

YOUTH INITIATIVES (NORTHERN IRELAND)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "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) (effective 1 January 2019)".

Objectives and activities

The principal object of the charitable company is to, without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, disability, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin and political or religious opinion, promote the physical, mental, spiritual and social welfare of young people in Northern Ireland through education, youth work, and volunteering, and to pursue other charitable purposes that the trustees shall decide.

Youth Initiatives NI is a cross community youth work charity which aims to awaken hope, inspire initiative, and mobilise youth to make a vital contribution to their community and to reconciliation in Northern Ireland, through the discovery and renewal of Christian faith in daily life.

The charitable company fulfills its objectives through projects jointly led by staff and young people aimed at the personal, social, physical, mental and spiritual development of young people.

The trustees have taken cognisance of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit as defined in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Achievements and performance

During the year ended 31 March 2025, Youth Initiatives (NI) ('YI'), continued, developed and expanded its work through the following projects:

YI East Belfast

The YI East Belfast Hub plays a crucial role in supporting and empowering young people in the community. With a dedicated team of five paid staff members and two voluntary interns, the Hub is supported by a vibrant group of ten youth volunteers aged 15-18 and two adult volunteers. These individuals are integral to the operation of two key sites: Strand Road and Ballymac.

EA Funded Programmes: The Hub continues to deliver valuable programs funded by the Education Authority (EA) at two locations. At the Ballymac Friendship Centre, sessions are held twice a week on Mondays and Fridays. These sessions provide a safe and welcoming space for young people to engage in various activities, receive support, and develop new skills. Similarly, at the Strand Road Hub, programs are offered on Wednesdays and Thursdays, focusing on personal, social, and educational development. These programs are designed to meet the diverse needs of the youth, offering structured activities that promote growth, learning, and community engagement. We also run after school cafe style drop ins on Monday and Tuesdays at the Mersey Street hub.

Outreach and Detached Youth Work: Outreach is a cornerstone of YI East Belfast's work, aiming to connect with young people where they are on the streets and in schools. The team conducts weekly street-based outreach, establishing a presence in the community and building relationships with young people in their own environments. This approach is complemented by two school-based group sessions each week, where the team engages students through group work focused on various issues relevant to their lives. Additionally, four mentoring sessions are conducted within schools each week, providing one-on-one support to students who may need extra guidance.

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The Area Leader plays a pivotal role in connecting YI East Belfast with broader networks, ensuring the Hub is deeply embedded in the local youth work ecosystem. Active involvement in the East Belfast Youth Practitioners Forum, EA Local Advisory Group (LAG) which the area leader has chaired for over a year now and has involved YI East Belfast young people on those LAG meetings, Churches East Belfast Network, and Street Workers Forum is essential for expanding the Hub's impact. These partnerships enable the Hub to signpost young people to other services when needed and receive referrals from partner organisations. Notably, the Hub has participated in joint street work initiatives with the EA detached team over the past year. These collaborations have been particularly important during times of tension within East Belfast, where the team's presence on the streets has helped defuse situations and provide support.

NUTS project

The NUTS Project, funded by the Education Authority (EA), is a dynamic and inclusive programme designed to support younger adolescents aged 10–14 through early intervention. Operating on a weekly basis - five sessions per week, the project hosts drop-in sessions and structured group activities that consistently attract an average of 25 young participants. These sessions provide a safe, welcoming, and engaging environment where young people can build meaningful relationships, express themselves freely, and access support during a key transitional stage of their development.

NUTS Project focuses on Personal, Social, and Spiritual Development. Each weekly session is carefully planned to help participants explore their personal values, enhance emotional and social skills, and strengthen their sense of identity and purpose. By fostering resilience, empathy, and moral awareness, the programme equips young people with the tools they need to navigate adolescence with confidence and integrity.

The project also places a strong emphasis on youth leadership and peer support. A dedicated team of 10 young volunteers plays an active role in the weekly delivery of the programme. These volunteers, many of whom are past participants themselves serve as relatable role models and provide vital peer encouragement. Their involvement not only enhances the overall experience for attendees but also supports the volunteers' own growth in leadership, responsibility, and community engagement.

By combining structured development with informal support in a nurturing setting, the NUTS Project continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of young people empowering them to thrive both now and in the future.

15 to 18's Volunteering program

Volunteering remains the cornerstone of YI East Belfast's mission, and the Youth Volunteer Programme continues to play a key role in developing confident, capable, and compassionate young leaders. Over the past year, the programme has experienced both growth and transition. Eight young volunteers have aged out of the programme and moved on to pursue full-time employment or further education, demonstrating the positive, lasting impact of their time with us.

At the same time, we've welcomed six new volunteers and retained four experienced returning volunteers, creating a strong and balanced team of ten. These young people are not only stepping into leadership roles within our weekly programmes but are also preparing to take part in our upcoming Summer Academy, a focused training initiative that equips them with essential youth work skills in communication, safeguarding, teamwork, and leadership. They will then help deliver our two-week summer scheme this August, where they'll support and mentor younger participants.

Beyond their weekly commitments, our volunteers have also engaged in wider opportunities across the YI network. They've taken part in regional residencies, where they connected with peers from other areas, built deeper friendships, and developed their leadership potential in new and challenging environments. In recognition of their dedication and contribution, they were also honoured at the YI Volunteer Awards Dinner, a special event celebrating the hard work and impact of youth volunteers across the organisation. One of our volunteers also recently received a trophy for his service to YI East Belfast. Volunteering not only benefits our wider community but provides a meaningful, structured pathway for personal growth, skill development, and long-term success.

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Link-d Project (15-18 year olds)

The Link-d Project, funded by the Education Authority (EA), is a program designed to support young people aged 15 to 18 through a holistic and engaging approach to youth development. Operating five sessions each week, the project offers consistent, high-quality engagement opportunities that meet young people where they are both physically and emotionally. These regular sessions include outreach, drop-ins, group discussions, and targeted developmental activities, providing a reliable and supportive space where participants feel safe, respected, and empowered.

At its core, Link-d is about more than just keeping young people busy it's about building character, confidence, and community. Each session integrates elements of Personal, Social, and Spiritual Development encouraging participants to explore their identity, strengthen emotional resilience, develop healthy relationships, and consider their values and goals. The holistic nature of the programme ensures that young people are supported in every aspect of their growth.

A defining feature of the Link-d Project is that we have two volunteer interns. The interns contribute to planning and delivery, act as peer mentors, and help create a culture of leadership and responsibility. By stepping into these roles, they not only grow in confidence and skill but also inspire and influence their peers in a meaningful way. Both interns have also completed their OCN Level 2 in youth work and are in the process of doing their OCN Level 3's.

The Link-d Project is making a lasting difference in the lives of young people across East Belfast offering stability, inspiration, and the tools they need to thrive during a formative stage of life.

Summer 2025

We have an extremely busy summer lined up with the following

1 Week Summer Academy Volunteer training

1 Week Social Action for junior and seniors

1 week sports week with juniors and seniors

2 weeks of Summer Schemes for Juniors

2 Weeks of Summer Schemes for Seniors

Mentoring

In addition to its structured programmes, YI East Belfast delivers a focused mentoring initiative that supports young people both within school environments and outside of traditional settings. Over the past year, staff have provided one-to-one mentoring to eight young people four based in local schools, and four supported in community-based, out-of-school contexts.

This dual approach allows the team to meet young people where they are, tailoring support to their individual needs and circumstances. In-school mentoring offers a consistent presence within the academic environment, helping young people stay engaged in education, manage behaviour, and set personal and academic goals. Mentors work closely with school staff to provide an added layer of emotional and practical support during the school day.

Meanwhile, mentoring outside of school is often provided to those facing more complex or sensitive challenges that require a private, informal space for reflection and connection. These sessions may take place in community centres, cafés, or during local walks where young people can feel safe, relaxed, and more open to honest conversation. This setting enables staff to build trusted relationships, address personal issues, and guide young people toward positive decision-making and greater self-awareness.

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Mentoring (continued)

Whether in school or in the community, each mentoring relationship is highly individualised, rooted in empathy, trust, and consistency. Through regular sessions, mentors support young people in setting goals, navigating challenges, and developing confidence and resilience ultimately helping them take ownership of their personal growth and future direction.

This blended mentoring model reflects YI East Belfast's commitment to holistic, responsive youth work that adapts to the real-life needs of young people, wherever they may be.

Faith Development

Faith development remains at the core of YI East Belfast's mission, with faith-based programmes thoughtfully embedded within the curriculum of all weekly activities. These programmes are designed to nurture the spiritual growth of young people by encouraging them to explore their beliefs, build a strong moral foundation, and foster a sense of community grounded in shared values. As part of this spiritual journey, a number of young people from the Hub have begun attending CFC Belfast on a weekly basis, deepening their faith through involvement in this wider faith community.

In addition to regular programming, young people from YI East Belfast recently joined participants from other YI hubs for a YI Camp Reunion Night. This gathering provided a valuable opportunity for fellowship, reflection, and connection with peers, reinforcing the ongoing spiritual support that is central to YI's work.

Leadership and Funding

The coordination of YI East Belfast's activities is led by the Area Leader, who plays a vital role in building and sustaining a vibrant youth community hub. In addition to managing EA moderation and monitoring visits and ensuring all funding targets are met to secure ongoing support, the Area Leader has made recruitment a major priority to guarantee strong youth participation across all programmes.

Thanks to focused recruitment efforts, the Hub has seen a significant increase in attendance, positively impacting the quality and energy of the programmes offered. Key recruitment activities over the past year have included hosting a retreat day for Elmgrove Primary School at the Hub's building, extensive leaflet drops throughout the community, a marked increase in social media engagement, as well as pop-up stalls and football outreach sessions.

These initiatives have successfully expanded participation: the average weekly attendance in the NUTS age group (10–14 years) has grown from 18 to 25, while the older group (ages 15–18) has nearly doubled, increasing from 8 to 16 participants. This growth not only enriches the social experience for participants but also strengthens the overall impact and sustainability of YI East Belfast's youth programmes.

Beyond these operational duties, the Area Leader is also responsible for representing YI East Belfast at both local and regional levels, advocating for the organisation's interests and contributing to broader youth development conversations. Additionally, the Area Leader chairs the Education Authority East Belfast Local Advisory Group (LAG) events, playing a key role in coordinating efforts and fostering collaboration across youth organisations in the area.

YI Downpatrick Project

Our Youth Community Hub based in the centre of the town works alongside 10-14 year olds and 15-19 year olds through a variety of centre based, school based and street based provision. Included are drop-ins, content-based programmes, faith development events, single gender activities and one to one mentoring. This year we had a team of 4 paid staff and one local intern who grew up through the programmes. We have continued to grow in the number of young people engaging with 15-18s and our 10-14s programme (tripling in size of our 10-14s programme). We have particularly seen growth and a sense of community in our Spark and Constructed single gender after school's programme.

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YI Downpatrick Project (continued)

Strive Peace Plus Project has recruited 30 plus young people to engage in the project with aims of citizenship, personal social development, good relations, and positive progression. Young people have taken part in cross site and cross boarder events as apart of Strive.

Youth Initiatives has continued its partnership with Down High School working 10 hours per week as the school's youth workers delivering personal social development classes, lunch time outreach, and mentoring sessions. We also provided sacramental prep sessions for local primary schools and ran summer schemes out of the local primary school. YI was generously funded by individuals and churches in the community. It is also funded by Strive Peace Plus Project, Benefact Grant, Newry, Mourne, & Down Council, Koch Foundation, and the Education Authority.

Faith Development

YI's Faith Development project has continued engaging young people and helping them discover the hope found in Jesus Christ through programmes, mentoring, and one-off events. Sarah Nilles regionally coordinates our faith development work. This has included the new Missing Youth Project funded by the Benefact Grant which funds 6 faith development champions in each of our local youth community hubs. The FD Champions meet quarterly to look at how we are developing Christian faith of young people in our areas based on our YI Faith Development Model. Sarah represents YI as apart of TOGETHER a collection of like minded Christian youth ministry workers and organisations.

YI delivered 30 personal, social and spiritual development classes at St Colm's High School, engaging with 420 students on a regular basis including an end of the year prayer service. The Well Prayer Youth Group in West Belfast, which runs weekly on a Sunday evening, has been a space for young people to explore and make personal faith choices. This Spring, the Well Alpha Course where 20+ young people engaged with questions about life and faith. YI Lisburn partnered with local churches in running Alphas in the local secondary schools. Following from a faith-based summer camp this July in which 250+ young people attended, the FD Project ran a "Summer in the Autumn Event" in October connecting young people from all the areas and sharing faith. The Faith Development project is financially supported by the Benfact Grant, Ardarron Trust, Koch Foundation, local parishes, and other donations.

YI Derry/Londonderry

YI Derry is now into its 11th year. The team consists of Jonny, Aoife and Caoimhe, Jack has also come on board through local partnership. And Clare & Cassie connect in with us once a month, when they aren't running their individual bases.

Artbridge continues to run as a creative good relations project for 11-16, funded by Donors & TEO CGR. This year we continued our regular pattern of an art Exhibition of young people's work in 'The Playhouse Theatre'- a great success again. In the summer of 2024, we ran our 5th TBUC camp as part of the wider YI Summer camp in Ganaway. Our partnership with the Franciscan Friars continues, allowing us to have a base & space in the Gallaigh estate at St Pio House developing different programs for 10-18's. We have completed our first cohort of The Strive Project our Peace Plus funded project & deep into the second one.

We continue looking at how we develop young leaders for the future through our volunteering and young leadership programme. We continue to build good relationships with a number of schools in the city. We value the unique relationships we are building with the young people in the city of Derry and the privilege it is to be invited into their worlds and journey alongside them. It has been exciting to see deeper relationships form and to see what being a consistent presence in the lives of young people can achieve.

The work of YI Derry / Londonderry was funded by Peace Plus, TEO Central Good Relations grant, EA generic targeted and by generous YI donors.

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YI Lisburn

YI Lisburn continued to work in the Lisburn North area over the past year, primarily out of "Exodus", the Bridge community centre, and Lisburn Racquets Club. We have provided programmes for 11-14s, including a Young Men's Group and Young Women's Group for those in that age bracket. We have also started a 15-18s programme including a weekly Programme and after-school Drop In.

YI Lisburn has continued to develop our relationship with the nearby Fort Hill Integrated College, with whom we have worked over the past 6 years. We have continued our "Youth Workers In Schools" programme where staff spend a full day on the premises, providing ad-hoc support to students and teachers, as well as 1-1 and targeted intervention programmes with small groups of students with a particular focus on those with low attendance.

We concluded the first of 4 years of E2T cohorts and have now recruited a second cohort of young people aged 15-18yrs, providing programmes focused on Personal and Social Development, Good Relations, Citizenship and Employability.

YI Lisburn has continued working in Lisnagarvey High School in Lisburn South, providing 1-1 sessions with students in need of support staying in school.

We have continued to work in partnership with Exodus and Lagan Valley Vineyard to provide additional short term projects in schools such as Alpha and NUA programmes to 14-16 year olds. Our Summer Scheme in 2024 was attended by over 20 young people across a 5 day period at the school, and this summer we will again be running our Summer Schemes there.

We also began a partnership with a local church based in Lambeg, North Lisburn. St Columba's Parish Derryvolgie is keen to see YI support their vision of a local church reaching out into and supporting the local community, and we are excited to see what opportunities will develop over the coming years.

The work of YI Lisburn was funded by Peace Plus, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Ardbarron Trust, the Police & Community Safety Partnership, TBUC, the EA Small Grants Programme, EA generic provision grant and by a variety of YI donors

YI Banbridge

This has been a year of change for Youth Initiatives Banbridge. With the departure of Youth for Christ (YFC) and Exodus from the J29 building we have seen challenges. Despite this, it has been another great year for establishing and growing connections with young people in the centre, schools and through street-based youth work. With visible growth within the community, surrounding schools and the centre based projects, we have built connections with local churches; The Bridge Church being a key connection allowing the facilitation of many ventures, the main being an out of centre drop-in which runs every Friday after school.

Normal Weekly Run-through:

On Monday afternoons we host our 1 to 1 or group mentoring sessions and use this time to up-skill our young people. From September 2024 - March 2025 we ran sessions for our young people to complete their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze awards. From September 2024 we also gained a new connection with Banbridge High School and started to supervise their lunchtimes every week through which we saw young people start to attend the centre and programmes.

On Tuesdays we have partnered with Reach Mentoring and have started to volunteer, helping with mentoring pupils in St. Patrick's College. We want to grow our connection with the school but also with Reach and are always on the lookout for more opportunities within schools and elsewhere.

We have started a 15+ project called Linked In where we open the centre as a drop in for sessions and offer a 10-30 minute programme of informal learning time at the end of the night. We have 15-30 young people a week joining us for this session.

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YI Banbridge (continued)

On Wednesdays we have continued to visit St Patrick's college from 12:30 to 2pm. as well as Banbridge High School, this time is spent with the young people on lunchtime supervision and it's a great time for us to host games and connect with more young people. Furthermore, on Wednesdays we host a Drop-In session for junior groups where we spend time making up creative events / games / activities / crafts and also spend time just being together, getting to know people that join us.

This year we have a group that is beginning to age out of programme but have found their place within the older Linked-in group.

We have also had great success with recruitment through one-off events in primary schools where we have seen a growth of about 5 to 10 younger people between the ages of 10 and 14. We have also changed our seniors drop in to a group called E2T focus group which gives us the chance to hit the required fundraising criteria but also makes a unique group of volunteers and allows them to meet in an informal yet educational setting. At drop in we average between 20 and 35 attendees and E2T group averages 30+.

On Thursdays we have started Spark which is a group for young people, aged 10-14 where they spend time doing group work and other learning activities. This project also gives the volunteers the chance to lead group sessions and games.

Friday consists of after-school-drop-in that runs out of the local church called the Bridge. this has been ongoing for the last 10 months and has resulted in the young people visiting the church on Sundays for fundraisers and church services. This is for all age groups.

This year we have started looking at more faith development opportunities by doing praise evenings every six to eight weeks and focusing on further development in this area. We had a turnout of 19 young people to praise sessions, including young people that wouldn't typically attend church.

We also have a group of 14 young people attending Summer Madness this year in June.

We aim to continue this work and seek guidance opportunities for the young people that we work with hoping to continue with E2T projects for which we have already had 16 successful completions in the first year. We have 21 young people signed up for year two as of February 25.

With Summer just around the corner, we have begun planning for t-buc programme for the Summer months ahead.

Crosslinks

Crosslinks has continued to work in partnership with Diverse Youth. Our team has staff from East, West and DY who work with volunteers from each hub to encourage and enable young people from the hubs to connect with young people from the wider community and enjoy the richness that brings. Crosslinks brought over 60 young people together to engage in team building and good relations workshops exploring the theme 'Hope' through summer programs, arts workshops and a training residential. Crosslinks' team of 15 youth peer mentors received leadership training and helped design and deliver the program. This culminated in a live theatre performance that the young people wrote, composed, choreographed and designed - 'Race against time'. It explored the journey our society has come on in terms of inclusivity & equality and what it took to achieve positive change and inspire those in the audience as to where we still need initiate change. This took place in Stranmillis Theatre to an audience of over 400 friends and family. Crosslinks was funded this year by Central Good Relations Fund, TEO, DFA and CRCNI.

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YI West

Nuts 11-14's

The YI West Belfast programme for 11 - 14's has been made possible through funding from The National Lottery. The NUTS programme, through a large team of youth volunteers, provides weekly programmes on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday in Poleglass where young people can explore their creativity, identity and spirituality. We also offer themed game nights for young people to build relationships with each other and have fun. Lastly, given the current circumstances in regards to the cost of living crisis we have continued operating a family dinner night where young people can come up and receive a hot meal to enjoy with friends around our family dinner table.

Flare – Girl's project

West Belfast 11-14's girls project creates a safe space for young women to come into on a weekly basis and explore themes that relate to being a young woman. This year Flare focused on young women building relationships both with their peers and with the older girls attending youth initiatives 15-18 programmes .

Wired – Boys project

West Belfast 11-14's boys project creates a safe space for young men to come into on a weekly basis and explore themes that relate to being a young man. This year Wired focused on a new group of young men building a safe space in which they can be honest and share with one another.

Lifeline 15–18s – West Belfast

The Lifeline 15–18s programme in West Belfast continues to create a vibrant, family-like environment where young people can grow alongside each other and their leaders through personal development, mentoring and shared experience. This year has seen a surge in new young people joining the programme — bringing fresh energy and momentum. In response, our focus has been on fostering identity, building trust, and developing strong, meaningful relationships.

We engage young people through school partnerships, detached street work and community outreach, primarily in the socially disadvantaged Colin Area. Our aim remains to walk alongside them as they navigate the highs and lows of teenage life, helping them discover purpose, connection and confidence.

This year also sees a significant group of young people preparing to graduate from the programme. Supporting them through this transition has become a key focus — creating space to reflect on their journey so far while equipping them to step into the next stage of life with hope and clarity.

We continue to offer a broad base of support through weekly centre-based sessions, small groups, 1-1s, day trips, residential and local outreach — all designed to help young people step out of their comfort zones, connect meaningfully with others, and grow in every area of life.

Many of our current volunteers are former Lifeline participants who are now giving back to their community by helping to plan and deliver youth sessions. These young leaders are trained, supported and deeply involved in team life — role-modelling positive leadership and peer mentorship.

Young Men's Work

In our West Belfast Young Men's 15–18s work, we've continued to provide a weekly programme that mixes consistency and challenge. We've been working with a steady group of regulars, while also welcoming new faces who drop in and out.

A key strand this year has been delivering the **Duke of Edinburgh Award** — providing structure, adventure and a sense of accomplishment. We're especially looking forward to this summer, when our young men will complete their first expedition weekend.

As we look ahead, our primary focus for the young men's work is **character formation**. In the face of toxic masculinity, generational unemployment, poor mental health and limited opportunities, we're committed to walking with these young men — encouraging them to grow in resilience, own their story and make positive life choices.

Through strong relationships, shared challenges and a sense of brotherhood, we're helping young men step into a vision of healthy masculinity and purposeful living.

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Young Women's GLOW Project

The 15–18s girls' programme in West Belfast has continued to go from strength to strength this year. The **GLOW project** has flourished under the leadership of a passionate and capable youth work team who have created warm, relational spaces where young women feel safe, seen and supported.

The team has developed a dynamic programme that blends fun, creativity, reflection and skill-building — all geared toward helping the girls grow in self-esteem, identity and confidence.

This year, for the **first time**, the young women have also begun working towards their **Duke of Edinburgh Award**, and we're thrilled to be supporting them on this journey. The girls' expedition weekend will take place this summer — at the same time as the boys' (though running separately) — marking a new and exciting milestone in our youth work.

It's been a joy to see the young women embrace new challenges, encourage one another and grow in strength and self-belief. The GLOW project is flourishing, and we're excited for all that lies ahead.

Regional

Volunteer Leadership Development Programme

Over 130 young people aged 15–22 have taken part in the YI Volunteer Leadership Development Programme this past year. The programme has been supported in part by The National Lottery through the Awards for All programme and LFT Charitable Trust, Belfast as we provide spaces and places for young people to receive training and practical experience in supporting the planning, delivery and evaluation of youth work programmes across each YI Hub. In September the training day saw the volunteers engage in a team training day working their way across Belfast from East to West taking part in challenges and managing their budget for the day. January 2025 we headed to Greenhill YMCA for a residential weekend with training on reflective practice, writing funding applications and planning for upcoming regional events. The YI Summer Academy is a 3 days intensive training programme for over 100 volunteers who went on to support the running of the summer schemes across each of our hubs throughout July and August. We have also had 20+ volunteers complete the OCN Level 2 and Level 3 in Youth Work practice through a partnership with Youth Link funded by the Education Authority. This is a great opportunity to upskill our incredible volunteers.

TBUC CAMPS

Across the YI youth community hubs, nine different camp programmes were delivered, featuring a range of pre-camp and post-camp activities. The residential element of the programme brought all nine camps together at @ Ganaway in Millisle, where over 300 young people from across Northern Ireland took part. These cross-community camps welcomed participants aged 11–18 for a four-day summer residential that combined community relations workshops with recreational activities. The main focus of the camps programme is to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations. The good relations sessions developed by the YI Staff team were incredibly creative and engaging including the design of a good relations board game as a workshop to engage participants. Young people across the individual camps and the wider camp continue to build relationships at regional YI events throughout the year.

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Financial review

The charitable company receives its income mainly from grants and donations. The expenses of the charity were incurred in the running, staff and programme costs of the projects.

The results for the year are set out in detail on pages 19 to 35. The charitable company returned net surplus for the year of £86,957 (2024 – £17,410 deficit).

At 31 March 2025, the total funds of the charity amounted to £892,708 (2024 - £805,751) comprising restricted funds of £683,341 (2024 - £671,275) and unrestricted funds of £209,367 (2024 - £134,476). The Trustees expect to apply the reserves to continue and expand the work of the charitable company.

The charitable company works closely with organisations such as; DfC, Garfield Weston Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the Education Authority Regional Strategic Grant, who all supported the core costs of YI during the year.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Directors have decided that Youth Initiatives should hold financial reserves for the following reasons:

1. YI has no long term funding sources and is entirely dependant for income year on year on short term grants and donor funding, which is inevitably subject to fluctuation.
2. YI requires protection against, and the ability to continue operating despite, fluctuations in income or events threatening to the organisation.
3. YI requires the ability to continue to employ workers and continue youth work projects in between periods of grant funding.

The Trustees have decided that the level of the reserves should ideally be the equivalent of three to six months' personnel and overheads costs, calculated and reviewed annually, and have decided that reserves should be built up to the desired level in stages consistent with the charitable company's overall financial position and its need to maintain and develop its charitable activities. At 31 March 2025 the free reserves of the charity amounted to £180,972 after designating an amount of £18,017 towards the purchase of a new minibus. This is an increase from the level of free reserves held at 31 March 2024, which was £123,286. The Trustees continue to give consideration to how this level of reserves can be increased further.

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charitable company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the accounting policies.

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Plans for future periods

In 2025–26, we are committed to returning to the founding principles of youth work, ensuring these core values shape both our methodology and our long-term direction. These principles will not only guide our organisational strategy but will also be embedded at the heart of day-to-day practice. Our vision is to inspire staff to think creatively, challenge conventional approaches, and fully integrate these principles into their work. To reflect this aspiration, our theme for the year ahead is “**Reimagine the Essentials.**”

Alongside this theme, we will progress into the third year of our strategic plan, with a continued focus on strengthening our investment in staff, interns, and volunteers. We are also continuing to invest in our youth community hubs to identify opportunities for enhanced resourcing and improved support, ensuring these spaces remain well-equipped to serve young people effectively. We are further investing in our staff team by equipping them with a deeper understanding of the theory underpinning youth work practice. This will enable them to more effectively translate these principles into action, strengthening the quality and impact of their engagement with young people.

Finally, Youth Initiatives has made a formal offer on the St. Christopher’s Church buildings in East Belfast, a step that could provide our hub with a permanent home and create a lasting base for our work in the community.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and was set up by a Memorandum of Association on 9 January 2014. It is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under charity number NIC100849.

The principal object of the charitable company is to, without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, disability, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin and political or religious opinion, promote the physical, mental, spiritual and social welfare of young people in Northern Ireland through education, youth work, and volunteering, and to pursue other charitable purposes that the Trustees shall decide.

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 F Dick	(Resigned 19 June 2024)
Mr K Humphrey	(Resigned 30 April 2025)
Mr R McFadden	
Ms D McNally	
Mr S McVitte	
Mr J Lilly	(Appointed 19 June 2024)
Dr M McFeeters	(Appointed 19 June 2024)
Mrs E Smyth	(Appointed 19 June 2024)

Organisational Structure and Decision Making

The governance of the charitable company is the responsibility of the Trustees who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the Articles of Association, which state that a person willing to act as a Trustee may be appointed by ordinary resolution or by a decision of the Trustees. Trustees are briefed on their duties and issued with an induction pack prior to their appointment.

The directors have delegated the management of the work of the charitable company to a four-person Management Team. The Chief Executive Officer, Mr Tony Silcock, oversees the day to day running of the organisation. In 2024-2025 Youth Initiatives employed a staff of employed a staff of 42 plus 1 intern and over 120 youth volunteers.

Risk Management

The Trustees have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the policies, aims and objectives of the charity. The system of internal control is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives, it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. In this regard, the trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operational and financial aspects of the Company. The Trustees are satisfied that appropriate risk management systems and processes have been put in place and that these evaluate the nature and extent of those risks and ensure that they are managed efficiently, effectively and economically.

YOUTH INITIATIVES (NORTHERN IRELAND)

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

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of Youth Initiatives (Northern Ireland) 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).

Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that GMcG BELFAST be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.


Small companies exemption

In preparing this report, the directors have taken advantage of the small companies exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

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.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.


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Mr R McFadden
Trustee

Date: 30 Sept 2025