

# Access<sup>or</sup>Loo



Annual  
Report  
2022/23

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# Chairman's Remarks

I am pleased to present the DPNI annual report and accounts for 2022/23. This year was our second year of post-covid recovery and we have managed to outperform our goals, with hire increasing in all market sectors. We were particularly happy with the growth in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain; and we were delighted to have opened our first depot in Great Britain during this year.

We have continued to see a growth in online activity as social media interactions increased in line with business activity. Our core staffing for the year was reduced due to people moving on to other work. So a huge thank you to all of our volunteers who stepped up to help fill in those gaps.

The annual report gives a useful insight into the governance, finances and main activities of our community group during the period 13 August 2022 to 12 August 2023. It is structured to reflect DPNI's strategic objectives which have guided the direction of the organisation during the year. At the end of the year and through consultation with members, service users, staff and other stakeholders the board decided to embark on a new five-year strategy from next year.

As a board we are regularly seeking new and enthusiastic board members to contribute their talents to our board. To guide the work of the board and help ensure its good governance the trustees participated in a training workshop and support programme facilitated by an external consultant.

I wish to thank Graham and all our staff and volunteers for their tireless efforts this year and to fellow board members for their hard work and support. The organisation remains fully committed to continuing to support choice, control and independence for disabled people.

Michael Holden MBE BSc MCMl



# Key Achievements

<b>8750</b> individual users helped.	<b>529 families</b> supported	<b>116</b> events visited
<b>8</b> information and awareness raising events attended	<b>5</b> training sessions and workshops attended	<b>201</b> information requests
<b>108</b> online presentations	<b>48</b> members	<b>10</b> volunteers supported our work
increase in annual income	<b>5%</b> increase in staff volunteers	<b>40,369</b> Facebook interactions
<b>470</b> Twitter followers	<b>2780</b> Facebook followers	<b>349</b> Instagram followers

# Strategic Outcomes

## 1. Quality Services

**We said we would develop and deliver a range of high quality mobile units and support services by trained staff for use by our members and clients.**

Our regional service, supported by paid and voluntary staff, provides independent, mobile changing places to help disabled people manage their own personal assistance, regardless of age or impairment, and to support them to make their own life choices. The service is provided by a team of on site attendants through physical presence at arranged venues. which enables service users to access our facilities in different ways to suit their needs

The staff successfully completed a number of training courses during the year including Independent Advocacy, Safeguarding, Visual Awareness and Data Security. Our office moved to a larger, more accessible, location in Saintfield. These new premises allow the team to provide a more customised service. We managed the expansion of the service over the year by reviewing the operation of the telephone facility, streamlining the internal processes and investing in additional staff.

## 2. Involving People

We said we would increase and diversify our membership and client base as a means of expanding the reach and influence of DPNI.

We reviewed our membership engagement during the year and introduced a number of extra opportunities to involve more disabled people in the work. A series of Facebook drop-ins were organised for the first time to provide a welcoming space for people to meet others and share ideas. Full membership is open to disabled people who support the ethos of independent living. It enables disabled people to contribute their expertise and experience and have a say in the future direction of the work of the organisation.

Associate membership is available to non-disabled people who support the principles of independent living.

We provided opportunities for a number of volunteers to participate in different aspects of our community group. We benefit from the time they give to our organisation and from the utilisation of a diverse skill set. Volunteers gain knowledge of how we work and are able to enhance

their own skills that will benefit their future ambitions. We have a positive attitude towards disability particularly in providing meaningful employment opportunities. During the year, disabled people took up a number of positions resulting in a more diverse staff team. We have disabled people working in all of our teams across the organisation.

We used the DPNI User Survey 2020 in September to provide a review of the experiences of those who have come into contact with our services. The survey evidenced a high level of satisfaction that echoed the findings of the two previous surveys and is testament to the need and value of the work we do. All the feedback provided will help us to continue to develop and improve the way we support individuals seeking to increase their independence.

### 3. Engaging Creatively

**We said we would positively promote the work of DPNI to our stakeholders through a range of communication initiatives.**

Our digital communication and public engagement work has enabled us to enhance the reach and promotion of the work that we do and our service to more disabled people. Our new website has been driving traffic to showcase our services through a clean design and intuitive interface. The new site is easy to navigate using mobile devices and it has made an enormous contribution to sales.

We continued our service user live Facebook event in February to seek ideas and opinions on future events and mobile designs. Twelve people engaged in the discussion and resulted in some useful personal experience being shared. These stories will help to shape our work going forward. We used a number of techniques to engage with service users who were not able to attend our Annual Meeting in October. We provided a live stream of the event and a Twitter discussion during the event.

## 4. Influencing Policy

### **We said we would develop the organisation's role in informing local government policy and legislation for the benefit of disabled people.**

We continue to participate in the regional work to mainstream inclusion and diversity at both local authority and private events. We participated in the regional discussions and attended local meetings, advocating for the implementation of the policy in the true spirit of independent living. At local government level, our advisers provided useful feedback on how the policy is working on the ground and raising issues that need to be addressed

We arranged a number of meetings with politicians during the year including MP's, MLA's and councillors. In the absence of a working NI Assembly we have attended regular cross party working group meetings on disability at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. These meetings provide an opportunity for issues to be raised directly with politicians from all local parties. To support our research and policy activities we were pleased that our chairman completed his Post Graduate Certificate in Social Science Research at Queen's University Belfast. We continue to work in partnership and collaboration with several organisations including the Western Health and Social Care Trust, Department of Communities, Mae Murray Foundation, Changing Places Consortium and Disability Action.

## 5. Sustaining Services

**We said we would retain existing and develop new support services and funding streams as a means of continuing and improving services to members and clients and ensuring the long-term sustainability of DPNI.**

We continue to fulfil our service agreement obligations to Antrim & Newtownabbey District Council in delivering the mobile Changing Places service to disabled people across the borough for the third year of a three-year contract.

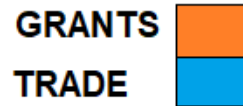
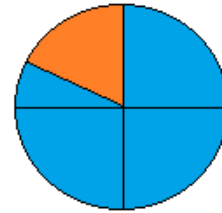
We built three mobile units for two different clients during the year, which helped with revenue and one of the clients engaged us to manage their units on an annual basis.

# Annual Accounts

A full set of the charity's accounts for the period is available on request, however an overview of the organisation's financial position of the year 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 is provided below.

The total income for the financial year was £291,008 compared with £175,665 in the previous year. Total expenditure for the financial year was £174,450.

## DPNI Income 2022/23



## DPNI Expenditure 2022/23



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# Service Users Feedback

As a user-led disabled people's organisation, it is important to us that we provide our service users with the opportunity to contribute to the service design, monitoring and on-going professional development of our organisation as a whole. During October to December 2021 we conducted a user survey; in total 446 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing approximately 15% of those who used service provided by organisation. Feedback from the survey was very positive, with the majority of respondents indicating they would definitely visit an open-air event if our services were provided on-site. Equally, respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with our service, staff and mobile units.

We greatly value the input and feedback service users have provided, and would like to thank everyone who took part. We will use this information to continue to provide a high quality service in the forthcoming years.

# Contact Information

Through regular board meetings, the board is actively involved overseeing the governance, financial and operational control of the organisation.

## **Members of the Board:**

Michael Holden MBE

Annie Byrne

Gavin Dunlop

Jonathan Hanna

## **Secretary:**

Graham Kenny

If you would like further information about Disability Pride NI  
please contact: Michael Holden

## **Contact Details:**

8 Riverdale Lane, Saintfield, County Down, BT24 7JG  
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# Public Benefit Statement

The direct benefits which flow from this purpose include, a better recognition of independent living and of disabled people's right to have the same provisions as the rest of society. Disabled people will be better placed to avail of opportunities to attend open air or pop-up events, carnivals, concerts etc. with confidence to manage their own support.

This purpose does not lead to harm.

These benefits are evidenced through feedback from user comments and photographs taken. Beneficiaries are disabled people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, regardless of age or impairment.

A private benefit may arise for employees who receive pay, training and personal development, and for Trustees who benefit from training and personal development; however, these benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to our beneficiaries.

The direct benefits which flow from this purpose include improved quality of life, better health and wellbeing, reduced stress on the disabled person and family members, opportunities to have a family life, to study, work, and to be part of the community. The disabled person could be exposed to some risk by using the access equipment from potential physical injury from falling should access equipment failure occur and these are mitigated by regulated testing of equipment. But the benefits gained in terms of autonomy, choice and improved quality of life outweigh any real or perceived risk. Risk can be mitigated by good risk assessment for each event.

There are no fees charged to the beneficiary.

# Public Benefit Statement

We aim to promote the principles of independent living and raise awareness about Changing Places toilets as an option for disabled people to achieve independence by providing toilets which offer more in respect of the events that they may attend. We will provide for hire by event organisers our high dependency mobile changing places toilets at their own event which will give access to a range of accessible, high dependency toilets to disabled people, regardless of age or impairment.

The high dependency mobile toilets are available to all events, concerts, outdoor shows, conferences and the like, throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.