

THE RAINBOW PROJECT LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, submit their annual report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

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 charitable company's [governing document], 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).

Review of Activity and Future Developments

Welcome to The Rainbow Project's Trustee Report 2022-23. This report contains details on what has been another extremely busy year for the organisation as we continue to deliver services, influence policy and undertake research to understand more about the LGBTQIA+ community in Northern Ireland.

Like many other organisations and services, The Rainbow Project is still dealing with the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on people's mental health and wellbeing. Our health and wellbeing services are in high demand which has an impact on the amount of time our clients are on waiting lists, for services such as our co-cultural counselling.

The Rainbow Project continues to grow and in 2022-23 delivered more services than in any year before it so we were pleased that with funding from the Rank Foundation we were able to employ a Health and Wellbeing Officer to support our clients through their journey of support.

The Rainbow Project works directly with members of our community by offering a wrap-around service for clients to support them through our range of services, including sexual health advice and testing; mental health support; hate crime advocacy; co-cultural counselling; LGBTQIA+ youth provision; regional support and a range of other initiatives and programmes.

We were also delighted to secure another round of funding to enable us to engage with the BAME community across Northern Ireland and work in partnership with other services/groups such as the Migrant Forum and Rainbow Refugees, to provide health, wellbeing and emotional support. This work has been particularly important in the context of the migrant crisis and TRP has been able to support a number of LGBTQIA+ individuals seeking asylum in NI.

The Rainbow Project has continued to grow our partnership developed with Stonewall in the delivery of a Diversity Champions programme in Northern Ireland supporting employers in meeting the needs of their LGBTQIA+ employees.

We have continued to develop our policy advocacy to ensure we are not just working to mitigate the impacts of discrimination, but also working to eliminate that discrimination in the first place. This is through detailed needs assessments, research, communications, and campaigns.

The organisation has worked with staff, volunteers and trustees in the implementation of a 5-year strategic plan. Emerging as a community response to the HIV epidemic in 1994, our work and focus has continued to grow as we have come to understand the full range of holistic approaches required to mitigate the impacts of discrimination to address the health needs of LGBTQIA+ people.

To monitor the organisation's impact and support the Rainbow Project in achieving its vision; mission; aims; and objectives, while remaining aligned to our values, we adopted an outcomes-based accountability model in our strategic plan.

We could not deliver this range of activities without a committed team of staff and volunteers and the support of our funders/donors/fundraisers. While charitable funding continues to come under real pressure, it is a real achievement that the organisation has maintained the confidence and support of a range of funders who support our activities. Our positive relationships with funders were demonstrated when we were able to communicate the importance of testing and vaccination at the time of the Monkeypox outbreak during the Spring and Summer of 2022 resulting in over 100 people requesting the vaccination and reducing the potential impact of a local outbreak.

THE RAINBOW PROJECT LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

During 2022-2023, the Trustees continued to focus on the governance of the Project: on setting and monitoring strategy, ensuring systems of control were in place, monitoring finance, and considering major areas of risk. Day-to-day management decisions are delegated to the Director. This work included a number of internal reviews to ensure best practice and good governance, including a review of The Rainbow Project's policies and procedures and volunteering systems.

During this financial year, The Rainbow Project continued to invest in a sustainability strategy aimed at expanding the sources of income for the organisation including a focus on giving. This investment was managed through our governance structure which includes a Sustainability, Strategy and Finance Sub-Group of the Board of Trustees which has overseen the sustainability strategy and will review progress towards agreed markers of success.

While we continue to witness on-going change in the views and attitudes of society in Northern Ireland that might have been un-imaginable ten or twenty years ago, we cannot be complacent. Homophobia, transphobia, biphobia and heterosexism are still prevalent in parts of the Northern Ireland community.

Our activity last year, has been set against a backdrop of increased anti-LGBTQIA+ narratives in Northern Ireland and across the globe. We have been working with our sector partners and other organisations to support those impacted, including our staff members and in particular trans and non-binary people. The Rainbow Project provides dedicated support and social opportunities to our trans and non-binary community through our BeU group and our hugely successful monthly trans and non-binary swimming sessions.

During 2022-2023 The Rainbow Project strengthened our work on the campaign to ban so called 'conversion therapy'. We partnered with the Department for Communities to commission research and have developed our relationships with organisations across the UK and Ireland to maximize our impact. The Department for Communities are thus far committing to a ban on so called conversion practices.

Two independent academics have been identified to assist in the proposed research project. The Rainbow Project will have a role in locating and supporting people to make their submission to the research panel. The Rainbow Project Policy and Advocacy Officer, which is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, led our policy, communications and engagement on this important work. We believe any ban must be comprehensive with no loopholes.

In Ireland, discussions are still ongoing with Roderic O'Gorman Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth of Ireland but at recent IDAHOBIT event he advised that any legislation will be trans inclusive. Academics have been identified to assist with the proposed research project which his department wants to initiate with University College, Dublin. Our partner organisation, LGBT Ireland, will have a role in locating and supporting people to make their submissions to the research panel.

The Rainbow Project has been in the vanguard of promoting as well as defending the rights, needs, views and expectations of the LGBTQIA+ community in Northern Ireland. In another year without an Assembly or Executive, TRP continued to engage with political parties and, elected representatives and departments. We continued to work with the Department for Communities and others in analysing the recommendations to produce a LGBTQI Strategy to make sure it contains targeted, measurable and resourced actions which are achievable and will make a real effective impact on the lives of LGBTQIA+ people. Through discussions that were initiated with political representatives to establish an all-party group in trans healthcare, MLAs felt a wider forum on LGBTQIA+ issues would be more beneficial. The All-Party Group on LGBTQIA+ Equality subsequently launched in September. When the NI Assembly does eventually come out of the current suspension we look forward to further engagement through the All-Party Group.

As one of Northern Ireland's key community/voluntary sexual health organisations, The Rainbow Project continues to develop its Sexual Health activities and services. Our Rapid HIV and Syphilis Testing Service, now in its 12th year, has been developed and expanded with over 300 men accessing rapid testing during 2022-2023. In addition to this, over 100,000 safer sex packs were distributed to men across Northern Ireland, and we commenced a key campaign, seeking to bring new HIV diagnosis to zero through a range of activities and investment. Over the next year, The Rainbow Project will continue to develop its services in line with a holistic approach to the health and wellbeing of our beneficiaries including identifying and working to meet the physical as well as mental health needs of our beneficiaries.

THE RAINBOW PROJECT LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Rainbow Project continued to be on the cutting edge of service provision during 2022-2023 with the continuation of Northern Ireland's only co-cultural gay affirmative counselling service resulting in over 1,000 sessions delivered, one to one support, couple counselling and the development of Therapeutic support groups. We have also developed counselling placement posts to support students in developing an LGBTQIA+ affirming model of counselling. We are still offering video and phone sessions with clients, and this has allowed us to reach new clients particularly those living in rural areas of Northern Ireland.

Training for professionals continued to play a key role in our work with sexual orientation and gender awareness sessions and an introduction to gay affirmative therapy sessions being delivered. We have also developed new training programmes which offer participants more awareness on trans and non-binary identities and issues. We will continue to work over the next year to ensure that revised mental health promotion and suicide prevention regional and locality action plans are supporting the LGBTQIA+ populations as a priority.

The Rainbow Project's strategic plan focusses on changing the lives of LGBTQIA+ people, changing service providers, changing society and changing ourselves. This change will be achieved through the development and delivery of key services addressing the needs of LGBTQIA+ people, working with others to increase their awareness and knowledge of the needs of LGBTQIA+ people, working to ensure society values the positive impact of LGBTQIA+ people and continuously developing our organisation to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Structure, governance and management

The Rainbow Project Ltd (previously Rainbow Health Limited) is registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 25 October 1995. It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association which were last amended on 22 September 2012.

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 Jenny Ashton	(Resigned 20 August 2023)
Mr Trevor Wright	
Ms Margaret Peacock	(Resigned 3 February 2023)
Ms Kimberly Ann Walsh	
Mr Ciaran Moynagh	
Mr Alan Kenneth Martin	(Resigned 27 August 2022)
Ms Karen Geraldine McShane	
Miss Nadine Campbell	
Mr Patrick Hughes	(Resigned 16 April 2022)
Mr Shane Lynch	
Mrs Lauren O'Sullivan-Harris	
Mr Jonathan Kyle	
Ms Norah Christie	(Appointed 5 February 2023)
Ms Monica Fitzpatrick	(Appointed 5 February 2023)
Mr Donall Henderson	(Appointed 5 February 2023)

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

No emoluments were paid to directors during the year.

Principal activity

To seek the benefit and enhancement of the mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Northern Ireland and, in particular, to advance education and awareness by way of research, provision of advocacy services, development, assessment and development of information and education services; to provide care and support services, counselling services, clinical services and advice relevant to health, particularly sexual health, and well-being; and to promote the equality and rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

THE RAINBOW PROJECT LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Risk policy

The Trustees who served during the year have undertaken an analysis of the work of the charity; identified the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that all appropriate policies, practices and procedures are in place to mitigate those risks. A Governance Sub-Group of the Board of Trustees has been formed and has produced a register of major risks and mitigating actions.

Financial review

During this reporting period, the charity has maintained a good financial position with an increase in donations and reserves held. The Trustees have reviewed the reserves of the charity. Considering the variable income and fixed commitments, as well as the wider funding climate, the review concluded that to allow the charity to provide a buffer for uninterrupted services, a general reserve equating to approximately four months of total expenditure should be maintained. The current free reserves held by the charity are £258,486 which is 31.4% or approximately four months of the total annual expenditure of 2022/2023.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of The Rainbow Project Ltd 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 charitable company 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 charitable company 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 charitable company 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 charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

A resolution proposing that Johnston Kennedy DFK be re-appointed as auditors of the charity will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

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.

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

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



Mr Trevor Wright
Chairperson

Date: 15/12/23