

**Zest - Healing The Hurt Limited**  
**Registered number: NI055213**  
**Trustees' Annual Report**

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

**Structure, governance and management**

The charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is governed by memorandum and articles of association. The trustees have had regard to guidance issued by the Charities Commission of Northern Ireland on public benefit in carrying out their statutory duties in the governance of the charity.

**Governing document**

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 17 May 2005 and accepted as a charity by HM Revenue and Customs from 17 May 2005. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Article of Association. In the event of the company being wound up, members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1. The number of members at 31 March 2024 was 7.

**Recruitment and appointment of directors**

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law. All directors retire at the Annual General Meeting and are eligible for appointment to the Board of directors for the incoming year to hold office until the Annual General Meeting. The traditional business, educational, medical skills, along with service users, community and voluntary groups are well represented on the board of directors and the directors are requested to provide an updated list of skills they are able to bring to the company each year and, in the event of particular skills being lost due to retirements, individuals are approached to offer themselves for election to the board of directors.

**Risk management**

The board of directors conduct, on a regular basis, a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. This review is updated at least annually. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a rolling strategic plan to allow for alternative funding methods for the charity's activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety rules for staff, volunteers and visitors. All procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.

**Organisational structure**

The Board of Directors meets 6 times a year and is responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. As a result of the Tudor Trust funding there has been in place since September 2019 a Chief Executive Officer with the day-to-day responsibility for the provision of services previously held by the director of clinical services and the director of corporate services. The Board has continued this post in 2023/24. Depending on the outcome of the new SHIP tender for 2024/25, the current CEO intends to step back and hand over service management.

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**Objectives and activities**

The company's objects and principal activities are to:

- (1) Work for the assistance of persons in despair or distress and thus reduce the incidence of self-harm and suicide;
- (2) Promote any charitable purpose directed to alleviating those who have lost through suicide a relative or friend and, in particular, the protection and promotion of good health, both physical and mental; and
- (3) Advance public education in factors associated with self-harm and suicide

The main objectives and activities for the year focused on counselling of those affected by self-harm or suicide and provision of training and information to all interested parties.

The strategies employed to assist the charity to meet these objectives included the following:

- To raise awareness among the general public of factors associated with self-harm and suicide;
- To provide a support service to those who are currently involved with a person who is self-harming or suicidal;
- To provide and equip premises and centres required for the purposes of the company;
- To organise sponsor and conduct educational and training courses and meetings, conferences and exhibitions;
- To publish and distribute materials relating to the work of the company;
- To collect, coordinate and make available (by publication or any form of communication) information relative to the activities of the company;
- To receive and administer and allocate grants and gifts available to the company under the terms and conditions attached to such grants and gifts;
- To act as trustees and to undertake or accept any such tasks or responsibilities where same will advance the objects of the company.

**Winding up**

Upon the winding up or dissolution of the company, any surplus shall be given to some other body, institution, or institutions charitable in law, and having objectives similar to the objectives of the company, which shall also prohibit distribution of income or property to its or their members. No sum whatsoever shall be distributed to members of the company.

**Achievements and performance**

The main areas of charitable activity are the provision of counselling and support, information, outreach work, hosting SHIP (Self Harm Intervention Programme) to assist people who self-harm who present throughout the Western Health and Social care Trust and the Northern Health and Social Care Trust areas. The project is currently on the 8th year. Zest was very successful in moving to remote service delivery, by telephone and video due to the Covid lockdown regulations. The careful oversight and planning by the Board and the CEO enabled the service not only to maintain the number of referrals received but also to deal with the increase in referrals that the lockdown created. Zest would like to acknowledge the receipt of 3-year funding from Tudor Trust towards the salary of a Chief Executive Officer Post. The funding helped towards the salary of the current CEO who had intended to step down in 2020/21 when the new tender for the SHIP service would be awarded. Due to Covid the tender process has been delayed and 4 extensions have been given to the SHIP contract thus delaying the departure of the CEO. The Zest fundraising programme has been extremely successful and along with monies saved due to lockdown and savings in travel and rents Zest was able to improve technology, secure a training arm to the organisation and greatly improve the future prospects for the organisation as we move forward. The training programme in 2023/2024 was much slower than 22/23 due to lack of training funding available to our usual training-commissioning agencies. Zest experienced a 40% decrease in requests. The financial year 2023/2024 is showing a significant improvement in requests for our training workshops and is looking very positive for the coming year.

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The counselling, support services and education and training programme is based at the main operational office at 15A Queen Street, Derry and provides counselling support to individuals who self-harm or attempt suicide and their family or friends. This would involve work with those who haven't attended statutory services and who self-refer to Zest services.

The mainstay of our service remains our volunteers, who undertake a number of functions, including counselling, support, information, awareness, administration and upkeep of the house. In the year under review, over 3,000 volunteer hours were donated. Over 6,000 counselling sessions took place during the year and 500 information/awareness sessions were held.

**SHIP (Self-harm Intervention Programme)**

The mainstay of our service remains our volunteers, who undertake a number of functions, including counselling, support, information, awareness, administration and upkeep of the house. In the year under review, over 2,000 volunteer hours were donated. Over 6,000 counselling sessions took place during the year and 500 information/awareness sessions were held. The SHIP programme is a direct service created in the Protect Life 2, the N. Ireland Suicide Strategy. When a person self-harms or has suicidal ideation a mental health assessment is carried out by the Statutory services. If there is an underlying clinical condition, then the person is treated by the statutory services. However, if the problems are existential i.e. life circumstances, then the person is offered the SHIP service for between 6-8 sessions of counselling and family members can access 2-3 sessions of information/education to help support the person in difficulty especially to risk manage the family member/friend. Zest holds the contract for 2 Health and Social Care Trusts, the Western and the Northern. In 2023/24 we received 1,500 referrals in total. The SHIP service also includes referrals from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Teams in both Trusts for children and young people aged between 11 and 18 years. We received 825 referrals from the Western Health and Social Care mental Health teams and 675 referrals from the Northern Health and Social Care teams in the year 23/24. The new tenders were available in March 24 and it was agreed at Board level to only tender for the Western Trust as the Northern area was incurring costs over and above the allocated budget, due to poor adult referrals and the geographic spread and related costs incurred.

**Other projects**

Zest is still involved with the FLOURISH project in partnership with Lighthouse based in Belfast offering training courses to the Churches/clergy in N. Ireland on the issue of mental health in general and suicide in particular. This is funded by the Public Health Agency and is currently in its 13th year. Towards the end of 23/24 we were chosen by the Rose Patterson Foundation for an award of £17,000 to target those clients who are suicidal and do not engage with statutory services. This work will be ongoing into 24/25. The bulk of this work will be carried out in the 2024/2025 financial year.

We have also begun a pilot service of supporting families bereaved by suicide. We visit the bereaved families homes after a death and offer ongoing support to individuals if necessary as well as individual counselling.

**Financial review**

The charity continues to adopt the new accounting framework applicable in the UK under "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)". The date of transition was 1 April 2015. There were no transition adjustments arising from the adoption of the new accounting framework.

**Results**

Against the backdrop of limited resources and insecurities over funding, the charity has continued to be difficult to plan ahead for or to develop its services. The charity has incurred a deficit for the year of £57,363 and the total funds at 31 March 2024 were £184,960.

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**Investment policy**

Any surplus funds and grants received in advance are placed on deposit until such time as they are required for the day to day expenditure.

**Reserves policy**

The directors have established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be 6 months of total costs. Total expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024 was £555,504 and therefore the target is £277,252 in general funds. The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and the directors are confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity while negotiating continuation funding. The present level of liquid reserves available to the charity are £228,135 is below this target level, and the strategy is to develop services and revenue raising measure to return to an operating surplus and increase cash reserves as a result of same.

**Plans for future periods**

There are no significant changes planned for the forthcoming financial year. The directors will continue to govern the company in line with the constitution in order to achieve the objectives noted above.

**Trustees of the charity**

The directors of the charitable company are its trustees for the purposes of charity law. The trustees who have served during the year and since the year end were as follows:

William Huw Grifft  
Eugene Moore  
Gary Murray  
Andrew Browne  
Margaret Hasson  
Liam Quigley  
Mark Owens - app  
David McGill - app  
Erin Higgins - app  
Ellen Hegarty - app  
Eva Czabanik - resigned 9 October 2024

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**Trustees' responsibilities**

The trustees (who are also the directors) are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the 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 company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

**Small company exemptions**

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

Signed by order of the Board  
On behalf of the Board

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**Huw Griffiths**

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**Gary Murray**

**Approved by the trustees on 18 December 2024**