

Chairperson Annual Report

ADD-NI Children's Charity

Reporting period: 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

It is my privilege, as Chair of ADD-NI Children's Charity, to present this report covering the period from April 2024 to March 2025. This year has been one of exceptional challenge, visibility, growth and impact. Against a backdrop of unprecedented pressure on ADHD services across Northern Ireland, ADD-NI has continued to stand firmly beside children, young people, adults and families, amplifying their voices, providing practical support, and advocating tirelessly for meaningful and systemic change.

ADD-NI Children's Charity exists to support children, young people, adults and families affected by Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) across Northern Ireland through advocacy, information, support and awareness-raising.

Review of Activities and Achievements

Advocacy and Policy Influence

During the reporting period, advocacy remained a core priority for the charity. ADD-NI supported and engaged with the petition led by Peter McReynolds MLA calling for the commissioning of Adult ADHD services in Northern Ireland. Trustees recognise the presentation of this petition at the Northern Ireland Assembly as a significant milestone for the ADHD community.

ADD-NI engaged with senior decision-makers including the Minister of Health, members of the Northern Ireland Assembly Health Committee, and the Department of Health. These engagements focused on diagnostic waiting times, access to medication, post-diagnostic support and the mental and physical health impacts of inadequate ADHD services.

The charity continued to act as Secretariat to the All-Party Group (APG) for ADHD, facilitating cross-party discussion and supporting informed, evidence-based dialogue. Trustees welcome the renewed momentum within the APG and the commitment shown by its members to improving outcomes for those affected by ADHD.

Support Services and Community Engagement

Throughout the year, ADD-NI delivered a range of Young People's programmes in house and in schools, as well as individual sessions. ADD-NI also hosted online parent and adult support meetings, providing safe, inclusive and accessible spaces for peer support, information sharing and emotional wellbeing.

The charity also hosted specialist information events in partnership with clinicians, including online Q&A sessions addressing Adult ADHD. These events demonstrated sustained demand for accessible, credible information and professional insight.

ADD-NI marked Women's Health Month with targeted engagement recognising the distinct experiences of women and girls with ADHD, including issues around diagnosis, hormones and mental health.

Media and Awareness

ADD-NI maintained a strong media presence throughout the year to raise awareness of ADHD-related issues. This included coverage on ITV News UTV, BBC News NI and BBC Radio Ulster Talkback.

A key focus was the global ADHD medication shortage, described by the charity as unprecedented in its 27-year history. Media engagement ensured that the voices of affected families were heard and that the seriousness of the situation was clearly communicated to the public and policymakers.

The charity also provided clear and compassionate guidance to families affected by disruption within a private ADHD diagnostic provider, prioritising reassurance, accurate information and signposting to alternative support.

Fundraising and Income Generation

I acknowledge and thank the many individuals, community groups and organisations who supported ADD-NI financially during the year.

Fundraising and income highlights included:

Community fundraising events such as the Lisburn Fun Run.

The inaugural All Dogs Have ADHD Sponsored Walk, raising £900.

Selection as Charity of the Year by a Belfast School for Performing Arts.

A grant award from the RTÉ Toy Show Appeal via the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland.

Donations from corporate and community partners including Lidl Northern Ireland and Ulster University Nursing Society.

Fundraising led by young people and community groups, including Dunmurry Protestant Boys Flute Band.

All funds raised were used to support the delivery of the charity's services and objectives.

Organisational Development

During the reporting period, ADD-NI relocated its head office back to Belfast. Trustees consider the move to Wellington Park to be a significant strategic development, enhancing accessibility, visibility and capacity for face-to-face engagement with families and stakeholders.

The official opening of the new premises took place during ADHD Month and was attended by families, supporters, professionals and policymakers.

Financial Review

I and the Trustees are satisfied that the charity maintained appropriate financial controls throughout the year. Income was derived from a mix of fundraising, grants and donations. Expenditure was focused on service delivery, advocacy, staffing and operational costs.

I and the Trustees acknowledge the challenging financial climate and remain committed to prudent financial management, diversification of income streams and long-term sustainability.

Plans for Future Periods

Looking ahead, the Trustees' priorities include:

Continued advocacy for commissioned ADHD services across the lifespan.

Sustaining and developing support services for families and adults.

Strengthening partnerships with policymakers, clinicians and community organisations.

Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the charity.



Chair of Trustees

ADD-NI Children's Charity

Trustees Report

ADD-NI Children's Charity

Reporting period: April 2024 – March 2025

This report reflects a year defined by advocacy at the highest levels, strong community engagement, dedicated staff and volunteers, and the resilience of the ADHD community we serve.

Structure, Governance and Management

ADD-NI Children's Charity is governed by a Board of Trustees who are responsible for the overall governance, strategic direction and financial oversight of the organisation. Trustees meet regularly throughout the year to review performance, ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, and guide the organisation in line with its charitable objectives.

The Trustees delegate the day-to-day management of the charity to the Chief Executive Officer and staff team, while retaining oversight through reporting, risk management and strategic planning. Policies relating to safeguarding, data protection, equality, financial controls and risk are reviewed on a regular basis.

Objectives and Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have had due regard to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and activities.

ADD-NI's objectives are to:

Advance education and understanding of ADHD.

Relieve need and distress among children, young people and families affected by ADHD.

Promote equality, inclusion and improved outcomes for individuals with ADHD.

Advocate for improved services, policies and systems that meet the needs of the ADHD community.

The Trustees believe that the activities outlined in this report have delivered clear public benefit to individuals and families across Northern Ireland.

Advocacy, Policy and Systemic Change

Advocacy remained at the heart of ADD-NI's work throughout the year. One of the most significant developments was our support of Peter McReynolds MLA's petition calling for the commissioning of Adult ADHD services in Northern Ireland. The petition reached significant public support and was formally presented at the Northern Ireland Assembly, a momentous occasion for the ADHD community.

ADD-NI staff attended the presentation of the petition to the Speaker at Stormont, marking a crucial step forward in highlighting unmet need and systemic inequity. Following this, the Department of Health confirmed that officials are considering the "future direction of travel for Adult ADHD services, including assessment of demand, stakeholder engagement, and potential commissioning options subject to budget availability". While much work remains, this acknowledgment represents progress driven by sustained pressure and collaboration.

Throughout the year, ADD-NI engaged directly with key decision-makers; including meetings with the Northern Ireland Assembly Health Committee and the Minister of Health, Mike Nesbitt. These discussions provided an opportunity to clearly articulate the lived realities of ADHD across the lifespan and the serious mental and physical health consequences of inadequate services. The Minister demonstrated interest and empathy, and we look forward to continued engagement as this work develops.

ADD-NI also continued its role as Secretariat to the All-Party Group (APG) for ADHD, supporting open and constructive dialogue among MLAs and stakeholders. We welcomed the appointment of Peter McReynolds MLA as Chair of the APG and were encouraged by the strong appetite for change reflected in the group's forward work plan.

Media and Public Awareness

This year saw ADD-NI play a prominent role in local and regional media, ensuring that ADHD remained firmly in the public consciousness. Our CEO appeared on ITV News UTV, BBC News NI, BBC Radio Ulster Talkback and other outlets to highlight the urgent need for commissioned services, long diagnostic waiting lists, and the real-life impact of policy inaction.

A major focus of media engagement was the global ADHD medication shortage. In all of ADD-NI's 28 years, this crisis was described as entirely unprecedented. Through collaboration with clinicians and journalists, ADD-NI helped ensure that the experiences of families across Northern Ireland were accurately and compassionately represented.

ADD-NI also issued clear and supportive guidance during a highly distressing situation involving the temporary collapse of a private ADHD diagnostic clinic. Our position prioritised reassurance, accurate information, and signposting to alternative supports, while continuing to emphasise that reliance on private provision is a direct consequence of under-resourced public services.

Community Support and Engagement

Direct support to families remained central to ADD-NI's mission. Throughout the year we delivered a range of online parent and adult support meetings, offering safe, inclusive spaces for connection, shared experience and guidance.

We hosted specialist information events in partnership with clinicians, including interactive online Q&A sessions with Dr Richard Bunn focused on Adult ADHD. These sessions were consistently well attended and demonstrated the ongoing demand for accessible, evidence-based information.

ADD-NI also marked Women's Health Month with a series of events and communications recognising the unique challenges faced by women and girls with ADHD, particularly around diagnosis, hormones and misdiagnosis.

Our commitment to collaboration was reflected in our support of other neurodivergent-led initiatives, including attendance at the launch of Spark, celebrating lived experience and inclusive practice within the wider neurodiversity community.

Fundraising, Events and Community Celebrations

Despite ongoing economic pressures, ADD-NI was deeply grateful for the generosity shown by individuals, community groups and corporate partners throughout the year.

Highlights included:

- ADD-NI being selected as Charity of the Year by a Belfast School of Performing Arts.

- Staff and volunteers participating in the Lisburn Fun Run; raising vital funds and awareness.

- The inaugural All Dogs Have ADHD Sponsored Walk, which raised £900 and brought families together in a joyful celebration of ADHD.

- Being named a finalist for Inspirational Charity of the Year at the Local Women Magazine Inspirational Women Awards.

- Receiving a highly significant grant from the RTÉ Toy Show Appeal via the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland.

- Fundraising initiatives led by young people and community groups, including Dunmurry Protestant Boys Flute Band, who raised £1,000 in support of our work.

- Generous donations from organisations including Lidl Northern Ireland and Ulster University Nursing Society.

These events not only raised funds but strengthened community connection, visibility and pride.

Organisational Development and Premises

A major milestone this year was the relocation of ADD-NI's head office back to Belfast. Following a period of transition, we officially opened our new premises in Wellington Park. The opening event, held during ADHD Month, brought together families, supporters, professionals and policymakers, symbolising both continuity and renewal.

The new centre provides an accessible, welcoming space for families and will enhance our capacity to deliver face-to-face support, community events and training.

Recognition and Gratitude

None of the work outlined in this report would be possible without the dedication of ADD-NI's staff team, volunteers, trustees, and the families who continue to place their trust in us. I would like to extend sincere thanks to our funders, donors, supporters, healthcare allies and community partners for standing alongside ADD-NI during a particularly challenging year.

Risk Management

The Trustees regularly review the major risks facing the charity, including funding uncertainty, service demand pressures, and external policy and healthcare system constraints. Appropriate mitigation measures are in place, including regular financial monitoring, policy review and strategic planning.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the next year, ADD-NI remains committed to:

Continued advocacy for commissioned equitable ADHD services across the lifespan.

Strengthening direct support for children, young people, adults and families.

Expanding community engagement and professional collaboration.

Ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience remain central to all decision-making.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. They confirm that the report accurately reflects the charity's activities and achievements during the reporting period.

The challenges facing the ADHD community in Northern Ireland are significant, but so too is the collective determination to create change. ADD-NI will continue to lead, challenge and support, with compassion, credibility and hope.


ADD-NI Board of Trustees