

**Charity registration number NIC108557**

**Company registration number NI653799 (Northern Ireland)**

**HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES ALLIANCE LIMITED**  
**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

# HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES ALLIANCE LIMITED

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

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The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

#### **Objectives and activities**

The charitable company's objectives are to promote the advancement of health and wellbeing of the inhabitants of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (hereinafter called 'the beneficiaries' and 'the area of benefit'), by consolidating the reputation and recognition of each of the Healthy Living Centres and to promote in a collaborative way the services that they provide in order to tackle health inequalities and improve the quality of life for the beneficiaries.

The direct benefits which flow from this purpose include;

- improved knowledge, capacity and ability of member groups to identify and target health inequalities and improve mental and physical health in communities experiencing endemic social deprivation;
- increased capability of member groups to collaborate sub-regionally in their own area so as to attract and target resources more accurately at areas of social deprivation;
- increased capability of member groups to collaborate on a regional basis with the public sector so as to attract and target government and charitable resources for and with people in socially deprived neighbourhoods;
- increased capability of member groups to strategise on an all-Ireland basis to attract and target resources at people experiencing poor mental and physical health in socially deprived neighbourhoods.

These benefits are evidenced through feedback from attendees at our training and strategic events using monitoring devices and forms; from surveys conducted with member groups; from outcomes delivered by thematic working groups and cyclical out-turn reports from our regional projects to funders and to the Board of Trustees. There is no harm anticipated from this purpose. The charity's beneficiaries are its members, their managers, staff and volunteers, and people whose lives are improved in or by Healthy Living Centres delivering locally as part of regional thematic, sub-regional and strategic, coordinated activity. A private benefit to trustees may arise from our ongoing programme of thematic training, good practice visits, direct support to groups, financial support through regional projects or information provision. Through this, trustees may gain skills, experience or funding which are transferable to other settings and which may benefit their own community group. These benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to our beneficiaries.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

# HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES ALLIANCE LIMITED

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

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

#### Achievements and performance

##### **Strengthening Commonalities and Working Groups**

Identification and action on thematic approaches and opportunities has proven to be highly productive and beneficial to our members, the communities they serve and health development in wider society. The Healthy Living Centres Alliance has successfully developed a number of permanent working groups on mental health, pain support, smoking cessation, and food health while Healthy Living Centres (HLCs) themselves continue to provide a plethora of opportunities for physical activity engagement, several of which became remarkable during the pandemic.

Our Working Group structure provides career enrichment opportunities for HLC staff to work on a regional basis with others both within the HLC Alliance and with PHA, Trusts, strategic partners and others to develop particular themes, provide training to the wider cohort of staff and volunteers and establishing/strengthening partnerships with organisations such as the Mental Health Foundation, Northern Ireland Environmental Alliance (NIEL), Public Health Agency and Safefood Ireland. Working group progress has resulted in the Alliance taking the lead with regional mobilisations on Mental Health Awareness Week, World Mental Health Day and No Smoking Day with high levels of successful public engagement. While progress had been set back as a result of the pandemic, 2023 has witnessed a resurgence of all Working Groups activity.

##### **HLCA Working Groups**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Supported by</b>	<b>Other members</b>
Mental Health WG	OAK and RHP (South Armagh) jointly	Sarah Hugget Joel Anderson - MHF	Teresa Nugent - RHP Davina Coulter - OAK Lisa McAliskey - Verve Paula Nixon - Down Rural Hannah Graham - NACN Tony Doherty
Smoking Cessation	OAK	Patricia Flanagan Caroline Ogilvy - PHA	Tony Doherty
Better Days Pain Support	LORAG	Natasha Moore	Tony Doherty Natasha Brennan - Lorag Christine McMaster - PHA Pamela Bell - NI Pain Forum Mary Hunter - Heart HLC Anne Marie Groom - DoH Tracy McAlorum - DoH Kevin Vowles - QUB Karen Hall - MHF
Food & Nutrition	Old Library Trust	Julie White Sarah Hugget	Requires renewal
Social Prescribing Task Group	HLCA	Tony Doherty	Liz McShane Martin Duffy Danny Power (up to March 23) Breige Conway Nicholas McCrickard Claire Convery Gillian Lewis Ann McNickle Natasha Brennan Micheál Mowen

# HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES ALLIANCE LIMITED

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

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

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#### **Strategic Connections and Achievements**

The HLC Alliance infrastructure has proven invaluable in terms of both delivering on the planned programmes and creating strategic opportunities for targeted health improvement. The most remarkable development arising out of our Mental Health Working Group has been the Better Days Pain Support Programme. Governed by a Multi-disciplinary Steering Group made up of the Public Health Agency, GPs and Physio, Pain Consultants, Queens University, Mental Health Foundation and the Alliance, we have created a new dispensation in pain management and self-care which has already won a major NHS PRESQipp Award for Delivering across Integrated Care Settings in 2021.



#### **The Better Days Project**

The Better Days Project has grown from strength to strength and, beginning in 2022-23, the Alliance has agreed a collaborative contract with the Mental Health Foundation designed to further bolster the skills of our large team of Pain Support Facilitators who are the backbone of the programme. A full schedule of training opportunities has been devised spanning 2022-24.

The following quotes from the 21-22 evaluation reflect the success of this valued programme:

'On a personal level I found the facilitator (named) knew how we all felt, treating us with empathy and care. Kindness was her light that shone into the room, on us. Mondays became the highlight of my week, the people on the course shared openly, challenged, cried, laughed, my inspiration, I knew I would deal with these health challenges. I also know that those living in increasing pain and emotional problems within this field, need these Projects. Central to healing such conditions is ending isolation, enabling people to find help within their Community and educating our Health Professionals to talk to people about their lives. I am forever grateful to Heart Project HLC Belfast, Hope Shone through the Darkness. Thank You.'

'Mary engaged on all the sessions and found the CBT for sleep and the food and nutrition sessions very useful, as it helped her link diet and sleep to promoting positive mental health and enabled her to accept her situation and deal with it in different way. Over the course of a few weeks her mood started to improve, and she could see the difference in was making to her life, She was starting to enjoy life again, and was more aware how self-help strategies can make the difference. She took a new approach to addressing her bad days with her pain by doing something more positive and introducing more regular exercises into her routine. She started to adapt an attitude of less reliance on her medications. She completed the full course and after a few months she contacted us and as she was now going back to work part-time and that family relationships had improved. She said that only for the support and interventions coming at the right time and talking to other people in similar situations really helped her, she didn't feel so isolated and alone. What she got of the programme was knowledge, skills and the CBT approach to her pain self-management and give her confidence to move on with her life and said that only for project she would, most likely still be on a vicious circle and very reliant on medication. She also agreed to come to attend one of our programmes and highlight of others the benefits of the Better Days pain support programme.

HLCA Ltd has now secured a 5-7-year contract with the Department of Health, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024, to fully deliver and develop Better Days, which is led by LORAG under an MoU with the Alliance.

# HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES ALLIANCE LIMITED

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

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

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#### **Mental Health Foundation**

The Alliance entered into a formal partnership with MHF in October 2022 following a number of exploratory meetings. As with any other collaboration or partnership, the possible merits were assessed in terms of shared outcomes and a perceived ability to achieve them. MHF have provided financial resources to enable us jointly to work towards the following:

- Work in partnership to build the capacity of the Healthy Living Centre Alliance Mental Health Working Group to develop a prevention approach to mental health across the Alliance and the programmes delivered by HLCs.
- Co-design and support the development of a mental health wellbeing module within the pain management programme (Better Days) based on participatory research & development.
- Develop a peer support capacity for participants in the Better Days Programme.
- Embedding learning and resources into other programmes and policies.

The contract with MHF has enabled the Alliance to employ a Mental Health Support Worker and to adopt a more evidence-based approach to HLC staff training needs, monitoring and evaluation, as well as focus groups and co-design and delivery with beneficiaries. The above development is testimony to how the Alliance is perceived due to our enhanced regional profile in Warm, Well and Connected, social prescribing and Better Days Pain Support.

#### **Transform Your Trolley**

The Alliance has continued to develop a highly fruitful relationship with Safefood – an all-Ireland body established after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement to promote awareness and knowledge of food safety and nutrition on the island of Ireland. We have created the highly innovative Transform Your Trolley programme supporting families living on low-income as they transform their trollies with a healthier, balanced food shop. The relationship with Safefood is now in its fourth year and is set to continue for the foreseeable future.

In 2023 HLCA Ltd secured a three-year contract with SafeFood Ireland to deliver and develop the Transform Your Trolley model. The project is led by the Old Library Trust HLC under and MoU with the Alliance.

#### **Heritage for Health**

In 21-22 we began discussions with the Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) with a view to forging strategic connections between our organisations, fusing health improvement with our natural heritage and natural environment recovery. Heritage for Health is now a new collaboration between the Healthy Living Centre Alliance (HLCA) and Northern Ireland Environmental Link (NIEL). Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, it is an innovative and regional model combining mental health recovery with natural heritage recovery. It is designed to bring direct benefits to health service users whose mental health has been adversely affected during the pandemic and, at the same time, to involve more people in accessing our natural heritage sites and activities.

In January 2023 both HLCA and NIEL employed a team of two Project Coordinators – one in each organisation – to lead on the delivery of this exciting programme, which commenced in February 23, is being delivered in ten HLC sites with ten local natural heritage partners. Progress has been both steady and promising in terms of results and outcomes.

# HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES ALLIANCE LIMITED

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

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

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#### **Social Prescribing**

One of the major areas for development in recent years has been in social prescribing as an innovative mechanism for tackling social isolation, loneliness and disconnectedness. Both the National Lottery and Daera have been funding partners in the Spring Social Prescribing project which is delivered locally in each of the five Trust areas, connecting with NHS patients through GPs, pharmacists and other primary care pathways.

In January 2022 the Alliance established the Social Prescribing Task Group. Convened by the Regional Coordinator, the aim of the group was to provide and implement a strategy to combine, resource and integrate our social prescribing projects into one. The work and benefit of the Task Group has been of critical importance to the Alliance.

As of July/August 2023, the Healthy Living Centres Alliance, led by Derg Valley HLC, had created the business case designed to combine the two strands of social prescribing into the Spring Integrated Social Prescribing project with up to 21 delivery HLCs and potentially three funders: DAERA, Dept of Health and National Lottery. National Lottery indicated that they had earmarked almost £400k towards the mid-term sustainability of the project, subject to HLCA securing financial commitments from both DAERA and DoH.

While a lot of work has gone into the Spring Integrated Social Prescribing project over the past 20 months up to beginning of September, its fortunes in July and August 2023 changed for the worst, despite the offer from National Lottery. In short, Daera had informed us in early August after much ado that were not in a position to fund the project any further and basically signalled their imminent withdrawal from it.

In relation to the Department of Health, on 7<sup>th</sup> September we received a letter from Peter May, Permanent Secretary, indicating that they were not in a position to provide any funding towards the project, the result of which is that the project had to be brought to conclusion.

This has been a very testing time for HLC managers and social prescribing staff with many losing valuable income and a valuable service bringing positive outcomes to people, families and communities. In strategic terms, while the Social Prescribing Task Group worked well since January 2022 to provide effective leadership of the project and to plan its long-term integration and sustainability, despite all of this, government in NI was not capable of providing sustainable support, effectively bringing the project to an end.

#### **All-Ireland Social Prescribing Network**

The HLC Alliance has also been central in sustaining the All-Ireland Social Prescribing Network in which both the PHA and the Dept of Health, had until recently, played a central role. However, with the reorganising of DoH structures in June 2023, their in-put has been removed, which has caused several practical difficulties. The HLC Alliance continues to play a pivotal role in educating various sectors and organisations as to the core elements and merits of social prescribing, especially in terms of its unique and innovative benefits. In June 2022, the Alliance provided the management support in hosting the All-Ireland Social Prescribing Conference in Derry, which was addressed by health ministers north and south, as well as beneficiaries, social prescribers, movers and shakers from throughout the island.

#### **Integrated Care Service ICS**

The HLC Alliance continues to play an active and energetic role in the development of Integrated Care and the implementation of the Integrated Care Service with other sections of the health service and with the Community/Voluntary Sector Steering Group. Adopting a Population Health approach the new ICS is designed to be more collaborative and inclusive in how it leads reform of the health service. While the Regional Coordinator plays an influential and pivotal role in determining the scope and scale of the population health opportunity, especially in terms of placing emphasis on community development approaches to long-term conditions i.e. pain support, social prescribing, there are major challenges in terms of creating equality within partnership structures, developing and nurturing a culture of collaboration, while the sector suffers severe funding cuts and sectoral setbacks.

# HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES ALLIANCE LIMITED

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

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

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#### **Reset Residential Conference 2023**

The current legal and working structure of the Healthy Living Centre Alliance has been in place since 2018, when it became a company limited by guarantee with a board of directors, which subsequently became registered as a charity with the NI Charities Commission.

In June 2023, following discussions held by the board of HLCA Ltd, it was agreed to hold a reset event for the Alliance to enable members to take stock of the position we've reached since 2018-19 and to explore whether our form and function remain fit for purpose.

Following the decision to host the event on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September, Steven Lindsay of Cavanagh-Kelly was commissioned to help shape and facilitate the residential. Subsequently, a Residential Working Group was established so that a breadth of ideas and issues could be catered for in advance of and during the event. The Working Group was made up of Martin Connolly, Linda Armitage, Breige Conway, and Lisa McAliskey supported by Tony Doherty, Regional Coordinator, and Louise Stephenson, HLCA Finance and Admin Manager. The event was run on a shared cost basis with each HLC expected to pay their way in terms of accommodation, food and facilitation. The WG met several times in August and September to agree the approach to and the agenda for the Residential. The objectives for the event were agreed as follows:

- a. To review the Alliance's purpose and activities
- b. To review the Alliance's structure and accountability arrangements
- c. To agree an action plan for the next 12 months
- d. To familiarise members with each other and the work of the Alliance

Some 30 representatives, including HLC managers, other HLC staff and Alliance project staff attended the event in the Roe Valley Hotel Limavady, 20 of whom stayed overnight with several travelling home and returning on Friday morning.

#### **Recommendations and Suggestions**

A range of outcomes and suggestions for improvement were recorded during the event, which was described as 'an excellent example of organisational democracy.' The Residential Working Group continued to meet since September to complete a mitigation process of the main outcomes recorded during the event, which is now complete. Following are the main categories of recommendations to be transformed into actions in 2024:

- Alliance role in identifying opportunities and coordinating bids to funders etc Funding Opportunities and Full Cost Recovery
- Creating Shared Service Opportunities
- Influencing Government and Decision-makers
- Board Development
- Subregional HLC Groups
- Promoting the Alliance and Communication
- Value of Membership Fees
- Learning from each other

#### **Financial review**

The results are set out on pages 16 to 28. The charity recorded net expenditure £40,075 (2022 - £30,426) for the year. At 30 June 2023, the charity had total Funds of £37,380 (2022 - £77,455).

# HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES ALLIANCE LIMITED

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

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

#### Reserves Policy

The charity aims to hold reserves that are sufficient to meet running costs. The charity's income is primarily derived from restricted sources, and it has secured funding for the continued delivery of services up until at least the end of 2025. Expenditure primarily relates to the delivery of these funded services and, as such, any drop in income will result in a corresponding drop in expenditure. The charity has no significant financial liabilities or commitments, therefore, a low level of free reserves is appropriate for the charity.

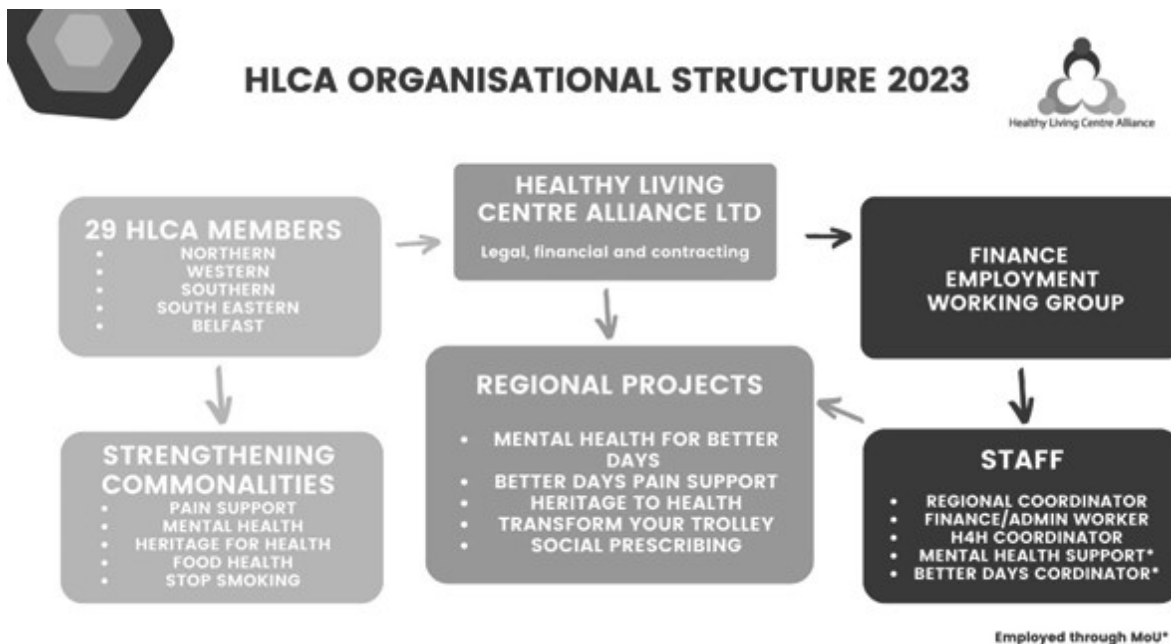
As at 30 June 2023 the charity had sufficient funds to continue to meet its financial obligations as they fall due and, as described in note 1.2, the financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. At 30 June 2023 the charity had free reserves of £37,380 (2022 - £14,103). This equates to approximately seven weeks of expenditure which is under the target level of twelve weeks annual expenditure. However, the charity's overheads and financial commitments are relatively low and the level of free reserves currently held is appropriate for the charity's circumstances. The trustees will continue to monitor this position going forward.

#### Structure, governance and management

Healthy Living Centres Alliance is a company limited by guarantee and is recognised as a charity by the NI Charities Commission.

Healthy Living Centre Alliance has a Board of Directors, appointed by the members on a cyclical basis, to ensure good governance and provide strategic direction to the Regional Coordinator. The Board meets up to six times per year and receives written updates on progress, partnerships and corporate development matters.

The Board is currently chaired by Ms T Nugent, supported by Mr M Connolly.



# HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES ALLIANCE LIMITED

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

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

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The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Ms N Brennan

Mr M Connolly

Mr C Corr

Mr L T Devine

Mr R M Duffy

Ms E Gingles

Mr G McGowan (Resigned 16 August 2022)

Mr M Mowen

Mr D Power (Resigned 22 March 2023)

Ms B Conway

Ms T Nugent

HLCA Ltd provides employment to five members of staff, either directly contracted or through an MoU:

- Tony Doherty – Regional Coordinator (Heart HLC Contract with PHA)
- Louise Stephenson – Finance and Admin Manager (Direct Employee)
- Natasha Moore – Better Days Programme Coordinator (MoU With Lorag)
- Sarah Hugget – Mental Health Support (Direct Employee as of December 23)
- Kelley Haan – Heritage 4 Health Programme Coordinator (Direct Employee)

The affairs of the HLC Alliance are managed on a day-to-day basis by the Regional Coordinator, Mr T Doherty, including attendance at Working Group meetings and training, regulating the activities of key partnerships such as the All-Ireland Social Prescribing Network, Integrated Care Partnership, Better Days Pain Support Steering Group and Spring Social Prescribing, both DAERA-funded and Lottery-funded.

#### **Subregional HLC Groups**

The function and purpose of the Subregional HLC Groups is well reflected in the Alliance MoU. The following Alliance members volunteer additional time as subregional Chairs, ensuring that the groups function by and large as planned:

- Southern Area – Liam Devine – Clanrye
- Belfast Area – Linda Armitage – EBCDA
- Western Area – Martin Duffy – Derg Valley Care
- Northern Area – Breige Conway – NACN
- South Eastern – Nicholas McCrickard & Gillian Lewis

#### **Risk Management**

The Board of Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity, and are satisfied those systems and procedures are in place to mitigate those risks.

# HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES ALLIANCE LIMITED

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

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

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#### Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of Healthy Living Centres Alliance Limited for the purpose 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 trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

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 Charities SORP;
- make judgements and 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; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that GMcG BELFAST be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

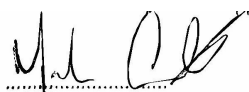
#### Small companies exemption

In preparing this report, the directors have taken advantage of the small companies exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

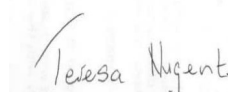
#### Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

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



Mr M Connolly  
Director



Ms T Nugent  
Director

Date: 27/3/24