,359</u>

14. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Trade creditors	105,295	121,758
Social security and other taxes	6,544	9,764
Pension creditor	2,764	3,706
Other creditors	5,090	125
Accrued expenses	5,000	4,700
	<u>124,693</u>	<u>140,053</u>

15. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

			31.3.25	31.3.24
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	funds	funds	funds	funds
	£	£	£	£
Current assets	1,731,947	182,717	1,914,664	1,624,732
Current liabilities	(124,693)	-	(124,693)	(140,053)
	<u>1,607,254</u>	<u>182,717</u>	<u>1,789,971</u>	<u>1,484,679</u>

16. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

		Net	
	At 1/4/24	movement	At
	£	in funds	31/3/25
		£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,360,575	246,679	1,607,254
Restricted funds			
DoH IRIS Test and Review	900	(900)	-
Comic Relief See, Hear, Act Grant	123,204	2,913	126,117
The Executive Office (EVAWG)	-	56,600	56,600
	<u>124,104</u>	<u>58,613</u>	<u>182,717</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>1,484,679</u>	<u>305,292</u>	<u>1,789,971</u>

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
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**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

16. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	531,270	(284,591)	246,679
Restricted funds			
DHSS & PS (Domestic & Sexual Violence Unit) Revenue Costs	73,973	(73,973)	-
Department of Education Helping Hands and Early Years	72,000	(72,000)	-
PBNI PPRP	60,000	(60,000)	-
DoH IRIS Test and Review	100,703	(101,603)	(900)
Comic Relief See, Hear, Act Grant	180,000	(177,087)	2,913
Tudor Trust WAFNI Core Funding	35,000	(35,000)	-
SBNI SAY Project	3,000	(3,000)	-
DOJ (ARCS) Survivor Engagement	12,023	(12,023)	-
The Executive Office (EVAWG)	75,000	(18,400)	56,600
DOJ ARCS Funds (Bursary)	12,500	(12,500)	-
DOJ Small Grants RRM	13,147	(13,147)	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	637,346	(578,733)	58,613
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS	1,168,616	(863,324)	305,292
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
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**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

16. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1/4/23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/3/24 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,196,656	163,919	1,360,575
Restricted funds			
Children In Need	2,030	(2,030)	-
Comic Relief Cost of Living Core Grant	15,000	(15,000)	-
DoH IRIS Test and Review	-	900	900
Comic Relief See, Hear, Act Grant	68,870	54,334	123,204
CAF All Feds Training Project	12,336	(12,336)	-
	<u>98,236</u>	<u>25,868</u>	<u>124,104</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>1,294,892</u></u>	<u><u>189,787</u></u>	<u><u>1,484,679</u></u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	392,638	(228,719)	163,919
Restricted funds			
DHSS & PS (Domestic & Sexual Violence Unit) Revenue Costs	73,973	(73,973)	-
Department of Education Helping Hands and Early Years	12,867	(12,867)	-
Children In Need	45,000	(47,030)	(2,030)
PBNI PPRP	60,000	(60,000)	-
Comic Relief Cost of Living Core Grant	-	(15,000)	(15,000)
DoH IRIS Test and Review	106,891	(105,991)	900
Comic Relief See, Hear, Act Grant	200,000	(145,666)	54,334
CAF All Feds Training Project	104,850	(117,186)	(12,336)
Tudor Trust WAFNI Core Funding	35,000	(35,000)	-
SBNI SAY Project	10,350	(10,350)	-
	<u>648,931</u>	<u>(623,063)</u>	<u>25,868</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>1,041,569</u></u>	<u><u>(851,782)</u></u>	<u><u>189,787</u></u>

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
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**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

17. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2025.

18. FRC ETHICAL STANDARD - PROVISIONS AVAILABLE FOR SMALL ENTITIES

In common with many other businesses of our size and nature we use our auditors to prepare and submit returns to the tax authorities and assist with the preparation of the financial statements.

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
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**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

	31.3.25 £	31.3.24 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	118,679	81,179
Allstate NI	28,279	4,133
The Allstate Foundation	130,000	120,000
Christmas Cards (Sara O'Neill)	13,650	19,500
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	290,608	224,812
Other trading activities		
Local Groups Affiliation Fees	17,600	17,600
Training	116,334	7,952
Sale of Publications and Helping Hands Packs	39,104	55,284
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	173,038	80,836
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	12,189	13,516
Investment Income	47,435	24,676
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	59,624	38,192
Charitable activities		
Grants	645,346	697,729
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total incoming resources	1,168,616	1,041,569
EXPENDITURE		
Charitable activities		
Salaries and NIC	277,632	277,158
Social security	22,363	22,380
Pensions	29,630	23,641
Insurance	1,804	2,395
Rent and Service Charge	15,000	15,000
Cleaning	-	116
Repairs, Renewals and Redecoration	-	86
Postage	4,476	4,019
Office Equipment Repairs and Rental	3,852	6,060
Carried forward	354,757	350,855

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**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Limited**

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

	31.3.25 £	31.3.24 £
Charitable activities		
Brought forward	354,757	350,855
Sundry Expenses	474	273
Computer Expenses, Consultancy & Support	13,374	5,756
Staff Travel & Conference Expenses	14,453	16,022
Staff Training	1,506	4,889
Staff & Volunteer Recruitment	4,801	-
DoH IRIS Local Groups and Partner Agencies	97,403	101,791
Catering & Accommodation for Training Events	1,359	1,033
Purchase & Printing of Publications & Reference Materials	21,938	30,568
Subscriptions & Membership Fee	1,214	1,057
Volunteer Expenses	1,500	827
Accreditation Costs	2,168	1,340
Consultancy Costs	43,785	69,890
Legal & Professional	5,787	4,389
Venue Hire	11,347	12,279
Regional Training	11,645	-
Telephone	4,264	5,011
Printing and Stationery	1,149	1,180
PBNI Local Groups PPRP	60,000	60,000
The Allstate Foundation Payments to Local Groups	89,000	108,000
Payments to Local Groups	104,000	59,722
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	845,924	834,882
Other		
Publicity and Advertising	2,410	8,002
Support costs		
Finance		
Bank charges	684	651
Governance costs		
Auditors' remuneration	4,800	4,500
Trustee and AGM Costs	9,506	3,747
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	14,306	8,247
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total resources expended	863,324	851,782
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net income	305,292	189,787
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

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