



**ARDCOMM**

The Heart of the Community

# **Ardmonagh Family & Community Group Ltd.**

**Trustees report: April 2023-March 2024**

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# 1. Objectives and Activities

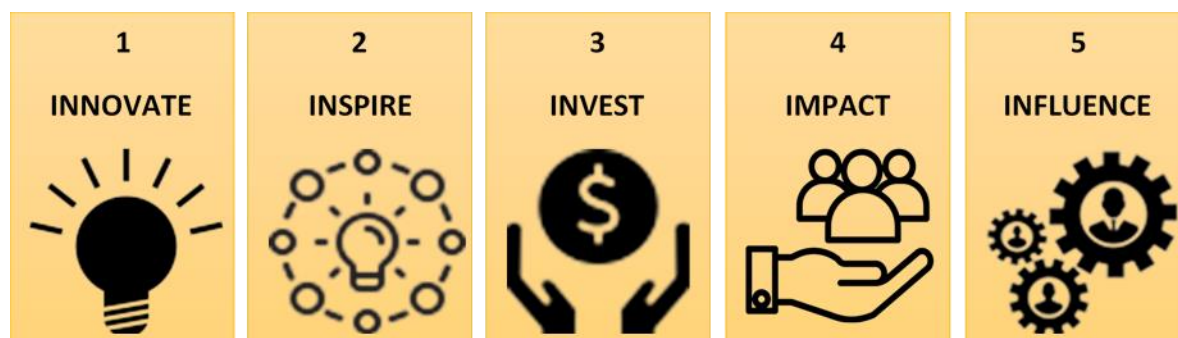
## Strategic Context

Ardmonagh Family & Community Group (Ardcomm) has a long established history of delivering much needed health and social care services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable within our community. We employ approximately 100 staff across our services which range from children’s and family’s services, to older adults support and domiciliary care services. Our vision as an organisation is clearly laid out in our Mission Statement and Values Statement below and our rights-based approach to our work.

With decades of experience, we are deeply embedded in the local community and have a profound understanding of the unique challenges faced by those we serve, including children, the elderly, individuals and families dealing with disabilities and other health and social issues, and those experiencing socio-economic hardship. Our strategic vision is focused on adapting to challenging and changing needs, such as the increasing demand for quality and accessible health and social care services for our ageing populations, bespoke support for our children and families, and tackling health and social inequalities. We aim to strengthen our role as a trusted partner in the delivery of integrated health and social care services, working collaboratively with other providers, local authorities and statutory agencies, and our other stakeholders, to ensure that our services remain cutting edge, responsive, accessible, and effective, in securing our service users’ rights and entitlements to meet the needs of those who are most at risk.

Our 5I’s strategic framework succinctly describes our vision and provides a structure for our strategic implementation plan. These strategic priorities form the basis of our Operational Plans across all of our services and sets out specific action items and objectives that we work towards to achieve our goals. The thematic framework moves us towards excellence and influences everything from our competitive advantages, recruitment, retention and training of staff, and all areas for performance, improvement and growth. In addition, we determine performance indicators and work closely with our stakeholders from the voluntary and community sector, Health and Social Care Trusts and other allied statutory bodies, and academic partners in Queen’s University Belfast, to demonstrate the ways in which our success and added social value is achieved and measured. These are constantly reviewed and adapted to ensure our services are evidence-based and our performance levels are of the highest professional standards.

### The 5I’s - Key Strategic Themes



## Mission Statement

To provide high quality care and support services to improve the health and wellbeing of people in the community. Our person-centered and compassionate approach ensures services are fit for purpose and that our service users receive the standards of care to which they are entitled. We also foster a safe and supportive environment for our staff that encourages open communication and ongoing learning so they can maximise their potential to be the best they can be.

Our values are....

- We place the community at the heart of what we do and approach our work with compassion, dignity and respect for all.
- We act with integrity and are accountable for our actions.
- We listen to and advocate on behalf of our community, acknowledging their right to participate and influence decisions that affect them and their care.
- We work in partnership with various external agencies to fulfil our shared vision.
- We build respectful relationships with each other to promote honesty and authenticity in all that we do.
- We foster a safe and supportive learning environment that meet the needs of all.

## Rights-based Approach

At Ardcomm we apply a rights-based approach to all that we do. This is a way of being and a guiding framework that emphasises service user advocacy and entitlement, and the protection and promotion of human rights principles in all aspects of our engagements, policies and practices. In the context of health and social care, this approach ensures that our service-users' rights to health, dignity, and equality are respected, upheld and promoted. It focuses on empowering individuals by recognising their right to access quality health and social care and receive services without discrimination, and builds their capacity to participate in decision-making to inform and shape services. This approach aligns care practice standards with international standards, ensuring that vulnerable groups, such as those with health and social care needs, disabilities or marginalised communities, are not excluded from necessary services and are treated and assessed with fairness and respect.

## Key Service Provision

To deliver our vision, we provide high quality support across a range of key services, which include;

- **Domiciliary Care** – Delivering support and care services within our organisational setting and within the home to children with complex/medical needs and adults with physical and emotional disabilities.
- **Older Adults Support Services** – Good Morning West Belfast, Older Adults Lunch Club & Befriending service, provide relevant supports and bespoke activities to over 55's who may feel isolated in the community. We work in collaboration with other charities and support services to improve our service-users' daily living situations and ensure their needs are met.

- **Family Time** – Supporting children and families through the provision of family time support. This service offers a safe and neutral place where children of separated families can spend time with adults important to them, and where positive relationships and engagements are promoted and encouraged.
- **Family Support** - Supporting families Belfast wide through the provision of targeted family specific work looking at many different areas to improve a family situation. Some areas of focus are; health & development, family & social relationships, stability or Financial support and employment or advocacy support to navigate engagements with other professional bodies.
- **Outreach** – Supporting children experiencing different transitions in life, whether this be unplanned placement moves for Looked After Children, or school changes for children that have experienced disruption or trauma. Working with children on a one-to-one basis, the service aims to promote positive relationships and build life skills with the children they support. A varied and bespoke service for families in need of support.
- **Children’s Residential Home** - a specialised child’s rights-based residential unit that provides a safe and secure environment, and individualised nurturing care, for children aged 5-11 years of age. We provide a unique home environment that offers the highest standards of rights-based, child-centred care and carefully planned therapeutic help and support, over a period of up to two years, for three children with emotional and behavioural development needs. Our goal is to work collaboratively with the children, our external partners from the statutory, academic, community and voluntary sectors, and the children’s families, in multi-disciplinary teams, to prepare our children to transition into long-term care settings.

## 2. Public benefit

To improve health and social care outcomes for vulnerable adults and children in disadvantaged communities or circumstances through the provision of quality services.

- The direct benefits which flow from this purpose is evident in the positive impact we have on the health and well-being of vulnerable children and adults in disadvantaged communities across the Greater Belfast area. Particularly when they are dealing with challenging and difficult times in their lives. This purpose does not lead to harm.
- By providing accessible and high-quality health and social care services, we improve outcomes for those facing significant challenges, including poverty, disability, social, emotional, behavioural and mental health issues, and social exclusion.
- Our services are designed to enhance access to care, promote independence, and support individuals and families in overcoming the barriers they face in achieving a better quality of life.
- Through our work, we contribute to reducing health inequalities, improving life chances, and fostering stronger, more resilient families and communities.
- Ultimately, our mission is to ensure that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has access to the care and support they need to thrive.
- These benefits are demonstrated through monthly and annual activity reports and outcomes-based evaluation.

- A private benefit to trustees may arise if the knowledge they gain as a trustee in regard to good governance and health and social care promotion and regulation is transferable to another setting.
- These benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to the beneficiaries.

To improve the social and emotional development of children and young people living in disadvantaged communities or circumstances through programmes and services that support parents, in caring for their children.

- The public benefit of this purpose is demonstrated through our commitment to enhancing the social, emotional and behavioural development of children and young people living in disadvantaged communities or circumstances in the Greater Belfast area. This purpose does not lead to harm.
- By providing targeted services, programmes and interventions we support them and those in a caregiving role to strengthen bonds and family connections thereby improving relationships.
- We help to create a nurturing environment that fosters understanding, resilience, confidence, and emotional well-being in children and parents.
- Our initiatives are designed to equip children and parents with the tools and knowledge they need to better support children's development improving outcomes for future generations.
- Through this approach, we aim to disrupt the cycle of disadvantage, ensuring that children in our communities have the foundation to reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives.
- These benefits are demonstrated through monthly and annual activity reports and outcomes-based evaluations.
- A risk may arise if through the provision of family support services, a child or parent/carer is harmed by a member of staff or a member of staff is harmed in the course of their duties. These risks are minimised through the implementation of Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults safeguarding policies, staff supervision and Lone Working policy and are outweighed by the overall benefits to children and families.
- A private benefit to trustees may arise if the knowledge and experience they gain as a trustee, in regard to good governance and family support is transferable to another setting.
- These benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to the beneficiaries.

To improve the quality of life of children and young people living in disadvantaged communities or circumstances in the Greater Belfast area through the provision of contact support services.

- The direct benefits which flow from this purpose is what through the provision of family support services, children are provided with a safe and neutral place for separated families to enable them to spend time with one or both parents and other siblings. The focus is on ensuring that organisations, professionals, and carers, work together to deliver high quality care. This purpose does not lead to harm.
- The beneficiaries of this purpose are children and young people, their parents and carers primarily living in the Greater Belfast catchment area.
- A private benefit to trustees may arise if the knowledge and experience they gain as a trustee, in regards, to good governance and early years is transferable to another setting.

- These benefits are demonstrated through monthly and annual activity reports and outcomes-based evaluations.
- These benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to the beneficiaries.

To improve the quality of domiciliary/palliative care of children and adults with physical and emotional disabilities living in disadvantaged communities or circumstances through the provision of care support services.

- The direct benefits which flow from this purpose is that through the provision of domiciliary/palliative care in the community to children and adults with complex medical needs, physical and emotional disabilities, they can be provided with health and social care packages specifically tailored to each individual's requirement.
- The agency is registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority. Training is provided by specialist Health Professionals focusing on development of staff and continuous improvement.
- Delivery of a high quality domiciliary and palliative health and social care services that focuses on core values and in keeping with human rights is available to attend to service users' needs. This purpose does not lead to harm.

To provide a safe and neutral place for looked after children (in the care system) to maintain contact with their birth families and spend time with one or both parents, kin and other siblings. All children have the right to protection, to fulfil their potential and to adult support to challenge others on their behalf to ensure their rights are upheld and respected. Everyone has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.

- The direct benefits which flow from this purpose is that by providing this service in family contact, and through our residential home, that children will experience significant and positive change to their social and emotional development which will impact upon their position within their community and their chance to have a successful and fulfilled life.
- Children and their parents/carers and adults are facilitated and empowered to engage with society in a way that is respectful and beneficial to them.
- A private benefit to trustees may arise if the knowledge and experience they gain as a trustee, in regard to good governance and early years, is transferable to another setting.
- Our children's' residential home is registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority. Training is provided by specialist and other professionals focusing on development of staff skills, knowledge, competence and continuous improvement.
- These benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided the beneficiaries.

### 3. Achievement and performance

The year 2023/24 continued to present challenges for the Ardmonagh Family & Community Group (Ardcomm), some of which were additional to the previous year ie 'Costs of Living', staff recruitment and retention, and political uncertainty around funded and commissioned services, all of which had an impact upon our service users and staff alike. We were tested on our resilience and commitment to deliver our services in a manner that our service users require, and which is expected of an organisation, which is 'fit for purpose'. However, as

always, we stepped up to the mark. Due to the commitment and dedication of our staff we had an exceptional year and successfully delivered our services and where and when required we stepped forward to support the most vulnerable within the community.

There remains an ongoing challenge to effect influence between our role as a voluntary organisation, delivering services to the most vulnerable members of our community, but also developing as a business, improving our services whilst keeping an eye on our costs/expenditure/profit and all that this entails. We are committed to meeting this challenge as the year has shown, and have remained steadfast in our resolve to enhance our contribution as a vital part of the social and economic fabric of society through the development of services to the most vulnerable.

We have a purpose in providing social value in all that we do within our immediate community and, as such, we have a vital role to play in its development and in building the capacity of its residents in their pursuit of protecting their health and well-being and, by so doing, building a better future. Whilst our emphasis over the years has been on continuing to grow our services both in terms of the quality and quantity, 2023/24 has focused on developing and restructuring the organisation against this continuing backdrop of immense challenge which does not seem to be easing.

The business plans which we developed for our services in 2022/23, continued to be implemented in 2023/24. We continued to develop our services, which involved having to make big decisions regarding where we invest our resources. This has resulted in us restructuring the Senior Management Team and we achieved our registration with The RQIA for our children's residential home, for children aged 5-11 years, in February 2024, and we opened for business in May 2024. We are a strong, well-structured organisation, we have our governance arrangements embedded and are working to the level that illustrates our strengths. Our governance sub-groups are all supporting and delivering the strategic direction and oversight of the organisation.

More importantly, we value all our staff who work extremely hard to deliver our services and those who provide vital leadership and management roles, and working alongside the Board, to develop and deliver our strategic and operational goals. They have helped us build an organisation of which we are all immensely proud. The vision, strengths, work and outcomes have not been achieved in isolation from our main financial stakeholders and funders: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; The Southern Health and Social care Trust, The Department for Communities; The Belfast City Council and The Northern Ireland Housing Executive. They have all contributed to the success of this organisation in various ways.

Last, but certainly not least, as the Chair of that Board I am indebted to the other Board members who so willingly give their time and expertise in the upward trajectory of this organisation. On behalf of the Board, I would like to commend everyone who is connected to the organisation for their efforts. The continuing success of Ardcomm is not only in meeting but surpassing our objectives. This is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and commitment of staff and to those to whom we strive to provide quality services.

## 4. Financial Review

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 and the running costs for a period equivalent to six months annual expenditure. We have invested in the restructuring of the

organisation and into setting up and opening a residential unit for children. We continue to monitor compliance with this policy on a regular basis and the board will review the appropriateness of the policy annually.

The company had net outgoing resources for the year of £427,484 (2023: net outgoing resources of £180,907), which reflected the decrease in trading activities during the year. Unrestricted funds decreased by £409,698, while restricted funds increased by £17,786.

While the charity does not typically partake of public fundraising initiatives, we have been successful in seeking and receiving grant funding amounting to £865,671, for this year ending 31 March 2024. The funding received assisted us in continuing with our aims and objectives, offering vital services in supporting children's development, and providing support to children, families and adults with additional needs and through difficult periods in their lives, and providing domiciliary care to children and adults with complex health, social and medical needs.

## 5. Future plans

The Charity's Statement of Financial Activities shows that the income generated over the period was restricted and unrestricted. The Trustees have identified that annually restricted funds, being made available to the charity may fluctuate.

The trustee's plan to continue with the existing services meeting the needs of people of in the community and further afield. It promises to be an exciting year for the Ardmonagh Family and Community Group. The contracts are currently secured and in place for the continued delivery of health and social care services and our aim for next year is to make some efficiencies and build our reserves up again after our sustained investment into the residential home, our newest initiative.

### Business Development

We have a new Operational Plan and 5-year Strategic Plan (2024-2029) that we use as a framework to deliver the organisations vision and mission, in the present, while also keeping an eye on the future. All services and activities, resources, performance and outcomes align with these documents to ensure that we remain focused on achieving our goals. Our business strategy is centred on securing contracts and opportunities to maintain and develop our services throughout the Belfast area and further afield. Ardcomm plays a key function in the delivery of these strategies and seeks to ensure that our outcomes map onto our projected targets.

The organisation has also embedded the OBA framework throughout our services showing clear outcomes that mirror the program for government. We advocate for and ensure that the needs of the local community and our service users are reflected when responding to public and government consultations issued and to exert influence through representation on local and regional strategic bodies and committees in each of the service delivery areas.

As the work of Ardcomm continues to grow and develop, stakeholders and service users are increasingly drawn from outside of the Belfast area in response to opportunities arising.

We will continue to focus on shaping and providing quality health and social care service provision and employ more experienced and qualified professionals across allied and related

health and social care disciplines. This will ensure we have the knowledge and skills to deliver our services with best practise at the forefront.

This past year, we have undertaken a programme of activities such as a review of the organisation and all of its services. This resulted in the identification of the following key priority areas that inform the trustees' perspective of the future direction of the charity.

- Development of our governance and compliance procedures;
- Development of a marketing plan for the organisation;
- Development and restructuring of Business Plans for each service
- Benchmarking of remuneration for staff, and
- Succession planning, particularly for the role of CEO.

### What have we learned

How we conducted our review of the organisation to develop our new strategic direction, has helped us to identify gaps and areas for improvement within the organisation, some of which we have already commenced and rectified, others remain opportunities for us to continue to develop. Lessons learned, detailed below, have influenced future plans and decisions about developing our services and staff, and allocating resources to their best effect.

We have learned that,

- organisation culture and ethos is the important bedrock on which high standards and good practice grow and that this filters down to frontline staff through good leadership and management.
- We advocate and challenge for our service users at all times – to ensure that their voices are heard and their views are considered in shaping policy and practice and relevant and sustainable services.
- Whilst we keep a focus on our goals, we are mindful that change can happen and we are flexible to adapt and act quickly. If we need to amend our goals in line with the changing or fluctuating landscape we are agile and willing to do this.
- We value and support our staff because they work hard in challenging fields to deliver services to the most vulnerable. We are implementing initiatives and schemes that foster that sense of value and pride.
- We continue to develop a professional approach in all that we do where we are need to be passionate about our work but also behave in such a way that reflects competence, reliability and respectfulness.
- There is a challenge in managing change particularly when people do not truly understand the change and why it is necessary. They may resist and push back. It is important to ensure that communication within the organisation is streamlined and that everyone can share their views.
- We do not work in silos but in collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders. We must nurture our professional working relationship by networking and getting involved

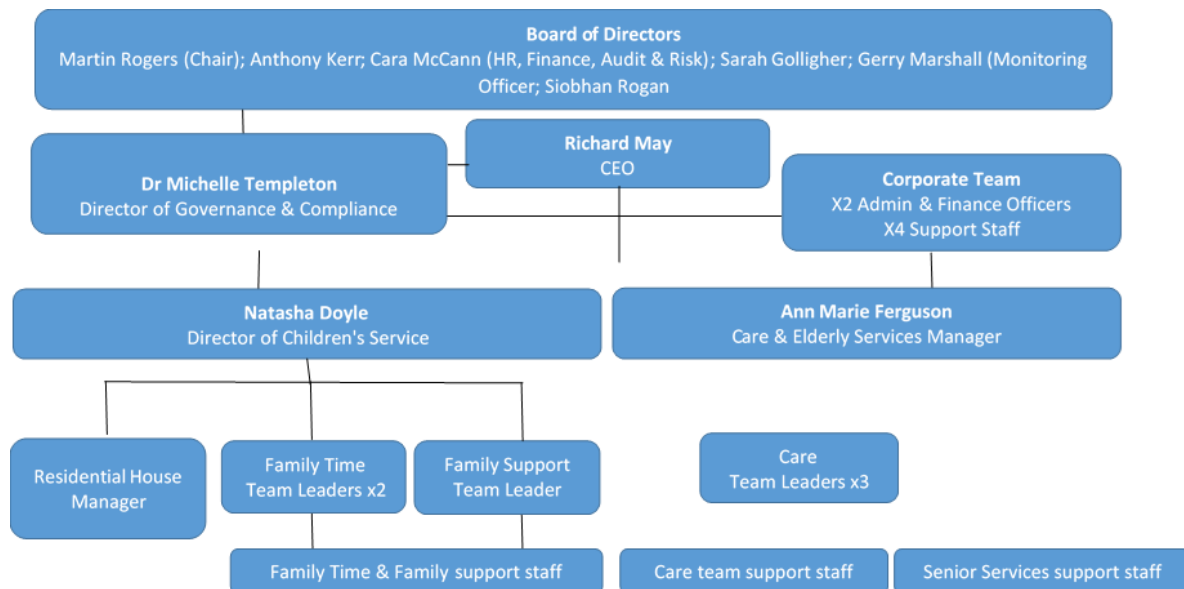
in meaningful initiatives, to enable us to share experience and knowledge for the benefit of all.

We feel this internal scrutiny and interrogation of what we do and how we do it has brought about major change in our organisation, which is still ongoing. This brings with it fresh understandings and opportunities but also new dilemmas and challenges. The main challenge for us is to keep going in the pursuit of excellence and encourage those around us to do this too, in the best interests of our service users and the community as a whole.

## 6. Structure, governance and management

### Organisational Structure

Below are details of the organisational structure as of end of March 2024.



### Role of the Board

The Board of Ardcomm, at the end of March 2024, consisted of 6 members made up of individuals with diverse backgrounds in industry and public life who have specialist knowledge, experience, and skills in areas such as commerce, finance, academia and health & social care.

Overall, the role of the Board is to govern and not to manage the organisation. Operational management is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Senior Management Team (SMT). It is recognised that the Board may step into operational matters to protect the interests of the organisation, when it is clear that the Board believe the SMT are not performing their duties up to the standard required which may result in placing the organisation at risk.

## Governing document

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

## Governance of the Charity

During the period under review the directors met monthly. Trustees/directors are appointed by nominations made in writing by any existing Chair. At the Annual General Meeting nominated directors are appointed by election.

## Induction and Training of new Trustees

New Trustees are interviewed, screened and provided with full information to brief them on their legal obligations under the charity and company law. Two new Trustees were appointed during the year, using the flexibility provided by the Articles of Association.

## 7. Reference and administrative details

The Board of Trustees, which can have between 4 and 8 members, administers the charity. The Board going forward will meet bimonthly, i.e., six times each year, as a whole. The sub groups will meet monthly and as when should an emergency situation arise. Each sub group has board member representation and reports to the whole board at the bi-monthly meetings.

The board agrees the strategic direction for the organisation, which is implemented by the employed staff, through an annual operational plan. The CEO, Mr Richard May, the Finance Manager Ms Leanne Magill, the Directors of Governance, Care, and Children's Services are responsible for the day to day running of the organisation and have devolved authority to take decisions between Board meetings.

We also employ the services of the following professionals to oversee our financial affairs.

**Auditor and Accountant** Billy Drake FCA  
Lynn drake &co ltd chartered accountants  
1st floor, 34 b-d Main Street  
Moir  
Co Armagh  
BT67 0le

**Bank** AIB  
35 University Rd  
Belfast  
BT7 1NH

**HR, Employment and:  
Health & Safety Law** Citation Limited  
Kings Court  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AR

Signed by Chair of Board: Mr Martin Rogers

