



JIGSAW

Northern Ireland

Annual Report

2022-2023



Office 4b
Townsend Enterprise Park
28 Townsend Street
BELFAST
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Contents

	Page No.
Company Information	3
Introduction	4
Mission Statement, Aims and Objectives	5
Structure of Jigsaw NI	6
Jigsaw NI Arts	7
Swimming & Exercise in Water	9
Boccia	10
Fitness/Boccia Class	12
Summer Activities	13
Comments	14
Highlights over the past year	15
Acknowledgements	16

Company Information

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Northern Ireland Charity Number
Recognised as a Charity by HMRC

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Jigsaw (Northern Ireland) is a company limited by guarantee

Board of Directors

Chairperson
Honorary Secretary
Treasurer
Director
Director
Director
Director
Director

*George Briggs
Mairéad O'Halloran
Nora Harte
Fionnuala McCaughley
Terry Woodside
Sharon Gillespie
Alison Moss
Anita Deery*

Employees

Manager
Programme Assistant
Programme Co-ordinator

*Clare McQuiston
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Introduction

Jigsaw NI began working as ACORN in 1990, providing a range of services to its service users who are adults with varying disabilities including brain injury, sensory impairment, physical disability etc. Quite often, our service users have experienced social exclusion and may have spent many years at home with little or no daytime activity outside the house. ACORN became Jigsaw NI, a company limited by guarantee with charitable status accorded by the Inland Revenue in February 1999. In 2002 the work of Jigsaw NI was recognised with an MBE for its manager at that time, in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Jigsaw NI's range of services for its users are: Community Art and Physical Activity classes, including Exercise in water, Fitness, Boccia and Swimming. Most service users live in the greater Belfast and North Down area. The activities are held in local leisure centres and community centres. Many of our activities take place in areas of urban deprivation.

We currently have 11 groups running throughout Belfast and 2 groups running in the North Down area on a weekly basis over forty weeks of the year. Jigsaw NI groups are made up of 8-14 members (depending on ability/assistance required) with different forms of disabilities and each activity is accompanied by a communal lunch/tea break. We feel that this "personal touch" distinguishes Jigsaw NI from many other providers in this field. Physical Activity classes are provided for approximately 95 people every week. Approx 60 service users currently participate in Community Art classes on a weekly basis.

Thankfully, following a couple of very strange and disruptive years, our services have been running at full capacity for a second year running, with no lockdowns or circuit breakers required. We are hoping this will continue moving forward.

Jigsaw NI places great importance on the quality of relationship between Jigsaw NI staff and our service users. Service users are contacted before the class they attend, and the ensuing conversation often refers to their feelings and matters of importance to the service user. A sense of group belonging is always encouraged, and Jigsaw NI emphasise the need for social inclusion as well as the need for activity.

Service users have reported the following benefits from participating in Jigsaw NI's activities:

- Greater social inclusion and the chance to participate in local community life
- Learning new skills
- Increased self esteem
- Forming friendships
- Improvement in physical and mental health
- Feeling valued and listened to
- Sense of isolation is reduced by feeling part of a group
- Respite for carers and forming relationships between carers

Mission Statement, Aims & Objectives

Mission Statement:

“Jigsaw NI encourages adults with disabilities to participate in activities and learn new skills in a fun and supportive environment.”

Aims:

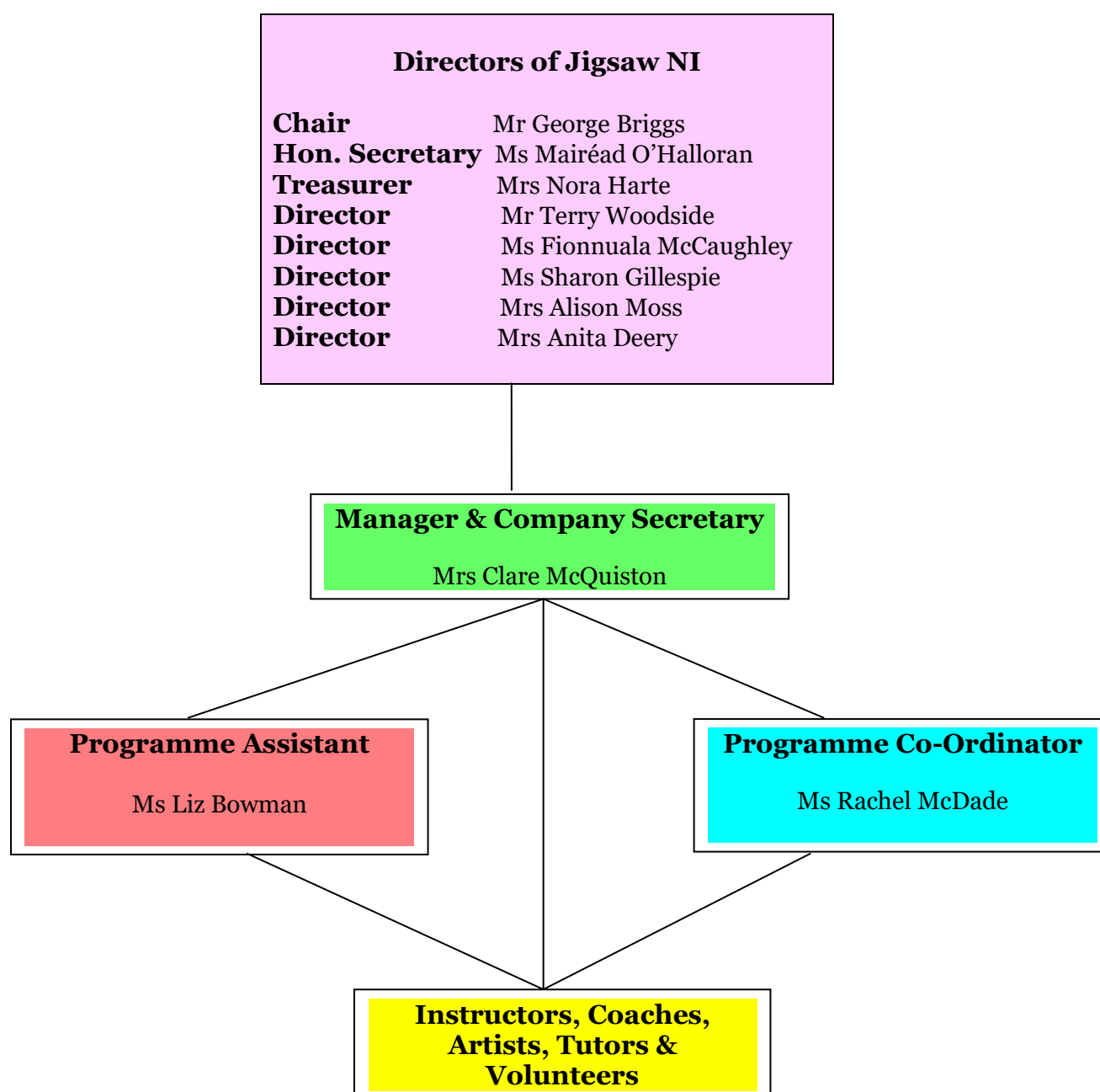
- To build self confidence
- To learn new skills
- To get people with disabilities out of their homes
- To meet and make new friends
- To provide carers with support

Objectives:

- A personal contact
- To provide a listening ear
- Assistance with transport
- Carry out Risk Assessments
- Provision of Instructors & venue suitable for the various programmes
- Support individuals
- Provision of ‘training’
- Continue to develop services
- Monitoring and evaluation of groups (ongoing)

Structure of Jigsaw NI

Management Structure



Jigsaw NI Arts

Jigsaw NI art groups are very popular with many of our service users. Our artists have been working with Jigsaw NI groups for several years and have an understanding of what our service users want to get from the class. Every service user is unique and goes to the class for different reasons. We currently have 5 art groups running, 4 of which run in areas of urban deprivation where it is often more difficult for people with disabilities to access services:

- 1 group in Skipperstone Community Centre, Bangor
- 1 group in Divis Community Centre
- 1 group in Glen Cough Community Centre
- 2 groups in Connswater Community and Leisure



*Group project for Connswater Tuesday group – Jigsaw NI

The art activities aim to provide a consistent source of social outlet and artistic opportunity by running workshops on a weekly basis for forty weeks of the year. The group dynamic is of great importance to Jigsaw NI and we aim to create a socially inclusive environment, whereby everyone is included, respected and feels comfortable. Having created the correct environment, we then concentrate on the practical aspect of the art class. Programmes are constructed with the direction of the group, considering the preferences and specific needs of the group service users. The community artists view their role as supportive and facilitative and so the service users have much control of their own experiences in the workshop and so gain a sense of ownership of their own class.

This year our groups worked on various individual pieces using various mediums and themes to produce some lovely pieces of work. Pictured overleaf are some photos of the quality pieces produced by our service users.

It is evident within the Jigsaw NI groups that the service users are always gaining in self-esteem, through the support available from other service users, artists and volunteers.



*Christmas tree



*Service user – Margaret showing her Valentine's Day crafts



*Service user - Damien showing his hard work



*Service user decorating some Valentine's craft pieces.

SWIMMING & EXERCISE IN WATER

Jigsaw NI have two swimming groups and two exercise in water groups that meet weekly for forty weeks of the year. One of the swimming groups is held in Olympia LC and the other swimming group and exercise in water groups are held in Lisnasharragh LC. Qualified leaders are present to encourage and support our service users, to give them advice and exercises to do and if appropriate, to encourage them to learn to swim. There are also lifeguards in attendance at all times. A hoist/pool pod is provided in the centres we use, which helps service users with complex mobility problems to enter the pool.



These sessions have taken place for several years and are very popular with service users. Groups attending are made up of both genders. The benefits derived from using the pool include exercising the whole body with support from the water, being able to mobilise joints, increased self-esteem and confidence in the water, being able to feel and move parts of the body that they couldn't before, and learning specific skills.



Boccia

Boccia is an inclusive sport that can be tailored to suit children and adults of all abilities. It is a Paralympic sport and has some similarities with indoor bowls. The aim of the game is for each team to propel and land their boccia balls closer to the white jack than their opposing team. Boccia is a great way of getting people active, while adding a little competitive edge when playing games.

Weekly sessions of boccia take place in Divis CC, Glen CC and Connswater C&L in Belfast and in Skipperstone CC, Bangor. The boccia groups are very popular with our service users. The boccia sessions are good fun with a lot of playful banter with service users really enjoying the activity, which is shown by the great attendance records throughout the year.



*Service user - Ruben delivering his shot using a shute.

Thankfully our annual boccia tournament was able to be held this year again and we had 11 teams competing in it. It was a great day's fun and we had teams from all four of our groups competing on the day with 'Denis the Menace' from Connswater CC group coming out on top to win the coveted shield.



*Action shot from this year's Jigsaw NI boccia tournament



*Winning Team – Denis the Menace, Connswater with coaches

We also had teams that entered The Andy & Nessie Ross Memorial tournament, The Dedication tournament, and the Sam Hunter Memorial boccia tournament organised by Boccia NI. The teams unfortunately didn't win any of these tournaments but played really well in them, making the semi-final in the Dedication tournament. This is a great achievement as teams come from all over Belfast, Newtownabbey and Antrim to participate in these tournaments and they are always competitive. This year the Dedication tournament was dedicated to our very own Monica Leydon, one of our service users that had played boccia with us on a weekly basis for a long time who sadly passed away last year. Monica was a great character and enjoyed the craic playing, was fond of a wee sing song and the group miss her very much. The consistency and improvement of the service users is evident. The groups are coached by a qualified boccia leader on a weekly basis and service users really enjoy this activity.

Fitness/Boccia Class

The Bangor boccia/fitness class which takes place in Skipperstone CC is very much a user-led group, with the group discussing ideas and planning out a timetable of activities in advance. This year the group mostly played boccia, board games, chair based activity, quizzes and circuits. The weekly class is on a Tuesday and is enjoyed by all the participants. It is hoped that this class will continue to grow, and more people will benefit from this group.



2023 Summer Activities

We provided a four-week summer scheme again this year for our service users in Belfast and in Bangor. We are very grateful again to have received funding from the “Black Santa sit-out fund” to help cover the costs of the summer scheme this year.

The Belfast summer schemes consisted of all South and East Belfast groups coming together on a Tuesday in Connswater Community and Leisure, North and West Belfast groups coming together on a Wednesday in Divis Community Centre and Bangor groups coming together on a Thursday in Skipperstone Community Centre to participate in a range of different activities, i.e. bingo, quiz, warm ups, boccia, target games etc. The summer scheme was a great success, with those attending enjoying the activities and a day out of the house. There was very positive feedback from service users at the end of the summer schemes.



* Quiz time at summer scheme



* Boccia action shot at summer scheme



* Happy facilitator James at summer scheme



* Service user – Laura playing bingo

Comments

'I am really enjoying my exercise in the water group. It particularly helps my balance. I missed a few weeks, and I really noticed the difference and couldn't wait to get back.'

Grainne (Service user)

'I really enjoy going to the art class. I now look at art and murals differently and take more of an interest when I'm out and about.'

Bonnie (Service user)

'I could not fault Liz, Clare, Martina or Carly in any way. Each one has gone above beyond with help when needed. Many thanks for giving me the opportunity to socialise with great people.'

Jean (Service user)

'Jigsaw continues to be a great source of encouragement and support. It provides us with both social and physical outlets which helps with my mental and physical health also.'

Sharon (Service user)

'I love going to my art group on Friday mornings. It really helps me mentally and I just love it.'

Bernard (Service user)

'I can't thank Jigsaw enough for giving me this opportunity to get back into the pool after my brain injury. It is the third happiest time of my life, the other two was when I had my two children.'

Ann (Service user)

'The Jigsaw service is very helpful, both physically and socially and it gives Geoffrey the support he needs to be able to go into the swimming pool again. Geoffrey looks forward to it each week.'

Moira (Relative of service user)

Highlights for 2022 – 2023

- ***All of our groups continued to run at full capacity safely, with no lockdowns or circuit breakers required.***



- ***Connswater CC boccia team “Denis the Menace” win Jigsaw NI annual boccia tournament – June 2023***

This year has seen our services running at full capacity again in a safe way. Referrals are coming in at pre-covid rates and service users are happy to get back to some form of normality after what has been a very unsettling time for all.

This year has been a great success with a total of 172 individual participants (82 male 47.7% and 90 female 52.3%) taking part in 520 sessions (1'040 hrs). Jigsaw NI activities are held throughout Greater Belfast and North Down and Ards areas.

Through continuous monitoring and evaluation, we continue to improve our services, giving our service users, working partners and funders the opportunity to contribute their observations and ideas for improvement of our existing programmes and possible suggestions for future activities that may enhance the work of Jigsaw NI.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following organisations for their help and support throughout the year.

Belfast HSCT



South Eastern HSCT



Black Santa sit-out Fund



BCC – Support for Sport



*National Lottery Community Fund
People and Communities*



The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust



Jigsaw NI also wishes to thank Connswater Community and Leisure, Glen Community Centre, Divis Community Centre and Townsend Enterprise Park for their on-going support and assistance and for any donations received throughout the year.