

# THE RAINBOW PROJECT LTD

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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The trustees of The Rainbow Project Ltd (the "charity"), who are also directors for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, submit their annual report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. 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 2 to the financial statements and comply with the charitable company's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Charities SORP "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)".

### Review of Activity and Future Developments

#### Overview

Welcome to The Rainbow Project's Trustee Report for 2024-25. This report contains details on what has been another very busy year for the Rainbow Project, and one where we continue our work to make Northern Ireland a better place for LGBTQIA+ people and their families.

The financial year 2024-25 represented a period of significant activity, consolidation, and growth for The Rainbow Project (TRP). Building on major organisational changes in 2023-24 - including the appointment of a new Director, the development of a revised strategic plan and a strengthening of service delivery structures - the charity continued to deliver high-quality, person-centred support to LGBTQIA+ people and their families across Northern Ireland.

Demand for TRP's services remained high across all areas: sexual health, mental health, policy advocacy, counselling, youth services, cancer support, hate crime advocacy and regional engagement. As in previous years, the cost-of-living pressures, and rising anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric continued to affect LGBTQIA+ communities, resulting in increased need for support.

Despite a challenging funding landscape, TRP secured several important new funding streams during the year and successfully expanded a number of core programmes.

### Key Developments in 2024-25

#### Organisational Strengthening

Following the 2023-24 organisational review undertaken by the Director and supported by the Board, the new Director, appointed in late 2023, oversaw refinements to service delivery, line management structures, and better alignment of regional and Belfast-based operations.

The Governance and Assurance Sub Committee have continued our planned review of our internal policies ensuring the charity remains compliant, trauma-informed, and aligned with best practice.

Work has progressed on the proposed LGBTQIA+ Hub for Belfast, with partner organisations, funders and Belfast City Council as well as research into new premises in the north west for 2025-26.

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## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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### Service Delivery Highlights

#### Health & Wellbeing

Demand for consultations remained high among LGBTQIA+ people seeking support for mental health, identity, housing, asylum, isolation and safety. During the year staff delivered:

- 394 Health and Wellbeing consultations were facilitated to LGBTQIA+ people who were new service users and some service users who were returning for support after 1yrs+. Demand for TRP's Co-Cultural LGBTQIA+ Affirmative Counselling Service continued to increase this year. Sessions supported clients experiencing domestic abuse, identity struggles, mental health challenges, and recovery from trauma.
- Deeply impactful casework supporting trans, non-binary, migrant and vulnerable clients.
- Continued wrap-around support and referrals for sexual health, counselling, asylum support, and community connection.

Feedback from service users:

- "I couldn't thank the staff enough for the way they handled things."
- "Once again, Leo is an asset to the team."
- "Really friendly member of staff, no judgement just understanding which was so nice after coming from a not so understanding area."

#### Workshops & Community Engagement

Workshops across Northern Ireland included:

- Hate crime information;
- LGBTQIA+ creative and cultural sessions;
- Patch-making, Irish mythology, and rural community engagement.

Participants consistently reported increased confidence, community connection, and reduced isolation.

#### Sexual Health

Under Public Health Agency contracts, highlights of our work completed this year with the support of PHA included:

- 28,094 Safer Sex Packs were distributed across Northern Ireland, exceeding our target.
- 172 rapid HIV and Syphilis tests were facilitated.
- 407 queries in relation to sexual health were completed.
- 60 Outreach sessions were delivered to clubs, pubs and other venues across Northern Ireland.

We also delivered:

- Mental Health Campaigns
- Workshops and social events for LGBTQIA+ people
- Training professionals
- Support for regional groups

Feedback from clients highlighted the safety, compassion and professionalism of TRP's services. Clients frequently expressed gratitude for the service and its life-changing impact.

# THE RAINBOW PROJECT LTD

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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Comments from Service users who have been supported through our Sexual Health Service:

- "So friendly and helpful"
- "Contacted Leo and he was so informative and helpful and booked me in"
- "LGBT+ friendly Very professional and supportive"
- "was awesome, he made me feel at ease."
- "Very open-minded staff and teach you a lot."
- "Great atmosphere and ease of access"
- "Non-judgmental, lovely staff, super helpful"
- "Informative and supportive, he is very people oriented and knowledgeable"
- "Amazing team"
- "Fantastic all round non-judgmental, lovely and super helpful staff"
- "Great service, very practical"
- "Very friendly, put me at ease"
- "Amazing staff"
- "Everything is perfect"
- "I wasn't expecting to have such a laugh!"
- "Excellent Service"

### Hate Crime Advocacy

TRP continued delivery of the Hate Crime Advocacy Service (HCAS) in partnership with Victim Support NI, Migrant Centre NI, and Leonard Cheshire. Casework during the year involved:

- Emergency accommodation support
- Safety planning
- Advocacy with PSNI and legal partners
- Multi-agency case meetings to support those at risk

Given increasing public debates and anti-LGBTQIA+ narratives, this service remains essential.

### Macmillan Cancer Champions

With funding and in partnership from **Macmillan Cancer Support**, we begun our pioneering Cancer Champions service which provides support, information and expertise to LGBTQIA+ people and their families impacted by cancer. Already in its first year the project delivered:

- Death Cafés, awareness campaigns, and health interventions
- Targeted sessions for trans and non-binary people related to breast/chest health
- Training for healthcare providers including radiographers, mammographers, palliative care staff and hospices
- National media attention from BBC and Daily Mirror
- A viral breast-screening video adopted by NI Trusts and featured on Macmillan's UK-wide website

Feedback from service users

- "Just glad you both were there for support as you were both brilliant when it came to getting the people that showed up, the precise help they needed"
- "Through attendance at the recent Death Café... I have been able to speak openly about the cancer diagnosis and palliative care of a loved one. As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, the opportunity to speak of pre-bereavement and loss is not a common experience and I have welcomed the change to be heard and understood in a warm and welcoming environment."

The youth service continued to grow its impact, delivering:

- Drop-ins, creative workshops, outdoor social activities, study support
- 1-1 mentoring
- A new monthly Strabane drop-in
- Youth-led skill-shares and peer leadership
- Contributions to Derry & Strabane's Child Friendly City initiative

TRP welcomed confirmation from the National Lottery Community Fund of four more years of funding, ensuring stability for the service until 2029.

# THE RAINBOW PROJECT LTD

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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### **Policy, Advocacy and Sector Leadership**

The organisation continued its role as a leading advocate for LGBTQIA+ equality in Northern Ireland. TRP continued engagement with Stormont following the February 2024 restoration of the NI Assembly and Executive. This included contributions to the All-Party Group on LGBTQIA+ Equality.

The team delivered ongoing leadership in campaigns to ban conversion practices and developed a strategy on trans healthcare, hate crime reform, and equality strategies. We continued to enhance cross-border partnerships including the All-Island LGBTQIA+ Forum with LGBT Ireland and our continuing partnership with Stonewall on the Diversity Champions employer programme.

Rising anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric poses increasing challenges; however, TRP continues to respond through evidence-based advocacy, community support, and coalition building.

We are grateful to The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust who fund our work in this area.

### **Sustainability and Funding**

The board operates a separate Sustainability and Strategy Subgroup and work this year has seen the charity maintain a stable financial position, despite sector-wide pressures. New and continued income sources included:

- Macmillan Cancer Support
- SSE Airtricity
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Public Health Agency
- Dormant Funds
- Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme
- The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
- Individual donors and community fundraisers

The Board continued oversight of the sustainability strategy through the Sustainability, Strategy and Finance Sub-Group.

### **Structure, governance and management**

The Rainbow Project Ltd 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.

During 2024-2025, A Governance Sub-Group oversaw compliance, risk management, and internal policy reviews. The Trustees continued to focus on the governance of the organisation: 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 CEO. During the year the Trustees continued a number of internal reviews to ensure best practice and good governance, including a review of The Rainbow Project's policies and procedures.

The trustees continued to serve on the Board in a volunteer capacity, and they continued to set and monitor strategy ensuring compliance with charity law and SORP. They continued to support both the Director and Assistant Director in delivering the strategic plan.

# THE RAINBOW PROJECT LTD

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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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:

Mr Trevor Wright	(Resigned 14 September 2024)
Mr Ciaran Moynagh	(Resigned 7 June 2025)
Ms Karen McShane	
Miss Nadine Campbell	
Mr Shane Lynch	
Mrs Lauren O'Sullivan-Harris	
Mr Jonathan Kyle	
Ms Norah Christie	
Ms Monica Fitzpatrick	(Resigned 13 September 2025)
Mr Donall Henderson	
Ms Emma Wallace	(Appointed 1 June 2024)
Ms Caroline Maxwell	(Appointed 1 June 2024)
Mr Arón Hughes	(Appointed 1 June 2024)

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

The Charity seeks 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.

### Risk policy

The Trustees who served during the year have undertaken an analysis of the work of the charity; regularly update 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 register of risks is maintained and reviewed at each Board meeting.

Of particular note this year is the volatility of public funding and rising hostility towards LGBTQIA+ communities. The Board has taken cognisance of the staff well-being and retention as well as data protection and safeguarding. Robust mitigating policies, procedures and reporting systems remain in place.

### Financial review

During this reporting period, the charity has maintained a good financial position. The charity ended the year in a stable financial position. Income remained broadly consistent with expectations, with increases in some restricted programme funding offsetting sector-wide pressures. The Board used some of the reserves to invest in a new fund raising manager and communications officer to allow the charity to create new income streams and reduce reliance on public sector funding.

Reserves remain within the Board's approved reserves policy of approximately four months operating expenditure. The current free reserves held by the charity are £260,950 which is 29.1% or approximately 3.5 months of the total annual expenditure of 2024/2025. A full financial breakdown is presented in the accompanying audited statements.

# THE RAINBOW PROJECT LTD

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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### 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.



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**Ms Karen McShane**  
Chairperson

Date: 11/12/25