

**Charity registration number NIC101148**

**Company registration number NI033998 (Northern Ireland)**

**CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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<b>Trustees</b>	Ms A Toal	
	Ms A Stewart	
	Mr D Farrell	
	Mr J Finnegan	
	Ms S Stewart	
	Ms T Canavan	
	Mr B D Moss	
	Dr D J Drury	(Appointed 22 February 2024)
	Mr C Haugh	(Appointed 22 February 2024)
<b>Secretary</b>	Ms P Kelly	
<b>Charity number</b>	NIC101148	
<b>Company number</b>	NI033998	
<b>Principal address</b>	Rights House 127-131 Ormeau Road Belfast BT7 1SH	
<b>Registered office</b>	Rights House 127-131 Ormeau Road Belfast BT7 1SH	
<b>Auditor</b>	GMcG BELFAST Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor Alfred House 19 Alfred Street Belfast BT2 8EQ	
<b>Bankers</b>	Ulster Bank Limited 11-16 Donegall Square East Belfast BT1 5HD	
<b>Solicitors</b>	Edwards & Co 28 Hill Street Belfast BT1 2LA	

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# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

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# **CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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 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 Children's Law Centre (CLC) was established to help children and young people in need and to promote their human rights in Northern Ireland. CLC provides legal information, advice, advocacy, assistance and representation for children and young people, their parents and carers and others working with and on behalf of children and young people. We raise public awareness of children and young people's rights and provide training to children, parents and carers and others working with and on behalf of children and young people. CLC gives a voice to children by facilitating and supporting a children and young person's advisory and peer advocacy group, Youth@CLC. In partnership with Youth@CLC we raise children and young people's rights with duty bearers.

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

#### **Achievements and performance**

The environment in which Children's Law Centre operated in 2023-24 has continued to be challenging. CLC continued to deal with multiple issues of denial of children's rights as a result of actions taken by duty holders including in response to the Covid pandemic. The situation was further aggravated by the ongoing impact of Brexit, the absence of the devolved administration in this jurisdiction and the continuing socio-economic crisis resulting in cuts to children's services. This convergence also impacted on availability of funding to the voluntary and community sector from statutory sources with the knock-on effect increasing competition for funding from Trusts and Foundations.

The impact on need was reflected in the number of issues we dealt with through our CHALKY freephone legal advice line hitting 2,980 which was an increase of 9% on the previous year. 90% of issues were assessed as 'Tier 1' and focused on disability in education, access to health and social care, family law, human rights and justice issues. The continuing denials of service for children with special education needs and disability continued to be a focus of our 'Tier 2' interventions, along with access to health and social care with particular emphasis on respite and community care support. We found particularly over the year that the increasing complexity of issues has required much more input from our legal and advice staff in order to achieve solutions for children.

There were 29,612 messages received on CLC's REE Rights Responder chatbot with 11,265 users engaging in 11,714 sessions. 81 people requested a REE Live Chat. The chatbot, which was co-designed with our Youth@CLC panel of young people continues to provide anonymised access to free legal information. This year we have been working with young people and with volunteer support from PricewaterhouseCoopers Belfast supported by a grant from Allen and Overy Belfast, to develop an 'Education and Disability' information strand for REE. The work on the new REE strand will be completed in the remainder of 2024 and will launch in January 2025.

During the year we have been working with Amnesty International, Committee on the Administration of Justice and Include Youth to challenge the use of spit and bite hoods and the use of strip searching of children by the Police Service NI. This work resulted in the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) instructing its Human Rights Advisor to conduct a review of strip searching of children benchmarked against human rights legislation. CLC was specifically recognised in the report published in June 2023. The NIPB Report made 10 recommendations including two to update guidance on PACE legislation.

Following publication of the NI Budget 2023-24 in April, CLC issued correspondence to the Secretary of State (SoS) for NI outlining equality and human rights concerns. The letter was endorsed by over 200 organisations and academics. The SoS's response to the letter raised further concerns and led CLC to apply for judicial review of the process undertaken by the SoS, the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and Department of Finance (DoF) when setting the budget. The Equality Commission NI (ECNI) were later joined to the proceedings. In January 2024 CLC was granted leave to proceed to a full hearing against the NIO, DoF and ECNI which was scheduled for May 2024. The case has not yet concluded although it has progressed.

## **CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

#### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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In May 2023 we supported a group of young people to travel to Geneva for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child examination of the UK and devolved government's implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This followed the submission of CLC's NI NGO Stakeholder Report and Young Person's Reports to the UN Committee in December 2022. The UNCRC Committee's Concluding Observations and Recommendations, which were published in June 2023, reflected many of the issues identified in our reports. This included a recommendation that "the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland withdraw the budget for NI for the period 2023-24 and fully consider the equality and human rights implications for a new budget, taking all possible steps to mitigate any adverse impact on children's rights before issuing a revised budget."

In support of the publication of the Concluding Observations report CLC embarked on a series of significant engagements throughout the autumn to raise awareness of the UNCRC Concluding Observations and Recommendations. This included a conference for children and young people – 'Rights Here, Right Now' – at Ulster University in September, a seminar directed at duty holders and politicians at the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings in October and culminated in our Annual Lecture in November at the Bar Library which was provided by Bragi Guðbrandsson, Vice Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Mr Guðbrandsson also engaged in a series of meetings with duty holders, the judiciary and young people in the two days prior to the lecture. With the provision of live streaming this was CLC's highest attended Annual Lecture.

With South Tyrone Empowerment Project (STEP) we continued to research issues impacting refugee and asylum-seeking children in contingency and dispersal accommodation. This has led to direct engagement with families through our legal advice and advocacy services including one judicial review undertaken on behalf of a disabled child. We succeeded in securing an investigation into the condition's children are living in and safeguarding concerns. The work has also involved engaging at Ministerial, Permanent Secretary and Non-Departmental Public Body CEO level. We continue to engage with colleagues through the Child Law Network to ensure complementarity on this work across the UK.

We completed our joint research with the Dublin based Children's Rights Alliance. The report – "Listen Up! Children's Voices on the Future – Consultation with Children and Young People on Children's Rights on the Island of Ireland: Responding to the Uncertainty of Brexit and Beyond", was published in April 2024.

A number of cases were successfully completed including:

- Securing a resolution with the Education Authority (EA) for its failure to provide school transport to a statemented child with special educational needs with transport being provided.
- A successful outcome in a Judicial Review (JR) against the Home Office and Mears Housing for their failure to provide disability accessible accommodation to a severely disabled child. Resolution was reached when the Home Office granted the family indefinite leave to remain and they moved to suitable accommodation.
- A successful resolution to litigation in relation to two minor applicants' claims for damages against a health trust for its failure to provide them with respite care.
- CLC submitted a third-party intervention in a JR of the Department of Health relating to the issue of parental consent for Covid vaccination for children. CLC's intervention assisted the Court in reaching a favourable outcome from a children's rights perspective.

With the return of the NI Assembly in February 2024 CLC's expertise in children's rights to education, special education needs, health and social care, mental health and housing were in much demand. Following an invitation to provide evidence to the Education Committee on special educational needs and disability (SEND) in March we produced two substantive briefings on SEND and another on the Children's Services Co-operation Act 2015 prior to attendance and evidence giving. The Committee expressed their thanks for the briefings and were highly receptive to the evidence session which included, with their consent, an overview of one young client's lived experience in trying to access education support when transferring to post-primary school. This resulted in a request from the Committee to meet the young client and hear their story first-hand. This subsequently took place in May 2024.

## **CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

#### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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Other Assembly engagements have included meetings with the Chair of the Health Committee and we were invited to give evidence to the Executive Committee alongside the Human Rights Consortium on the need for additional rights protections in Northern Ireland.

Throughout the suspension of the Assembly CLC continued to engage with political parties and individual representatives including MLAs and MPs. Policy consultation responses have included:

- Department of Education's Consultation on Draft Statutory Guidance on the Reduction and Management of Restrictive Practices in Educational Settings;
- Department of Education's Consultation on Relationship and Sexuality Education;
- Department of Health's Consultation on the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Services;
- Equality Impact Assessments of the 2023-24 budgets for Department of Health, Department of Education and The Executive Office; and
- NI Policing Board's Engagement Strategy.

All of our consultation responses, briefing and position papers can be found at <https://childrenslawcentre.org.uk/consultation-responses/>. In addition to the above we prepared and circulated a briefing note outlining our concerns related to the equality and human rights implications for children and young people of the NI Budget 2023-24 and the process by which it was arrived at, for the Second Reading of the NI Budget (No2) Bill in the House of Commons.

CLC continues to work at a local, UK, all-Ireland and EU level including with the Child Law Network and Civil Society Alliance on the threat to the Human Rights Act, with the Child Rights Alliance in Dublin on the impact of Brexit on the rights of children across Ireland and human rights protections in the Good Friday Agreement, and with Rights of the Child Alliance UK on implementation of the UNCRC. We are also working in partnership with STEP on breaches of the rights of refugee and asylum-seeking children as they relate to education, health and housing in particular. There is a particular focus in this work on asylum-seeking children in contingency and dispersal accommodation.

Following a successful application to the Dormant Accounts Fund we recruited a Training and Engagement Co-ordinator to deliver regular programmes of training with input from our Legal and Policy and Public Affairs Teams. We have also engaged in the development of training programmes delivered in partnership with allied organisations. We continue to investigate new ways to maintain engagement post-training. We are working to extend the organisation's reach including with parents and community groups. Response to initial training programmes in the third and final quarters of the year have been extremely positive and we look forward to further development of the offers in the coming year.

Our digital communications reach has continued to grow with over 75,000 visits to our website, almost 700 new followers on X and 350 new followers on Facebook. The additional numbers accessing and linking into our social media also act as a conduit for our policy and public affairs work enabling the sharing of consultation responses, reports, training and events, and generally keeping our supporters up to date with the issues we are working on to improve the lives of children.

We are grateful to our Youth@CLC members who have worked closely with us on securing and raising awareness of the UNCRC Concluding Observations, the young people's conference in September and the seminar at the Long Gallery in October. They have also assisted in the recruitments for our Training and Engagement Co-ordinator, and most recently a new Trainee Solicitor who is funded through the Legal Education Foundation Justice First Fellowship. Without an active Youth Participation and Advocacy Worker (YPAW) this has been a challenging time but our Communications and Marketing Manager, Training and Engagement Co-ordinator and Policy and Public Affairs team have all given their time to continue to support Youth@CLC. At the time of writing we are recruiting a new YPAW following a successful application to the National Lottery Community Fund.

# **CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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Following our organisational review in 2021-22 we have continued to develop our work on implementing the strategic plan 2022-25 with the development of operational and team plans, complemented by updating our approach to one-to-ones. We will continue to review implementation with a particular focus on how approaches may be improved as we work toward our next strategic planning cycle at the end of 2024. We undertook and completed a salary and benchmarking exercise which demonstrated with the exception of some role anomalies that CLC, when compared with other similar organisations in the voluntary and community sector recognises its staff with higher than average salaries and benefits. The posts that were identified as anomalies were also brought into line and we continue to monitor this to ensure we remain competitive and an employer of choice.

With two Board members standing down at our AGM in December 2023, we recruited and appointed two new Board members from the public and private sectors who bring additional skills and experience to the organisation. In January 2024 the Board commenced a mid-point review of our progress in our organisational development journey. We were delighted to have made considerable progress against the organisational development plan. We will now be prioritising remaining identified areas including extending our reach and increasing our influence over the next two years.

In a particularly volatile funding environment and with considerable work undertaken in identifying and submitting funding applications, we have been fortunate to end the year showing a small unrestricted financial surplus. As we move into the next financial year the funding environment is even more volatile as the economic crisis impacts on availability of statutory funding and increases competition with trusts and foundations whose own resources are now being stretched. It is against this background that the rights of children to access the services they need to grow and live are at their greatest risk since CLC commenced its work in 1997.

CLC will continue to work in the best interests of all children living in Northern Ireland to ensure their access to services to which they are entitled and more broadly to ensure their rights under equality and human rights legislation are vindicated. In continuing this work we would like to thank our small dedicated staff team for another year of trojan work; to our Trustees who continue to support and guide our work; to our Youth@CLC volunteers and all young people we have engaged with this year, for their commitment to a better future for children and young people; and last but by no means least to the Trusts and Foundations who have shown such faith in our work and our statutory funders for their continuing support in the most challenging of times.

#### **Financial review**

The results for the year are set out in detail on pages 13 to 34. The Centre returned net deficit of £142,940 (2023 – £100,439) of which £151,372 related to a net deficit in restricted funds and £8,432 related to a net increase in unrestricted funds.

The increase in unrestricted funds includes exceptional movement in pension provision expenditure of £45,060 (2023 - income of £613).

At 31 March 2024, the total funds of the charity amounted to £706,571, comprising restricted funds of £321,067 and unrestricted funds of £385,504. The unrestricted fund balance includes unrestricted general funds of £390,793, designated funds of £55,000 and a deficit on the pension reserve of £60,289. The vast majority of income received by the Centre is earmarked by the donor for specific purposes (restricted income). Only small amounts are received as free monies (unrestricted income) which can be allocated according to organisational needs, including core running costs.

The unrestricted fund is considered to be essential to the Centre as restricted funds are not always sufficient to meet all costs. Furthermore, in the current economic environment, the level of funding may fluctuate from one year to the next. The unrestricted fund will therefore be essential to finance working capital, continue the charity's activities in the short term and fulfil its legal responsibilities to employees and creditors for a three month period. Current running costs for the charity are £75,000 per month and the level of free reserves at the year end, excluding fixed assets and designated funds, was £284,296. The charity has significant funds secured for the forthcoming year and budgets have been prepared that show that the charity has sufficient resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Restricted funds represent funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors. The balance of restricted funds at 31 March 2024 was £321,067.

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.

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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#### Plans for future periods

One of the long-term objectives for the organisation remains the securing of mainstream funding for the Centre alongside diversifying and growing funding streams. Acting on financial and legal advice, the Centre is also committed to working to build unrestricted financial reserves equivalent to six months with a minimum of at least three months' running costs to ensure a financial cushion in the event of future funding difficulties. The building of such reserves is viewed by the charity as prudent financial management, in the best interest of the Centre and necessary to honour the Centre's legal and financial commitments.

#### Structure, governance and management

The Centre is a charitable organisation and a company limited by guarantee governed by its Articles of Association.

The Centre is a membership organisation which is governed by a Board of Trustees (which is also the Board of Directors) elected for one year at the organisation's AGM. According to the Centre's constitution, additional Board members can be co-opted. The Board elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Training is provided as required. All Centre staff are answerable to the Board through the Centre Director, Ms Patricia Kelly, who is responsible for the day to day management of the Centre. The Board of Trustees ensures the good governance of the organisation by setting its strategic objectives and policy direction through the Centre's three year strategic plan and monitoring progress on this through the annual operational planning process.

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:

Ms A Toal

Ms A Stewart

Mr D Farrell

Mr J Finnegan

Ms S Stewart

Ms T Canavan

Mr B D Moss

Dr D J Drury

Mr C Haugh

(Appointed 22 February 2024)

(Appointed 22 February 2024)



# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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### Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of Children's Law Centre (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).

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

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 Charities SORP;
- make judgements and 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; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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

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.



Ms P Kelly  
Company Secretary

Date: 27/11/24

## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

#### TO THE MEMBERS OF CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

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#### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Children's Law Centre (Northern Ireland) (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

#### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

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## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

### TO THE MEMBERS OF CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

#### Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

#### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

### TO THE MEMBERS OF CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

#### Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities, the trustees, who are also the directors of the charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

### TO THE MEMBERS OF CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

#### Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and then design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

In identifying and assessing potential risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliances with laws and regulations, we considered the following:

- . The nature of the industry and sector, control environment and business performance, including the company's remuneration policies for directors, bonus levels and performance targets, if any;
- . Results of our enquiries of management about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities;
- . Any matters we identified having obtained and reviewed the company's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to:
  - Identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instance of non-compliance;
  - Detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
  - The internal controls established to mitigate risks of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- . The matters discussed among the audit engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, we considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the company for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in income recognition. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

We also obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that the company operates in, focusing on provisions of those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The key laws and regulations we considered in this context included the Companies Act 2006, and local tax legislation.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which may be fundamental to the company's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty.

## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

### TO THE MEMBERS OF CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

#### Audit response to risks identified

Our procedures to respond to the risks identified included the following:

- Reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- Enquiring of management concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- Performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- Reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and reviewing correspondence with tax authorities; and
- In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

We also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. In addition, as with any audit, there remains a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as they may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

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**CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)**

**TO THE MEMBERS OF CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

**Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



**Mr Nigel Moore FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)**  
**for and on behalf of GMcG BELFAST**

2 December 2024

**Chartered Accountants**  
**Statutory Auditor**

Chartered Accountants & Statutory  
Auditor  
Alfred House  
19 Alfred Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8EQ

- 12 -

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Chartered Accountants | Registered Auditors | Chartered Tax Advisors | Forensic Accountants | Corporate Finance Advisors

GMcG is a trading name of GMcG Group Limited. Reg No: NI059660. List of Directors available at registered office

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[www.gmcgca.com](http://www.gmcgca.com)

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

		Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
	Notes						
<b>Income from:</b>							
Donations and legacies	3	2,284	-	2,284	50	-	50
Charitable activities	4	189,710	520,174	709,884	71,715	680,149	751,864
Investments	5	49,273	-	49,273	38,404	-	38,404
Movement in pension provision	6	(45,060)	-	(45,060)	613	-	613
<b>Total income</b>		<u>196,207</u>	<u>520,174</u>	<u>716,381</u>	<u>110,782</u>	<u>680,149</u>	<u>790,931</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Charitable activities	7	<u>187,603</u>	<u>671,718</u>	<u>859,321</u>	<u>50,327</u>	<u>841,043</u>	<u>891,370</u>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers</b>		8,604	(151,544)	(142,940)	60,455	(160,894)	(100,439)
Gross transfers between funds		<u>(172)</u>	<u>172</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) for the year/</b>							
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		8,432	(151,372)	(142,940)	60,455	(160,894)	(100,439)
Fund balances at 1 April 2023		<u>377,072</u>	<u>472,439</u>	<u>849,511</u>	<u>316,617</u>	<u>633,333</u>	<u>949,950</u>
<b>Fund balances at 31 March 2024</b>		<u><u>385,504</u></u>	<u><u>321,067</u></u>	<u><u>706,571</u></u>	<u><u>377,072</u></u>	<u><u>472,439</u></u>	<u><u>849,511</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.



# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Intangible assets	12		1,435		7,770
Tangible assets	13		231,138		241,194
Investment properties	14		214,000		214,000
			<u>446,573</u>		<u>462,964</u>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	15	51,749		52,500	
Cash at bank and in hand		495,710		553,265	
		<u>547,459</u>		<u>605,765</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	16	(99,818)		(57,650)	
Net current assets			<u>447,641</u>		<u>548,115</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			894,214		1,011,079
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	17		(127,354)		(141,814)
<b>Provisions for liabilities</b>					
Defined benefit pension liability	20	60,289		19,754	
		<u>(60,289)</u>		<u>(19,754)</u>	
<b>Net assets</b>			<u><u>706,571</u></u>		<u><u>849,511</u></u>

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)

AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
<b>Income funds</b>					
Restricted funds	22		321,067		472,439
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>					
Designated funds	21	55,000		55,000	
General unrestricted funds		390,793		341,826	
Pension reserve		(60,289)		(19,754)	
			385,504		377,072
			706,571		849,511

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 27/11/2024

*Alice Toal*

Ms A Toal  
Trustee

Mr D Farrell  
Trustee

Company Registration No. NI033998

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Cash absorbed by operations	29		(92,866)		(21,493)
<b>Investing activities</b>					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(233)		(2,738)	
Proceeds from disposal of tangible fixed assets		14		194	
Investment income received		49,273		38,404	
<b>Net cash generated from investing activities</b>			49,054		35,860
<b>Financing activities</b>					
Repayment of bank loans		(13,743)		(14,983)	
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>			(13,743)		(14,983)
<b>Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents</b>			(57,555)		(616)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			553,265		553,881
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>			495,710		553,265

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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#### 1 Accounting policies

##### Charity information

Children's Law Centre (Northern Ireland) is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in Northern Ireland. The registered office is Rights House, 127-131 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 1SH.

The members of the company are the directors named on page 4. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the company.

##### 1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

##### 1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

##### 1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Designated funds comprise funds which have been set aside at the discretion of the trustees for specific purposes. The purposes and uses of the designated funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

##### 1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

Rental income is recognised evenly over the period of the tenancy agreement.

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

---

#### 1 Accounting policies (Continued)

##### 1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

Support costs are those costs incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the company. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the company and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Charitable activities and Governance costs are costs incurred on the company's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the company apportioned to charitable activities.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

##### 1.6 Intangible fixed assets other than goodwill

Intangible assets acquired separately from a business are recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Intangible assets acquired on business combinations are recognised separately from goodwill at the acquisition date where it is probable that the expected future economic benefits that are attributable to the asset will flow to the entity and the fair value of the asset can be measured reliably; the intangible asset arises from contractual or other legal rights; and the intangible asset is separable from the entity.

Amortisation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Software	33.33% per annum straight line
----------	--------------------------------

##### 1.7 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Leasehold land and buildings	2% per annum straight line
Office equipment	25% per annum reducing balance

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

---

#### 1 Accounting policies (Continued)

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

##### 1.8 Investment property

Investment property, which is property held to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation, is initially recognised at cost, which includes the purchase cost and any directly attributable expenditure. Subsequently it is measured at fair value at the reporting end date. The surplus or deficit on revaluation is recognised in profit or loss.

##### 1.9 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

##### 1.10 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

##### 1.11 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

##### **Basic financial assets**

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

##### **Basic financial liabilities**

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

##### **Derecognition of financial liabilities**

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

---

#### **1 Accounting policies (Continued)**

##### **1.12 Employee benefits**

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

##### **1.13 Retirement benefits**

In prior years the Centre contributed to a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme, NICPS, into which the Centre is committed to making payments of £9,955 per annum to make good prior year deficits. Following the closure of this Scheme on 31 March 2009, the directors confirmed the selection of the Pensions Trust as the provider of the Flexible Retirement Plan (defined contribution scheme) at a contribution rate of 7% from employers and a minimum 5% per employee. Contributions to this Scheme by the Centre have therefore been accounted for by charging costs as payments accrue.

A provision is recognised for the contributions payable that arose from the agreement with NICPS to fund the prior year deficits.

##### **1.14 Leases**

Rentals payable under operating leases, including any lease incentives received, are charged as an expense on a straight line basis over the term of the relevant lease.

#### **2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements**

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

---

### 2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements (Continued)

#### Key sources of estimation uncertainty

##### Investment Property

Fair value is determined annually and derived from the current market rents and investment property yields for comparable real estate. Valuation involves some estimation uncertainty but is based on periodic advice from independent expert valuers.

##### Fixed Assets

The annual depreciation charge on fixed assets depends primarily on the estimated lives of each type of asset and estimates of residual values. The directors regularly review these asset lives and change them as necessary to reflect current thinking on remaining lives in light of prospective economic utilisation and physical condition of the assets concerned. Changes in asset lives can have a significant impact on depreciation and amortisation charges for the period. Detail of the useful lives is included in the accounting policies.

##### Debtors

Short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment. Impairment of such debtors involves some estimation uncertainty.

##### Multi-employer Defined Benefit Pension Scheme Liability

The pension scheme liability is in relation to the contributions payable that have arisen from an agreement with a multi-employer plan to fund a deficit and is based on certain assumptions as detailed in note 20.

##### Restricted and Unrestricted Funds

Judgements are made in relation to allocation of income and expenditure to restricted and unrestricted funds. The directors consider it appropriate to allocate these funds based on interpretation of donations received.

### 3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations and gifts	2,284	50
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>



# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

### 4 Charitable activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Performance related grants	657,507	683,149
Membership and training	10,023	2,829
Income from legal work	86,165	65,886
Less: deferred income	(43,811)	-
	<u>709,884</u>	<u>751,864</u>
<b>Analysis by fund</b>		
Unrestricted funds	189,710	71,715
Restricted funds	520,174	680,149
	<u>709,884</u>	<u>751,864</u>

The Board considers the Charity to have one main Charitable Activity, being the promotion, protection and realisation of children's rights.

### 5 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Rental income	35,907	36,926
Interest receivable	13,366	1,478
	<u>49,273</u>	<u>38,404</u>

### 6 Movement in pension provision

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	(902)	(575)
Remeasurements - impact of any change in assumptions	(828)	1,188
Remeasurements - amendments to the contribution schedule	(43,330)	-
	<u>(45,060)</u>	<u>613</u>

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

### 6 Movement in pension provision

Further information in relation to the pension provision is provided in note 20.

### 7 Charitable activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs	486,563	469,942
Depreciation and impairment	16,610	35,024
Insurance	12,279	10,775
Printing, postage and stationery	5,422	7,426
Telephone	7,086	6,764
Electricity	3,505	4,364
Service charge	9,787	10,077
Cleaning	2,981	2,609
Young peoples expenses	346	346
Information materials	596	134
Subscriptions	613	622
Legal account expenditure	38,321	42,613
Pension scheme management costs	2,441	2,441
Management costs	26,189	39,720
Other charitable expenditure	14	194
	<u>612,753</u>	<u>633,051</u>
Share of support costs (see note 8)	241,718	253,594
Share of governance costs (see note 8)	4,850	4,725
	<u>859,321</u>	<u>891,370</u>
<b>Analysis by fund</b>		
Unrestricted funds	187,603	50,327
Restricted funds	671,718	841,043
	<u>859,321</u>	<u>891,370</u>

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

### 8 Support costs

	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2024 £	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2023 £
Staff costs	160,233	-	160,233	126,261	-	126,261
Insurance	2,167	-	2,167	1,901	-	1,901
Printing, postage and stationery	957	-	957	1,459	-	1,459
Electricity and telephone	1,869	-	1,869	1,964	-	1,964
Service charge	2,253	-	2,253	2,239	-	2,239
Repairs and maintenance	12,448	-	12,448	11,365	-	11,365
Professional fees	18,697	-	18,697	58,747	-	58,747
Staff training	2,681	-	2,681	1,686	-	1,686
Sundry expenses	18,459	-	18,459	22,060	-	22,060
Loan interest	11,911	-	11,911	8,655	-	8,655
Irrecoverable VAT	10,043	-	10,043	17,257	-	17,257
Audit fees	-	4,850	4,850	-	4,725	4,725
	<u>241,718</u>	<u>4,850</u>	<u>246,568</u>	<u>253,594</u>	<u>4,725</u>	<u>258,319</u>
Analysed between Charitable activities	<u>241,718</u>	<u>4,850</u>	<u>246,568</u>	<u>253,594</u>	<u>4,725</u>	<u>258,319</u>

Governance costs includes payments to the auditors of £4,850 (2023- £4,725) for audit fees.

### 9 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

### 10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
	<u>15</u>	<u>14</u>
Employment costs	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	554,738	513,299
Social security costs	55,578	51,700
Other pension costs	36,480	31,204
	<u>646,796</u>	<u>596,203</u>

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 10 Employees (Continued)

Total remuneration payable to key management personnel during the year was £198,736 (2023 - £166,251).

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

#### 11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from income tax and capital gains tax to the extent that its income and gains are applied for charitable purposes. No tax charge has arisen in the year.

#### 12 Intangible fixed assets

	Software £
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	83,932
<b>Amortisation and impairment</b>	
At 1 April 2023	76,162
Amortisation charged for the year	6,335
At 31 March 2024	82,497
<b>Carrying amount</b>	
At 31 March 2024	1,435
At 31 March 2023	7,770

#### 13 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold land and buildings £	Office equipment £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>			
At 1 April 2023	249,605	45,675	295,280
Additions	-	233	233
Disposals	-	(270)	(270)
At 31 March 2024	249,605	45,638	295,243
<b>Depreciation and impairment</b>			
At 1 April 2023	28,198	25,888	54,086
Depreciation charged in the year	4,992	5,283	10,275
Eliminated in respect of disposals	-	(256)	(256)
At 31 March 2024	33,190	30,915	64,105
<b>Carrying amount</b>			
At 31 March 2024	216,415	14,723	231,138
At 31 March 2023	221,407	19,787	241,194

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

### 13 Tangible fixed assets (Continued)

Land and buildings of net book value £216,415 are held as security against the company's bank borrowings.

### 14 Investment property

	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>
<b>Fair value</b>	
At 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	214,000

The 2024 valuations were made by the directors, on an open market value for existing use basis.

Investment property of net book value £214,000 is held as security against the company's bank borrowings.

### 15 Debtors

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade debtors	36,796	35,643
Prepayments and accrued income	14,953	16,857
	<u>51,749</u>	<u>52,500</u>

### 16 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
	<b>Notes</b>	
Bank loans	<b>18</b>	14,788
Other taxation and social security		14,071
Deferred income	<b>19</b>	12,543
Trade creditors		43,811
Other creditors		-
Accruals and deferred income		7,189
		9,987
		672
		39
		20,815
		15,706
		<u>99,818</u>
		<u>57,650</u>

### 17 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
	<b>Notes</b>	
Bank loans	<b>18</b>	127,354
		<u>141,814</u>

## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 18 Loans and overdrafts

	2024 £	2023 £
Bank loans	142,142	155,885
Payable within one year	14,788	14,071
Payable after one year	127,354	141,814
Amounts included above which fall due after five years:		
Payable by instalments	54,395	73,848

Bank loans and overdrafts are secured by a legal charge over the charity's premises.

Bank loans are repayable by monthly instalments of £1,820 until 2031 at an interest rate of 3% per annum over Base Rate.

#### 19 Deferred income

	2024 £	2023 £
Other deferred income	43,811	-
Deferred income is included in the financial statements as follows:		
Deferred income is included within:		
Current liabilities	43,811	-
Movements in the year:		
Deferred income at 1 April 2023	-	-
Resources deferred in the year	43,811	-
Deferred income at 31 March 2024	43,811	-

The deferred income arises in respect of income being received in the year which relates to a future accounting period and in respect of income received in the year where conditions for recognition have not been satisfied. The income will be released to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which it relates.

## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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#### 20 Retirement benefit schemes

##### Defined contribution schemes

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund.

The charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes was £36,480 (2023 - £31,204).

##### Defined benefit schemes

In prior years the Centre contributed to The Pensions Trust Northern Ireland Charities Pension Scheme (the Scheme). The Scheme is a multi-employer defined benefit scheme. The Scheme is funded and was not contracted out of the state scheme.

The Scheme closed to future accrual on 31 March 2009. There is currently no intention to wind-up the Scheme and it continues in paid-up form.

The Pension Trust commissions an actuarial valuation of the Scheme every three years. The main purpose of the valuation is to determine the financial position of the Scheme in order to determine the level of future contributions required so that the Scheme can meet its pension obligations as they fall due.

The actuarial valuation assesses whether the Scheme's assets at the valuation date are likely to be sufficient to pay the pension benefits accrued by members as at the valuation date. Asset values are calculated by reference to market levels. Accrued pension benefits are valued by discounting expected future benefit payments using a discount rate calculated by reference to the expected future investment returns.

During the accounting period 31 March 2024 the employer paid contributions of £4,525 to cover the deficit payments and scheme management costs.

It is not possible in the normal course of events to identify on a consistent and reasonable basis the share of underlying assets and liabilities belonging to individual participating employers. The Scheme is a multi employer scheme, where the scheme assets are co-mingled for investment purposes, and benefits are paid from total scheme assets.

The last formal completed valuation of the Scheme was performed as at 30 September 2022 by a professionally qualified actuary using the 'projected unit credit' method. The market value of the Scheme's assets at the valuation date was £22.8 million. The valuation revealed a shortfall of assets compared to liabilities of £3.2 million.

The results of the 2022 valuation means a new deficit recovery plan is required to fund the deficit of £2.4 million. This will run until 30 June 2037.

The Scheme Actuary has prepared an Actuarial Report that provides an approximate update on the funding position of the Scheme as at 30 September 2023. Such a report is required by legislation for years in which a full actuarial valuation is not carried out. The funding update revealed a decrease in the assets of the Scheme to £18.6 million (from £22.8 million at 30 September 2022) and indicated a decrease in the shortfall of assets compared to liabilities of approximately £4.4 million (from £3.2 million at 30 September 2022), equivalent to a past service funding level of 81% (88% at 30 September 2022).

Following a change in legislation in September 2005 there is a potential debt on the employer that could be levied by the Trustee of the Scheme. The debt is due in the event of the employer ceasing to participate in the Scheme or the Scheme winding up. The debt for the Scheme as a whole is calculated by comparing the liabilities for the Scheme (calculated on a buy-out basis i.e. the cost of securing benefits by purchasing annuity policies from an insurer, plus an allowance for expenses) with the assets of the Scheme. If the liabilities exceed the assets there is a buy-out debt.

## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 20 Retirement benefit schemes (Continued)

The leaving employer's share of the buy-out debt is the proportion of the Scheme's liability attributable to employment with the leaving employer compared to the total amount of the Scheme's liabilities (relating to employment with all the currently participating employers). The leaving employer's debt therefore includes a share of any 'orphan' liabilities in respect of previously participating employers. The amount of the debt therefore depends on many factors including total Scheme liabilities, Scheme investment performance, the liabilities in respect of current and former employees of the employer, financial conditions at the time of the cessation event and the insurance buy-out market. The amounts of debt can therefore be volatile over time.

Under FRS 102, where an entity participates in a multi-employer plan, and the entity had entered into an agreement with the multi-employer plan that determines how the entity will fund a deficit, the entity shall recognise a liability for the contributions payable that arise from the agreement and the resulting expense in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Movements in the present value of defined benefit obligations:

	2024 £
Liabilities at 1 April 2023	19,754
Benefits paid	(4,525)
Actuarial losses	44,158
Interest cost	902
	<hr/>
At 31 March 2024	60,289
	<hr/>

The above provision has assumed a discount rate of 4.71% per annum (2023 - 5.15% per annum) and is the equivalent single discount rate which, when used to discount the future recovery plan contributions due, would give the same results as using a full AA corporate bond yield curve to discount the same recovery plan contributions.

The Centre now uses The Pensions Trust as the provider of a Flexible Retirement Plan (defined contribution scheme) at a contribution rate of 7% from employers and a minimum 5% per employee. Contributions to this Scheme by the Centre have been accounted for by charging costs as payments accrue and no payments (2023 - £Nil) were outstanding at the year end.

#### 21 Designated funds

The income funds of the charity include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	Balance at 1 April 2022	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2023	Movement in funds Incoming resources	Balance at 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
ALB Legal Works Funds	10,165	9,835	20,000	-	20,000
Essential building maintenance	-	35,000	35,000	-	35,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	10,165	44,835	55,000	-	55,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>



## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 22 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds			Movement in funds			Transfers	Balance at
	Balance at 1 April 2022	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 1 April 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended		31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Department of Health	3,696	53,976	(53,976)	3,696	26,989	(26,989)	-	3,696
DOH SPPG	105,028	120,146	(197,631)	27,543	115,640	(120,313)	-	22,870
Department of Education	1,706	50,000	(51,244)	462	51,000	(51,084)	-	378
BBC Children in Need	3,893	40,500	(33,833)	10,560	22,000	(21,111)	-	11,449
Angel Eyes	314	25,000	(21,980)	3,334	20,000	(16,362)	-	6,972
Atlantic Philanthropies Capital Project	173,060	-	(3,628)	169,432	-	(3,587)	-	165,845
Esmee Fairbairn	4,520	-	(4,520)	-	-	-	-	-
Legal Education Foundation	36,438	72,000	(77,507)	30,931	66,000	(77,382)	-	19,549
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	110,955	150,000	(175,858)	85,097	140,000	(188,443)	-	36,654
The National Lotteries Community Fund	100,369	163,390	(133,346)	130,413	-	(105,579)	-	24,834
Children's Rights Alliance Research	15,447	5,137	(11,472)	9,112	-	(9,120)	8	-
Access to Justice	75,553	-	(74,004)	1,549	-	(1,713)	164	-
Dormant Accounts Fund NI	-	-	-	-	48,545	(26,951)	-	21,594
Department for Communities	2,324	-	(2,042)	282	-	(70)	-	212
Other grants	30	-	(2)	28	30,000	(23,014)	-	7,014
	<u>633,333</u>	<u>680,149</u>	<u>(841,043)</u>	<u>472,439</u>	<u>520,174</u>	<u>(671,718)</u>	<u>172</u>	<u>321,067</u>

## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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#### 23 Explanatory notes to Children's Law Centre reserve funds

##### Unrestricted funds

###### General funds

This fund is expendable at the discretion of the Directors for the general purposes of the charity. In addition, funds may be held in order to finance capital investment and essential working capital.

Transfers from general funds to restricted funds are made to cover the remaining costs incurred for specific projects which have not been met from other restricted monies.

###### Designated funds

£20,000 has been designated towards ALB Legal Work (previously known as Alpha Law Fund) to facilitate ongoing casework.

£35,000 has been designated to facilitate essential external building maintenance work in line with listed building requirements.

###### Pension reserve

The pension reserve represents contributions payable under an agreement with NICPS to fund prior year deficits. During the year there was a transfer of £4,525 into the pension reserve from general funds relating to deficit contributions paid in the year.

##### Restricted Funds

###### Department of Health

This funding partly covers salary costs for the Centre Director, Head of Legal Services, Head of Administration and Finance Unit and Administrative Assistant / Receptionist posts.

###### Department of Health Strategic Planning and Performance Group

This funding contract is used to provide an Independent Advice, Support & Mediation Service to children in need and their Parents and Carers acting on their behalf.

###### Department of Education

This funding is in relation to Special Education Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) Project inclusive of salary costs for SENDIST Representative and contribution to running costs.

###### BBC Children in Need

This funding is to provide advocacy support for vulnerable young people with mental health issues via a grant towards the salary of a Mental Health Adviser and associated running costs.

###### Angel Eyes NI

This funding is to assist and support Angel Eyes NI with their Equal Eyes Project - to raise awareness of visual impairment and impact on Children and Young People.

## CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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#### 24 Explanatory notes to Children's Law Centre reserve funds (continued)

##### Atlantic Philanthropies Capital Project

This funding was a grant contribution in a previous year towards the purchase and refurbishment of a building to be occupied by the Children's Law Centre.

##### Esmée Fairbairn

This grant is to provide core costs to secure the rights of disadvantaged young people in Northern Ireland.

##### Legal Education Foundation

This grant is to cover the salary and running costs for a Policy Manager.

##### Paul Hamlyn Foundation

This grant is to support strategic and operational development and growth of the centre. An additional expert support package and funding for young people to attend 2 UNCRC events in year 2022 and 2023.

##### The National Lotteries Community Fund REE

This grant is to allow the Children's Law Centre to utilise digital technology to continue development and delivery of digital solutions to young people's legal problems - REE Rights Responder.

##### Children's Rights Alliance

This funding is for collaborative research and consultation work on the rights of children on the island of Ireland.

##### Access to Justice

This funding covers three projects - solicitor salary and associated costs, CLC operational costs and one month associated costs for Immigration Solicitors work.

##### Dormant Accounts Fund NI

This two year grant is to cover salary and part running costs for the Training & Engagement Co-ordinator.

##### Department for Communities

This historic funding was for a project to Develop a Digital Legal Information and Advice Service for Children and Young People. Expenditure in year represents depreciation of asset.

##### Other grants

Other grants include the following:

##### Tesco Charity Trust

This fund relates to the acquisition of a fixed asset in a prior year. Expenditure in the year represents depreciation on the asset.

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

### 25 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:						
Intangible fixed assets	579	856	1,435	1,570	6,200	7,770
Tangible assets	51,335	179,803	231,138	52,244	188,950	241,194
Investment properties	196,725	17,275	214,000	196,725	17,275	214,000
Current assets/(liabilities)	324,508	123,133	447,641	288,101	260,014	548,115
Long term liabilities	(127,354)	-	(127,354)	(141,814)	-	(141,814)
Provisions and pensions	(60,289)	-	(60,289)	(19,754)	-	(19,754)
	<u>385,504</u>	<u>321,067</u>	<u>706,571</u>	<u>377,072</u>	<u>472,439</u>	<u>849,511</u>

### 26 Financial commitments, guarantees and contingent liabilities

(i) A portion of grants received may become repayable if the Centre fails to comply with the terms of the letters of offer.

(ii) During a prior year the charity received correspondence from The Pensions Trust in relation to a review the Trustee has undertaken regarding the application of changes to Northern Ireland Charities Pension Scheme benefits. The outcome of the review could give rise to an additional liability of approximately £58k.

During the prior year further correspondence was received in relation to a potential new item that has come out of the review. It relates to changes in legislation made by the Government to the measure of inflation used for increasing pensions already in payment and how this interacts with members' pensions provided under the Rules. It is anticipated that the Court will provide a ruling at the earliest in Q4 2024. At this stage the amount and likelihood of any additional liability arising from this change is not known.

The Pensions Trust have indicated that it is unlikely that any further liability will arise, therefore no provision for these items has been made in the financial statements.

### 27 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2023 - none).

### 28 Operating lease commitments

At the reporting end date the charity had outstanding commitments for future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases, which fall due as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Within one year	<u>312</u>	<u>312</u>

# CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

29	Cash generated from operations	2024	2023
		£	£
	Deficit for the year	(142,940)	(100,439)
	Adjustments for:		
	Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(49,273)	(38,404)
	Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	16,610	35,024
	Difference between pension charge and cash contributions	40,535	(5,138)
	Movements in working capital:		
	Decrease in debtors	751	92,798
	(Decrease) in creditors	(2,360)	(5,334)
	Increase in deferred income	43,811	-
	<b>Cash absorbed by operations</b>	<b>(92,866)</b>	<b>(21,493)</b>
30	Analysis of changes in net funds	At 1 April 2023	Cash flowsAt 31 March 2024
		£	£
	Cash at bank and in hand	553,265	(57,555) 495,710
	Loans falling due within one year	(14,071)	(717) (14,788)
	Loans falling due after more than one year	(141,814)	14,460 (127,354)
		397,380	(43,812) 353,568