

Oasis - Caring in Action

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) (continued)

Year ended 31 December 2024

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Oasis – Caring in Action
Charity registration number	NIC 100881
Company registration number	NI032295
Principal Office and registered Office	81-83 Castlereagh Street Belfast BT5 4NF

The Trustees	Mr James McKay Mr Michael Patterson Mr Donald Eastop Mr David Mark Mrs Helen Newell
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Auditor	Finegan and Gibson Ltd Causeway Tower 9 James Street South Belfast BT2 8DN
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Bankers	Ulster Bank Limited Arches Retail Park Belfast BT2 8DN
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Solicitors	Hewitt and Gilpin 73 Holywood Road Belfast BT4 3BA
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Oasis Strategic Aims

- To promote mental well-being
- To create opportunities for people to gain knowledge and skills to achieve their full potential.
- To contribute to the well-being and development of children and young people.
- To develop sustainable businesses that meet needs, create jobs, and generate income.
- To create opportunities for people to engage by volunteering within an Oasis volunteer development program
- To create a sustainable and effective organization for delivering high quality services and programs.
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Vital to our role in the community is participation in Community groups seeking to achieve similar purposes:

- To be an active member and key recipient of referrals from the Family Hub in Inner East
- To be an active member and key recipient of referrals from the Family Hub in Outer Belfast
- To be an active member and key recipient of referrals from the Mental Health Hub East Belfast
- To be a key member of Inner East Membership Forum □ To be an active participant in EastSide Learning
- To attend and input to the Anti-Poverty Strategy in East Belfast
- To contribute to the East Belfast Locality Planning group
- To contribute and take part in ANTRIM by collaboration with a variety of same minded groups as Home start, Antrim Sign Language Community, Kinship Café, Safe space to be Me, Daisy Counselling Sessions, Basic IT training for the community, Women's Aid, CAB, CAP

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Structure, governance and management

Oasis-Caring in Action is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 22 April 1997, accepted as a charity for tax purpose by HM Revenue and Customs on the 22 April 1997 and registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 1 April 2015. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 18 April 1997 and amended on 17 October 2002 and 20 March 2015. These were further updated on 21 May 2025.

The key personnel of the Charity are the CEO and the Managers of Finance, Early Years, Imago, Antrim Foodbank, Princes Trust and Good Morning Oasis.

Organisational Structure

The charitable company is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The company is not-for-profit and limited by guarantee. The liability of members is limited to £1.

New directors are briefed about their legal obligations under charity and company law, the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee, the decision-making process, the business plan and the recent financial performance of the charity. They are free to discuss any issue with other directors or key employees. Directors are encouraged to attend any appropriate external training events which will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

Public Benefit Activities

Oasis Caring in Action has been set up to relieve poverty and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare using a community development process. It desires to help improve the conditions of life of the inhabitants of Northern Ireland (mainly East Belfast) and its environs and to work with partners in other disadvantaged areas of the world.

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Objectives and activities

The purpose of the charity are;

- To relieve poverty and provide facilities in the interests of social welfare using a community development process.
- To improve the conditions of the inhabitants of Northern Ireland (mainly East Belfast) and its environs.
- The advancement of Health via mild Mental Health intervention
- To assist the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill health or other disadvantages.

The vision that shapes our activities is focussed upon meeting the needs of those who find themselves impoverished or marginalised in our society. To this end, the trustees have considered the Charity Commissions guidance on public benefit.

The charity relies on grants, donations from individuals and income from fees.

Affordability and access are of paramount importance to Oasis and is reflected in our pricing policy (for after schools and childcare provision).

We endeavour to ensure that our activities are accessible to all within our community, irrespective of background. This is evident in the diversity present in all levels of our charity.

Our Mission Statement

Oasis exists as a practical demonstration of God's love for the communities of East Belfast and Antrim.

We offer training and resources wishing to see people empowered within their personal, family and community lives as practical evidence of God's love. The following priorities presently guide our work;

- Improving the quality of people's lives by offering practical training to help them back to work or to find work and to enhance self-esteem, self-confidence, and life-choices.
- Offering activities including a range of training including personal development, IT skills, preparation for employment and essential skills (literacy and numeracy).
- Offering affordable and accessible early years provision in partnership with Health and Social Services, thus providing childcare places, family visitation, and support for vulnerable parents. We will also offer after-school full-day services.
- Offering befriending services for people with mild ill-health challenges and for those isolated by illness, old-age or other difficulties in their homes.
- Offering programmes focussed upon focussing upon education for those who have been unable to benefit in that regard from school life.
- Providing food to those who are struggling to make ends meet.

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Strategic Report

The following sections for achievements and performance and financial review form the strategic report of the charities work in 2024.

Achievements and performance

In 2024 we achieved our primary goal of running OCIA on a firm financial footing whilst ensuring the Board supported staff to maintain the programs that have served participants well across Inner East Belfast and Antrim. Having completed the execution of the Strategic plan out-laid in agreement with the Board of Oasis and BDO we then set about ensuring adequate funding was acquired, in an increasingly competitive environment, to sustain our valuable work. Being substantially dependent upon government departments for funding, we seemed to hang in limbo, as those departments awaited confirmation of their budgets in the new financial year. We, nonetheless, have continued to fulfil our objectives.

Many demanding situations were unearthed by the staff. They identified solutions, established plans of action with clients and carried these to perfection to the joy and appreciation of all. The dedicated staff were indeed a real life saver on occasions.

There is no doubt that the closure of so much of Oasis work in Antrim, due to loss of funding in 2023, left a difficult legacy in the early part of 2024. It was sorrowful for Belfast staff to see colleagues have to move on from the sphere of Oasis activity. The Antrim Foodbank remained open throughout the year, nonetheless, and was ably lead by a strong committee of Antrim people.

Oasis Caring in Action Belfast: What we do!

Imago Project delivered professional medium term 1-1 Befriending for those suffering from anxiety and depression or any other mental health situations. We delivered the service to in excess of 99 individuals for up to 6 months on a one to one basis.

During 2024 we have seen significant improvement in the lives of clients. We exceeded the targets agreed with funders and saw many outstanding results due to the skill and commitment of staff. Many individuals were given sufficient support and confidence to allow them to fully function in their homes and in the community. They experienced increased self-esteem and self-confidence and the well-being of the community at large was enhanced as a result

Imago Self Help Groups (Mental Health Programme) continued with the help of existing clients and volunteers,: Programmes carried out included Art, History, Knit and Knatter (craft group, Fishing and Music, Through 2024 we had the privilege of delivering a diverse program that allowed many individuals to get their lives back on track. We met every client either in person or remotely via phone or facetime, always going the extra mile to ensure we helped touch the lives of the most vulnerable positively.

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Imago Men's Self Help Groups: In 2024 the men's self-help groups have continued to enjoy a Belfast centric breakfast group. Led by one of the Imago befrienders, the group has grown from strength to strength throughout 2024.

Imago Overview

In 2024 Imago received 257 referrals. The target had been set at 160. Contact had been made during the year with 1973 individual visits. The Imago team see meaningful changes in clients with regard to their mood and well-being. The work is established on trusting relationships, allowing clients to confide in and relax with staff.

The Imago team require 30 more hours of work and need a resource with which to secure those supplementary hours of work.

Early Years continued to deliver excellent and affordable childcare sought by parents and by statutory agencies. We accommodated up to 85 children every week. Oasis continued to make a difference in the lives of many families and children. Our provision enhances the economy of the local area as many parents are able to work because of our affordable service. This sector of our work continued to get particular focus throughout 2024 as we invested to ensure we made it fit for purpose to ensure that children are looked after in a positive and uplifting setting. Equipment was updated and staff received the most up-to-date training. We continued to provide a vehicle for school pickups.

Family Support We have a family support program linked into the local Family Support Hubs which carries out visits to those needing assistance within the environ of their home, to help parents / carers with bringing up and educating their children. The two key workers also act as a sign-posters to help the parents /carers seek out help with education , finance, housing or whatever the needs of the family happen to be.

Princes Trust Team We ran two team programs through 2024 catering for 16, 16 -24 year olds, assisting them on a journey of discovery often from very dark and difficult places and isolation. A few weeks into their programme, the young people show evidence of thriving. They make presentations to their group, raise money for other charitable works in their community, have a new cohort of friends , have a safe place to come and talk through challenging truths and have a much better outlook. This is all achieved over a 12 week period. All young people are sign-posted towards the next stage to continue their improvements when the programme ends.

Nxt Gen Youth Project

When Princes Youth Trust ended funding from our youth work, we leaned upon Henry Smith Charity to sustain our high quality interventions with young people at the edge of society. We engaged young people in re-imagining our provision. A new development emerged, which the youths decided should be called Nxt Gen. The first Nxt Gen programme began towards the end of the year. Twelve young people participated in a range of developmental activities, all of them progressing to further development opportunities at the conclusion of their programme experience.

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Achievements and performance (continued)

Good Morning Oasis provides a befriending service for elderly, vulnerable and isolated people in South and East Belfast. Over the past year we have offered support and friendship on a daily basis to 260 people by offering a Good Morning telephone call. As well as forming strong relationships and gaining the trust of our service users, we have offered support and advice, and have sign-posted our users to many different services available to the community. Many different people from South and East Belfast are on the service and for many different reasons We can confidently say that in the past year, we have built upon existing relationships and have welcomed many new people on to the service and have introduced them to the benefits of the Oasis Good Morning Telephone Service. We are building relationships with external organisations such as the Red Cross. In the future, we hope to maintain the high standards for our service and to be able to expand by bringing on as many new clients as possible.

Antrim Foodbank

Antrim foodbank is part of the Trussell Trust's 400-strong network of food banks, which provides three days' nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to people who are in crisis. From a substantive base in 2021 there was a marked increased need and the crisis continued in 2023 with an estimated rise of 60% in the numbers of the Antrim community now availing of their local Foodbank. To strengthen the underpinning infrastructure, the Foodbank Volunteer Support Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis. It supports in excess of 40 foodbank volunteers and provides training and development on the effective running of the foodbank, new working procedures and health and safety.

Central Administration – Oasis caring in Action

We continued to sustain the number of staff that would enable us to support the Project and to provide the personnel needed to sustain our range of programmes. The reduction in funding for the Voluntary and Community sector continued to present a major challenge for us. The loss of European Social Funding (following Brexit) significantly raised the number of Projects requesting funding from a smaller field of sources. A significant amount of time was spent preparing funding applications in 2023 and in maintaining flows of reports to funders who did support us. We (The Board and I) are very grateful to the staff, funders, donors and volunteers at Oasis across all sites who have made the continuance of our valuable programmes possible in 2023 and for their hard work in making Oasis the dynamic organisation it is today. We will work throughout the coming year to manage our finances in a prudent manner to match the hard work and endeavour that is delivered day in day out.

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Achievements and performance (continued)

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Our Volunteers

OCIA across all sites is very involved in the community and relies heavily on voluntary help. Alongside some 20 volunteers who help with oversight and governance we have over 40 volunteers who help directly in the running of the projects. Our volunteer policy allows us to manage this body of valued workers effectively.

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Financial review

We incurred a net gain of **£16,000** for the year to December 2024. By 31st December 2024 we have implemented changes to our policies and procedures across the charity. We have updated our financial processes and procedures document for the seventh time in 2024. OCIA is debt free and we work at clearing all creditors within 30-45 days. It has been a necessarily slow process due to us working hard to limit damage around the human aspect and the public benefit aspect but OCIA has now been fully restructured and we have a clearly re-focused team who will ensure they support the excellent staff who run the projects now and who did so through 2015 to 2024 whilst this restructure change in circumstances was evolving. We believe we can look forward to the future with renewed confidence. We are looking at Board Development and Succession Planning including leadership training in 2025.

Plans for the next year;

It is our intention to run our multi-faceted charity on a prudent and balanced basis. We are committed to providing the following programmes in 2025

Early Years Family Support	Funder, BHSCT
Early Years Sponsored Daycare	Funder: BHSCT
Early Years 0-4 Childcare	Funder: Pathway
Imago Befriending :	Funder: Public Health Agency
Nxt Gen Youth Project	Funder: Henry Smith Charity
Good Morning Oasis:	Funder: NI Housing Executive
	Dept for Communities
Oasis General and Premises	Funder: Belfast City Council
	Dept for Communities

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes 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).

Company law requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity 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 charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as trustees to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

The trustees' annual report and the strategic report were approved on and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Mr James McKay

Mr Donald Eastop

Date

Date