

**COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER: IP 219**  
**CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 108364**

**Skilled NI**  
**Company Limited by Guarantee**  
**Financial Statements**  
**31 March 2024**

Finegan Gibson Ltd  
Chartered accountants & statutory auditor  
Causeway Tower  
9 James Street South  
Belfast  
BT2 8DN

# **Skilled NI**

**Company Limited by Guarantee**

**Financial Statements**

**Year ended 31 March 2024**

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# Skilled NI

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

#### Year ended 31 March 2024

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The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

#### Manager's Report

2023/2024 has been a challenging year financially due to several factors. Operational costs were reflective of this, however the investment portfolio, despite having some issues in the middle of the year, recovered and performed well. This meant that the overall financial position of the company at the end of the year was positive with a surplus of £46K. 2023/2024 has seen a continued period of change and growth. The organisation has continued its workforce restructuring programme and has also completed a salary review and implemented a pay and reward strategy. The company continues to develop its Moving Forward Strategy, adapting and changing in order for it to compete more effectively. Succession planning, staff change, recruitment and development are at the forefront of this strategy and the organization continues to go from strength to strength with new programmes outside yet sympathetic to our core values being developed.

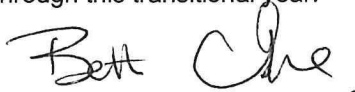
We continue to deliver Apprenticeships<sup>21</sup> and Skills for Life and Work programmes through our contracts with The Department for the Economy. We successfully tendered for funding from the Community Foundation under the Mental Health Fund for a Youth Support Worker from St James Place for IT equipment and from the Halifax Foundation. The organization continues to deliver a range of vocational skills training as well as other bespoke services and training that supports the needs of individuals to enable them to move into or compete effectively in the employment market. The company has made excellent progress in recovering from having to access its reserves towards the end of last year as can be seen in the final accounts.

Service users are starting to achieve more qualifications, thus leading to increased output related funding (ORF.) This in turn gives Trustees the confidence to invest in programmes and resources. The end of this year also saw student numbers starting to rise. Apprenticeships numbers have risen by 25% and Skills for Life and Work have risen by 65%. The Trustees have been extremely supportive and have approved a range of capital and revenue investment throughout the financial year.

Despite the ongoing challenges this report details the incredible work and successes achieved by our hard-working dedicated Management and Staff team, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that the company moves forward and that our students are availed of the best and most appropriate training, support, and opportunities.

I would like to say a personal thank you to our Management Committee and all of those who have supported us through this transitional year.

Signature



Beth Ogilvie

Executive Director

Date:

26/11/24

# Skilled NI

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

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#### Reference and administrative details

**Registered charity name** Skilled NI  
**Charity registration number** 108364  
**Company registration number** IP 219  
**Principal office and registered office** 98-102 Donegall Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2GW

#### The trustees

P Donaghy  
R Gilgunn  
A Simpson Waite  
G McAllister  
J Savage  
D Elliott (Appointed 27 February 2024)

**Company secretary** Gary McAllister

**Auditor** Finegan Gibson Ltd  
Chartered accountants & statutory auditor  
Causeway Tower  
9 James Street South  
Belfast  
BT2 8DN

**Bankers** Danske Bank  
PO Box 183  
Donegall Square West  
Belfast  
BT1 6JS

## Skilled NI

### Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 March 2024

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#### Structure, governance and management

Skilled NI is a Training Organization set up as an Industrial Provident Society and a registered charity and has been operating since 1975 (formally known as Belfast Central Training and before that VSB). We are located in Belfast city centre, and we support young people and adults across Northern Ireland with barriers to employment and learning.

#### **Management Committee/Trustees**

The management committee of the charitable company Skilled NI are its trustees for the purposes of charity law. Throughout this report they are collectively referred to as "the management committee". The management committee serving from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 were as follows:

Paul Donaghy	Chairperson (Solicitor)
Gary McAllister	Secretary (Business Owner, Community Worker)
John Savage	Treasurer (Retired)
Alan Waite	Committee Member, (RCity)
Denny Elliott	Committee Member, Date appointed 27 February 2024
Roisin Gilgunn	Committee Member, (Education and Training Inspectorate, Retired)

The Executive Director of Skilled NI is Beth Ogilvie.

#### **Governance**

Skilled NI is a registered charity and Industrial Provident Society. The Rules of Skilled NI (Memorandum and Articles of Association) sets out the organisation's internal governance structure. It is the organisation's Governing document and fully compliant with the Charities Act 2011, the Industrial and Provident Societies (Northern Ireland) Act 1969 and the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Skilled NI is governed by a Management Committee made up of five voluntary members with the relevant skills and expertise to fulfil their responsibilities as Board Members. The Committee meets quarterly and is responsible for the strategic direction and policies of the charity. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles, the members of the Management Committee are elected to serve for a period of one year, after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting. Key designated officers are elected by the Members of the Committee, these roles include: A Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Company Secretary and Treasurer. The designated officers are elected to serve for one year, after which re-election for the roles normally takes place at the August monthly meeting. Day-to-day responsibility for the provision of services rests with the Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and also has responsibility for the day-to-day operational and strategic management of the organisation, supervision of the Senior Management Team and Vocational Educators, skills development and good working practice.

#### **Responsibilities of the Management Committee**

The Management Committee is accountable for the work of the organisation. The matters reserved for the Management Committee include the approval of strategy; the budget; the business plan; the Annual Report and Financial Statements. The Management Committee also retains oversight of management controls and corporate governance, along with the appointment of Management Committee members, the Executive Director and senior staff positions.

All members of the Management Committee give their time voluntarily and receive no financial or material benefits from the charity. Any expenses claimed from the charity are set out in a note to the accountants.

## **Skilled NI**

### **Company Limited by Guarantee**

#### **Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)***

**Year ended 31 March 2024**

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#### ***Risk Management***

The Management Committee recognises the inherent risks in working with disadvantaged young people and in raising funds to pay for its work. The span of these risks is wide, including health and safety, client safeguarding, programme development and fundraising. The Committee works to mitigate the risks that it takes and aims to deliver safe and effective opportunities for people. The Management Committee ensures the organisation manages its risk as effectively as follows:

# Skilled NI

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 March 2024

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#### Objectives and activities

##### ***Vision***

We are dedicated to encouraging, educating, and upskilling students, creating meaningful opportunities and a brighter future. Where success is achieved. A place where businesses work in partnership, where people learn collaboratively and work together towards individual goals.

##### ***Strategic Objectives***

1. To provide quality occupational and employability training to school leavers and young people aged 16-24 in the Greater Belfast area and throughout Northern Ireland.
2. To develop the organisation both through the identified short-term business goals and the long-term strategy and vision.
3. To provide effective leadership and management by communicating clear direction through mission, vision and values.
4. To promote a culture of accountability, responsibility, self-evaluation, and continuous improvement to encourage and support innovation.
5. Demonstrate commitment and passion for the organisation's goals and engage staff across all levels of the organisation in strategy and planning.
6. Drive performance and outcomes.
7. Deliver value to stakeholders and learners by fully understanding their requirements and expectations.
8. Bring together the creativity, capability, and innovation of our workforce through continuous professional development.
9. To enhance the organisation's performance by providing learning strategies which exhibit rigor, innovation and flexibility in meeting the needs of the learners, employers and the industry.
10. To improve plans, systems and processes which will lead to improved organisational performance and sustainability.
11. To build an effective partnership between parents, learners, employers, stakeholders and the wider community to fulfil the organisation's mission.
12. Provide equal access to a broad and relevant curriculum to all with a wide range of enrichment activities to widen the learners' awareness of the industry and raise their career aspirations.
13. To provide a data rich environment using relevant data and statistical analysis to monitor performance.
14. To develop and deliver digital skills across all training areas.

##### ***Principles and Values***

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## **Skilled NI**

### **Company Limited by Guarantee**

#### **Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)***

##### **Year ended 31 March 2024**

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- We believe in the potential of our young people and adults.
- We believe in respect, honesty, hard work, support, collaboration and communication as the foundation for all of our work.
- We believe that all key stakeholders should be involved in the training journey.
- We provide a flexible client-centred holistic approach that is caring and compassionate.
- We are dedicated to including all sections of the community, offering equal access to services and support.
- We believe in the importance of partnership and collaborative working to maximise student benefit.

##### ***Skilled NI charitable purposes:***

##### **To advance education and vocational training for young people and adults throughout Northern Ireland.**

The direct benefits from this purpose include school leavers and young people qualified in skills and knowledge that meet local and regional employer needs or provide the young person with the opportunity to progress onto further education or training. The intended beneficiaries of this purpose are unemployed young people in Greater Belfast and Northern Ireland, including school leavers and those classed as NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) who require support to secure employment or progress to further education. Additionally young adults already in employment who require training and upskilling to enable them to progress within the employment environment and further beneficiaries are local and regional employers with increased recruitment options; and the local communities with reduced levels of anti-social behaviour associated with high levels of unemployment.

##### ***Skilled NI Programmes and Services***

To meet these purposes and maximise Public Benefit we provide the following programmes and services from our college site at 98-102 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2GW.

- Apprenticeships NI
- Skills for Life & Work
- Apprenticeships21

##### **Strategic report**

The following sections for achievements and performance and financial review form the strategic report of the charity.

## **Skilled NI**

### **Company Limited by Guarantee**

#### **Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)***

#### **Year ended 31 March 2024**

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##### **Achievements and performance**

Skills for Life & Work (SfLW,) Apprenticeships21 (APPS21.)

SfLW is the Department for the Economy's mainstream programme targeted at young people aged 16 to 17 (up to 24 if coming from a care background or requiring additional support) to provide them with the skills, confidence and support they need to secure employment. Young people undertaking SfLW at Skilled NI join the programme at a level appropriate to their ability and are supported to progress accordingly within the programme, get a job upon completion, and ideally take up opportunities available through APPS21 to study for higher level qualifications whilst they are in employment. Ongoing work with schools and colleges has led to a significant increase in recruitment on the SfLW programme and the company will continue to invest in this.

Apprenticeships21 continues to grow and with the introduction of all age apprenticeships there is every reason to believe that these numbers will continue to rise. Consequently, this will mean that the strategic plan for the coming year will incorporate the staffing needs to address these increases.

This year the organisation worked with on average 35 young people and 210 Apprentices. Throughout the year the students responded well to the training and support on offer and as a result a significant number of qualifications were attained.

98% of completers this year progressed to positive destinations, Employment, Apprenticeships or Further Education/Training. Of those who left early, 92% left for positive destinations.

Recruitment onto Apprenticeship programmes has been excellent with 166 Apprentices recruited this year. There has been significant development this year in the organisation's capacity to deliver quality provision consistently across all sector areas offered. A review of Apprenticeship delivery led to changes to the delivery model that now provides a sound base from which to grow Apprenticeship provision in the incoming year.

# Skilled NI

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 March 2024

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##### Financial review

2023/24 has been a challenging year for Skilled NI for a variety of reasons with incoming resources of £798,014 compared to £760,950 in 2022/23. At the year end the organisation had reserves of £1,437,147 of which £16,251 was restricted. The organisation remains confident going forward and optimistic about future opportunities for income generation. We remain committed to making a positive difference to social need through the provision of high-quality services.

##### **Reserves Policy**

Skilled NIs Reserves Policy outlines the organisation's commitment to establishing and maintaining sufficient levels of reserves to meet a number of planned and unplanned events. The year end account record sums of £16,251 as restricted and £1,420,896 as unrestricted reserves, £13,656 of which can only be realized by disposing of tangible fixed assets.

The policy of the organisation is to ensure that in the event of periods of unforeseen difficulty, funding gaps, or of the business being wound up, that it would be necessary to maintain key staff to ensure that this was conducted in an orderly manner and that all legal and contractual obligations were met. Skilled NI believes that 9 months' operational running costs and the provision of staff redundancy costs is an appropriate target level of reserves. Unrestricted reserves, which are realisable without the disposal of tangible fixed assets, currently held by skilled NI are £1,407,240 , which is higher than target level.

## Skilled NI

### Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

### Year ended 31 March 2024

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#### Plans for future periods

Over the incoming year Skilled NI has identified the following key areas for consolidation and/or further development:

#### **Review of current 5 Year Strategic Plan**

Our senior team will begin to review our current strategic plan throughout Autumn 2024, aiming to have a refreshed and updated plan before the end of the year.

#### **Skills training and employability and Investment in new training options**

Continue recruitment onto the programmes,

- Skills for Life and Work (SfLW) (Entry Level and Level 1)
- Apprenticeships<sup>21</sup>

Investment in new technology and upgraded computer suite

Investment in additional training courses to complement and support the current qualifications.

Skilled NI will continue to

- develop pathways to employment, Apprenticeships and Further Education for young people and adults.

These investments have been a direct response to our 5-year Strategic Plan, where the organisation set actions to widen vocational training options and increase Skills for Life and Work intake.

#### **Investment in Student Support Services**

The company acquired additional funding for a student support worker in order to meet the demand for support services and the increasing numbers of students presenting to us with mental health and other socio-economic issues. Implemented in June 2022, the service is already having a huge and positive effect on those students who require the support. The funding is due to be completed in September 2024.

#### **Business Support**

The company has a need for a Business Growth worker to ensure that marketing and recruitment is being supported in a manner that benefits the company. This is a business-critical role that will be developed over the 2024/2025 year.

#### **Social Economy initiatives**

Skilled NI will continue to explore viable and sustainable business opportunities aligned to the company's principles and values.

#### **Capital investment to re-invest in people (core business)**

- ongoing investment in our premises to:
  - enhance existing and future service provision.
  - increase revenue potential for future re-investment for community benefit.
- Identify further capital investment opportunities.

This will require us to continually assess and review our organisational capacity with regard to both human and physical resources and to create and build robust models of collaborative and partnership

## **Skilled NI**

### **Company Limited by Guarantee**

#### **Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)***

##### **Year ended 31 March 2024**

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working.

##### **Trustees' responsibilities statement**

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

##### **Auditor**

Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

## **Skilled NI**

**Company Limited by Guarantee**

**Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)***

**Year ended 31 March 2024**

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The trustees' annual report and the strategic report were approved on 26 November 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



Gary McAllister  
Charity Secretary