

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 2025. 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 2025 was 9.

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 six times per year and is responsible for setting the charity's strategic direction and policy. In 2019, a CEO was appointed to oversee the organisation's day-to-day clinical and corporate services, a role that was partially funded by the Tudor Trust.

In 2024, the organisation participated in the tender process for the SHIP programme. At that time, it was the incumbent provider for both the Northern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts. The organisation tendered solely for the Western Health and Social Care Trust and was subsequently awarded the contract.

It was agreed that the CEO would remain in post until the tender process concluded; the CEO formally stepped down in Q4 of 2024/25. Day-to-day management responsibilities have since been transferred to the Clinical Director. The outgoing CEO has remained in a part-time role to support the transition and to continue providing training and other client services, ensuring the organisation can still draw on their expertise and experience.

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Trustees' Annual Report

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

We successfully delivered the Protect Life 2 Suicide Strategy programme, SHIP (Self-Harm Intervention Programme), across both the Northern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts. Following a Board decision not to retender for the Northern area, our contract for that region concluded on 1 November 2024. From that date, we began delivering the updated SHIP contract exclusively for the Western Trust, having been successful in securing the tender.

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Registered number: NI055213
Trustees' Annual Report

For 2024/25, we are projected to deliver 3,300 sessions to service users referred to the programme, as well as 365 sessions for parents and carers of individuals who self-harm. We remain on track to meet—and potentially exceed—these targets.

In our Omagh office, we delivered 525 sessions—a 20% increase on the previous year.

Our fundraising efforts have continued strongly. Combined with savings from reduced travel and rental costs during lockdown, this has enabled us to invest in updated technology, sustain our training services, and strengthen the organisation's long-term prospects.

Training activity remained slow during 2024/25 due to reduced funding from our usual commissioning partners, resulting in a 40% decrease in requests. However, early indicators for 2025/26 show a significant recovery, with a 60% increase in workshop bookings and strong demand projected for the year ahead.

Counselling, Support Services, and Education

Operating from our main office at 15A Queen Street, Derry, we provide counselling and support to individuals who self-harm or experience suicidal thoughts, as well as to their families and friends. Many of these individuals have not engaged with statutory services and self-refer directly to Zest.

Our volunteers remain central to our service delivery. They contribute across counselling, support, information provision, awareness activities, administration, and maintenance. In the year under review, volunteers donated more than 1,500 hours of service.

Self-Harm Intervention Programme (SHIP)

The SHIP programme, established under the Protect Life 2 Suicide Prevention Strategy, supports individuals assessed by statutory services following self-harm or suicidal ideation. Where no clinical condition is identified, clients are referred to SHIP for counselling—previously 6–8 sessions, now 8–10 under the updated contract. Family members receive information and education sessions to help them provide effective support; this allocation changed from 2–3 sessions to 1–2 sessions from November 2024.

In 2024/25, Zest received a total of 1,500 SHIP referrals:

- 825 from the Western Trust's mental health teams
- 675 from the Northern Trust's mental health teams

Referrals also included children and young people aged 11–18 from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Across the year, more than 6,000 counselling sessions and 500 information/awareness sessions were delivered.

Other Projects

FLOURISH Project:

Zest continues to work in partnership with Lighthouse (Belfast) to deliver mental health and suicide awareness training to churches and clergy across Northern Ireland. This Public Health Agency-funded project is now in its 14th year.

Rose Patterson Foundation Award:

In late 2024, Zest was again selected to receive a £15,000 grant to support clients who are suicidal and disengaged from statutory services. Most of this work is scheduled for 2025 and is already on track to meet its targets.

Pilot Bereavement Support Service:

We have initiated a pilot programme providing support to families bereaved by suicide. This includes home visits, ongoing emotional support, and individual counselling where required.

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

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

The charity has incurred a deficit for the year of £43,911 and the total funds at 31 March 2025 were £141,047.

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 adopted a policy that requires the charity to maintain unrestricted funds—excluding those invested in tangible fixed assets—equivalent to six months of total operating costs. While total expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2025 was £489,330 this figure will decrease significantly in 2025/26 following the organisation's withdrawal from providing SHIP services for the Northern Board. The Board is satisfied that current cash reserves are broadly in line with the reserves policy, taking into account the substantial reduction in projected expenditure.

The Board remains focused on maintaining, and where possible increasing, cash reserves by identifying new funding opportunities, sustaining fundraising activities, and ensuring effective cost and expense management.

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 Griffiths
Eugene Moore
Gary Murray
Margaret Hasson
Mark Owens
Liam Quigley
Andrew Browne
Ellen Hegarty - appointed 10 October 2024
Erin Higgins - appointed 9 October 2024
Eva Czabanik - resigned 9 October 2024
David McGill - appointed 9 October 2024, resigned 20 December 2024

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Registered number: NI055213
Trustees' Annual Report

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

Huw Griffiths

Gary Murray

Approved by the trustees on 11 December 2025