

Springboard Opportunities Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name Springboard Opportunities Limited

Charity registration number 101249

Company registration number NI027175

Principal office and registered office Lourene House
112 - 114 Donegall St
Belfast
BT1 2GX

The trustees

J Redpath
D Rowan
I Jamison
S Kelly
H Bell
T Losty

Company secretary Stephanie O' Rourke

Auditor Finegan Gibson Ltd
Chartered accountants & statutory auditor
Causeway Tower
9 James Street South
Belfast
BT2 8DN

Structure, governance and management

Legal status

Springboard Opportunities Limited (Springboard) is a company limited by guarantee incorporated on 22 January 1993 and registered with the Inland Revenue on 6 September 2000. The Company registration number is NI027175 and the Charity Reference Number is XR26582. Our organisation was established in 1992 and incorporated in 1993. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended on 23 June 2016.

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Structure, governance and management *(continued)*

Trustees

Springboard applies a range of methods to appoint Trustees, this includes targeted advertising and/or using trustee brokerage services. Applicants are provided with detailed information including role specification and description along with details such as time commitment as well as process for application. Subject to approval by the Board, preferred candidates are identified and invited to join.

Springboard employs clear policies and procedures for a comprehensive induction of Trustees. All new Trustees are provided with a detailed induction pack which includes current Directors and Professional Advisors; roles and responsibilities and Code of Practice; information on Springboard. New Trustees also receive the most recent financial statements, Board meeting papers, a copy of the company's governance procedures and guidance from Charity Commission for N Ireland.

Trustees deploy a wide range of skills and experience essential to good governance and the balance of expertise is kept under review. The board has the responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of Springboard, ensuring the charity upholds its ethos and values and work is aligned to charity objects.

The Board of Springboard meet at least every 2 months and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. At these meetings, the Trustees agree broad strategy and areas of activity for the organisation, including consideration of governance, reserves and risk management policies and performance. At present the Board has six members with significant experience of the voluntary, community and public sector. The Company Secretary / Executive Director also attends the Board but has no voting rights. The Executive Director is responsible for the operational management of the charity. She is responsible for ensuring the charity delivers the services specified and that key objectives are met.

Those who serve on the Board of Springboard Opportunities Limited (Springboard) have responsibilities both under Company Law as Directors and under Charity Law as Trustees. Each new Director is asked to abide by Springboard's Code of Practice which defines the standards expected of Springboard Directors in order to ensure:

- the organisation is effective, open and accountable;
- the highest standards of integrity and stewardship is achieved; and
- the working relationship with any staff and advisers is productive and supportive.

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Structure, governance and management *(continued)*

Audit, Risk & HR Committee (ARHRC)

There is a requirement under current "Good Governance" procedures for Springboard to set up robust audit and governance systems. These will have a clear role in ensuring that the organisation meets the required standards of financial and legal probity and HR processes/systems. ARHRC has been delegated responsibility under Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 18th January 1993, Articles 50 and 51; on behalf of the Board for ensuring that there is a framework for accountability and oversight. Firstly, for examining and reviewing all systems and methods of control both financial and otherwise including risk analysis and risk management; and for ensuring the company which has charitable status, is complying with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations, good practise and governance. The Committee is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the internal and external audit functions and considers any significant issues arising in respect of either internal or external audit arrangements. ARHRC also reviews the adequacy of the internal control environment and risk management processes. With support of ARHRC, Directors conduct a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established and where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate risks the charity faces. This involves identifying the types of risks the company faces, prioritising them in terms of potential impact and likelihood of occurrence, and identifying means of mitigating the risks. Significant external risks to funding requires ongoing diversification of funding and activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with the health and safety of staff, volunteers, clients and visitors to the premises.

Secondly ARHRC advises the Board about the appointment and appropriate remuneration and terms of service for all staff, in line with the company's charitable status, relevant regulations, good practise, governance and compliant with all aspects of the law. The Committee is primarily responsible for the framework/broad policy for the appointment and pay of all staff, recommends level and structure of remuneration for senior management and considers disciplinary and grievance procedures and sensitive issues of dismissal, performance and complaint, as and when required.

The Terms of Reference of this Committee have been approved by the Board and recorded in Board minutes

Remuneration

The charity's Trustees and the senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis. All Directors give of their time freely and no Director received remuneration or benefited from their work with the charity in the year. Details of Directors' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in note 13 and 27 to the accounts.

The starting pay of all staff is outlined fully in Terms and Conditions of employment, with all staff placed on the NJC scale. Progression on the NJC scale is subject to satisfactory performance. All staff must have completed 6-months service to be eligible for an increment. Satisfactory performance is recommended by the Executive Director for final approval by the Board. In respect of the Executive Director, any increments are subject to approval by the Board. Increments and cost of living increases for all staff are subject to availability of budget.

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Structure, governance and management *(continued)*

Safeguarding

The charity's Trustees and staff place central importance on complying with requirements for the protection and safeguarding of young people and adults at risk. An Adult Safeguarding Champion and Deputy Designated Officers are in place with key Safeguarding policies kept up to date. The organisation also support staff to keep knowledge and skills up to date. During the audit year the organisation effectively dealt with concerns according to protocols.

Objectives and activities

The charity's purpose is reflected in their objects as contained within Springboard's Memorandum and Articles of Association. These objects promote public benefit within the island of Ireland as follows:

(a) To provide opportunities, by all or any of the following means;

- Provision of opportunities, by all or any of the following means, to members of socially and economically disadvantaged communities to enable them to develop their capacity and skills in such a way that they are better able to identify and to help them meet their needs and to participate more fully in their communities and society;
- Promotion of education, training or retraining and provision of work experience, particularly to unemployed people;
- Provision of assistance in personal development, business advice and consultancy; and
- Provision of support and activities that enable the development of skills, of capacity and capability that enhance social inclusion and participation in communities and society.

(b) To promote mutual understanding, equality and diversity between people from diverse backgrounds by:

- Promotion of education and raising awareness in equality and diversity and the elimination of discrimination on any ground including of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion;
- Provision of activities to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds; and
- Conducting or commissioning research on equality and diversity issues and making the results of same available to the public.

(c) To promote conflict resolution, reconciliation and peacebuilding within a national and international context to better understand the benefits of relief from suffering, building and maintaining social cohesion and trust within and between communities by:

- Promoting education into the causes and effects of conflict, reconciliation and peacebuilding; and
- Provision of support and activities that enable development of skills and capacity in conflict resolution, reconciliation and peacebuilding.

Main Activities undertaken for Public Benefit in Relation to these Objectives

Springboard trustees continue to ensure activities focus on public benefit and are within the context of the objects within the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Activities/services undertaken during the audit year were targeted at individuals and groups from disadvantaged communities and included the following.

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Objectives and activities *(continued)*



annually supports up to 48 young people aged 16-17 years (additional criteria apply for up to 24 years) who wish to build key personal and employability skills, gain essential skills and vocational qualifications in either youthwork or customer services. The rolling programme is funded by the Department of Economy.

Outcome Areas	Personal Development	Employability
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The YouthStart programme (2023-2025) is funded under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and delivered through a consortium of partners which includes Springboard, Kings Trust, Northern Ireland Youth Forum, Bytes, Start 360, Include Youth and led by Youth Action NI. Through the consortium the project aims to target 2,278 young people aged 16-30 years who are economically inactive, reside in high level areas of economic inactivity, are NEET and have complex needs.

Outcome Areas	Personal Development	Employability
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is a youth-led cross-community programme focusing on areas impacted by disadvantage and the legacy of the conflict. The programme supports 15 unemployed young people aged 16-25 years, particularly those at risk of paramilitary involvement and sectarianism. The programme themes are good relations, personal development and employability. During the audit year a 15-month Directions programme (Oct 2023-Dec 2024) was completed and a 12-month programme (Jan 2025-Dec 2025) commenced. Programmes are funded by International Fund for Ireland (IFI).

Outcome Areas	Good Relations	Personal & Social Development	Employability
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is an 18-month youth-led cross community programme in partnership with Greater Shankill Partnership. The programme builds understanding between the two communities on either side of Belfast's first 'peace-line' in Cupar Way. The programme involves 16 young people aged 16-21 years and programme themes are good relations, personal development, citizenship & leadership. The programme is funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI). Initially due to complete in Dec 2024 the programme received an extension from IFI to March 2025.

Outcome Areas	Good Relations	Personal & Social Development	Citizenship
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Led by Springboard in partnership with Roe Valley Residents Association, the Beyond25 research project explored peacebuilding practice with marginalised young people within an urban/rural environment in NI, and from North-South and East-West contexts. The project involved workshops, study visits to similar organisations in Ireland and England, and stakeholder consultations. The research report was launched through a webinar. The project was funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI).

Outcome Areas	Good Relations
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Year ended 31 March 2025

Objectives and activities *(continued)*



Journeys (2024-2027) is supported by PEACEPLUS and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). Journeys is an innovative cross community/cross border initiative of tailored programme interventions; to support distinct groups of disadvantaged & at-risk young people from diverse communities in Greater Belfast, Greater Limavady, Londonderry/Derry & Monaghan/Cavan to realise their potential & become active contributors to building a shared, united & more cohesive society. Together young people will build individual capacity, develop an appreciation of diversity & active citizenship. Journeys will design and deliver 12 tailored programmes per year supporting 1,728 young people overall. Springboard is lead partner, with partner organisations Roe Valley Residents Association (RVRA), Cavan Monaghan Education & Training Board (CMETB) and Creggan Enterprises (CE).

Outcome Areas	Good Relations	Personal & Social Development	Citizenship
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were cross-community programmes (2024-2025) aimed to work with 72 young people aged 14-17-year-olds from schools located in Belfast, Limavady, Ballymoney and Coleraine. The programme focused on building personal development and good relations culminating in a showcase activity. The programme was funded by NI Executive Office Central Good Relations Fund.

Outcome Areas	Good Relations	Personal & Social Development	Citizenship
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commenced Jan 2025 in audit year and will finish in Oct 2025. MSpace aims to reach, engage and support over 115 young people through recovery-based services. The programme will include one to one mentoring, health and wellbeing workshops and peer education activity. The programme also supported staff development and development of trauma-informed good practice. The programme was funded by Comic Relief NI impacting mental health in Northern Ireland fund and managed by Community Foundation Northern Ireland (CFNI).

Outcome Areas	Mental Health & Wellbeing	Personal Development
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Year ended 31 March 2025

283



239

2 Non-binary
2 Transgender

240

233

48

1

CNR

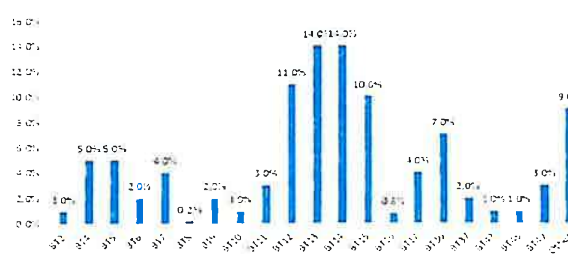
PUL

OTHER

NONE

58%
36%
6%

63% have been influenced by paramilitary activity (family, friendship group, environment)



3%



34%



26%



11%



9%



17%



■ in Education
 ■ Employed
 ■ Unemployed More Than 12 Months
 ■ Unemployed Between 6 and 12 Months
 ■ Economically Inactive

● Physical System	21
● Physical Design	10
● Physical Design Process	55
● Physical Design	10
● Physical Design Tools	50
● Physical Design of a System	29
● Physical Design of a System with Multiple Outputs	90
● Physical Design of a System with Multiple Inputs	112
● Physical Design of a System with Multiple Inputs and Outputs	21
● Physical Design of a System with Multiple Inputs and Outputs	109

60%

1%

3%

9%

3%

- Foundation / Key Stage 1 / Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 3
- Key Stage 4
- Key Stage 5
- Bachelor/Foundation Degree
- No Formal Qualification

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Achievements and performance

During the last audit year (2024-2025) Springboard was involved in the inception, delivery and management of significant activities and programmes in support of their charity objectives. Delivery focused on capacity building/employability, wellbeing, good relations, community participation and cohesion with activities designed and delivered within each or across these pillars. The organisation delivered significant impact and provided public benefit, through innovative programmes, strategic collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to addressing social challenges for young people and their communities.

During the audit period key programme achievements for the organisation included the following:

The **HeadStart** programme is a rolling programme supporting young people to build key personal and employability skills. During 2024-2025 young people achieved Essential Skills in English, Maths and ICT a wide range of qualifications in OCN Personal Success & Wellbeing, OCN Employability, in addition to either OCN Youth Work Practice or OCN Business Admin. Young people engaged in intensive work placements and world of work activities, including site visits to Ulster University, Coca-Cola and Lidl. In evaluation 95% of young people stated they feel more prepared to move into employment, education or training as a result of participating in HeadStart.

I left school thinking education wasn't for me. HeadStart has completely changed my perception of learning. I'm really enjoying education for the first time. I have gained more qualifications than I did my entire time in school and the confidence to attend a work placement.

YouthStart is funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund and in partnership with local organisations. It works with 16-30 year olds who are economically inactive and living within an urban setting. During the audit year, the programme engaged with a wide range of young people including young parents, refugees, those living with disabilities, addictions, poverty, homelessness, care experienced young people, young people involved in the criminal justice system and those who have been disengaged from any support for a number of years. Young people achieved qualifications eg NOCN Level 2 Skills for Employment, Training and Personal Development and participated in industry specific training including CSR construction skills, security and attended tailored employability workshops responsive to the varied needs of young people. The Multiply programme also funded by UKSPF was a short-term funded project under YouthStart that aimed at supporting young people with numeracy skills and finance management. Participants completed a Level 1 qualification on understanding financial services and benefits, money management, staying safe online, digital footprints, credit and interest rates and online banking. YouthStart completed 205% of its completion target number in 2024-25. 90% of young people on the programme successfully progressed into employment, education or training.

"Youth Start supported me to move from being a single father stuck in the benefit trap for over 12 years to having a full-time job landscaping in Stormont. I'm living my dream and finally feel like a positive role model my children can look up to."

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Achievements and performance *(continued)*

Both **Directions** programmes engaged with young people with complex and multiple barriers, including homelessness, mental ill-health, substance misuse and relationship breakdowns. Poverty, and rising cost of living have been pressing concerns, with staff providing tailored support and engaging with specialist services as needed. As a result of their involvement participants demonstrated improved social and emotional capabilities, built their capacity and identified greater involvement in their communities for example volunteering with food banks. An integral part of programmes was good relations development, with participants building improved awareness of self, others and respect for diversity. Upon their completion in December 2024, 100% of participants stated they better understood differing communities to their own and had a more positive attitude towards people of a different culture, tradition or background to their own. The current Directions programme concludes in December 2025.

"The Directions programme has supported me to make more positive choices in my life and exposed me to so many people I never imagined I would have connected with before this."

The **Wall2Wall** project worked with young people on either side of Belfast's 'peace-line' in Cupar Way to build understanding between the two communities. Participants explored the impact of the peace-line, within the local context of division and the 'Troubles'. In addition to the perspective of both sides to the divide with local activists, the group developed life skills that foster good relations through the medium of workshops, capacity-building activities and an international study visit to the city of Nicosia, Cyprus. The workshops and activities formed the backdrop to how division started in a local context, which participants used to draw on lessons through an international lens during their study visit. Overall, the educational cultural visits as well as facilitated sessions contributed to greater understanding for the group, and more importantly enabled them to become more confident in having discussions around identity, challenging prejudices and discussions on peace barriers and their impact. The programme fostered a positive group dynamic, where young people felt a sense of belonging and felt more empowered to have their voices heard on the future of peace walls in NI. This was further evidenced by the youth-led impact report 'Wall2Wall Capturing Youth Voices' which was launched in Ulster University at the closure of the project. An external evaluation by independent evaluator Dr. Shelley McKeown Jones at Oxford University Innovation Ltd. found the programme personally and socially 'transformational'. 100% of young people became more involved in their communities as a result of participating in the programme, with 100% also stating they better understand different communities, cultures and traditions to their own.

"Joining the 'Wall2Wall' group wasn't something I had planned to do but I am so glad I did. We talked about the wall and division and for the first time I understood so many different perspectives on this place we called home. I started to create my own beliefs on things rather than just taking on what other people had told me. Wall2Wall helped me realise the peace walls have EVERYTHING to do with me."

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Achievements and performance *(continued)*

2024-2025 also saw Springboard explore approaches to further embed peace and reconciliation beyond 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. The research project, **Beyond25**, considered impacts of division and conflict on young people, highlighting the ongoing pervasive impacts of 'them and us' aspects of everyday life, ongoing high levels of trauma and mental ill-health and growing challenges of global displacement on communities.

"Springboard to me is a safe but also neutral environment where it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from or your religion or background because you are accepted and respected for who you are"

During 2024-25 Springboard further expanded its provision to support young people. With the organisation successfully launching the 4-year PEACEPLUS funded Children and Young People **Journeys** initiative, along with partner organisations in Limavady, Derry/Londonderry and border counties in Cavan/Monaghan. To date the partnership has supported the development of 508 young people, across four themes of personal development, good relations, citizenship and employability. Springboard provision engaged 194 young people and on completion, 95% of young people found it easy to have an open and positive attitude towards young people from a different background. In its first year, the initiative also convened youth work practitioners for a roundtable focused on peacebuilding approaches, and formed a youth advisory group that went on to lead a series of events, including a youth panel addressing key issues affecting young people.

"The Journeys programme taught us the importance of good relations and coming together to build a better understanding of one another. It has helped me feel empowered to become more involved in my community and advocate for change."

During 2024-2025 Springboard also worked with 14-17 year olds on two programmes, **Fusion+ Belfast** working with schools in Belfast and **Fusion+ North West** working with schools in Limavady, Ballymoney & Coleraine. The programme involved good relations workshops which explored identity, difference, community and diversity through collaborative team activities. Key highlights from the projects were the programmes social action projects where participants celebrated diversity and working together whilst also addressing key issues within communities. Participants on both programmes also worked together to create podcasts on youth rights, participation and the environment including carbon footprint and recycling. Fusion+ programmes also demonstrated significant distance travelled on good relations with 88% of participants, at programme end stating that they found it easy to have a positive attitude towards others from a different community background or tradition.

"This programme helped my confidence grow so much. I loved getting out of my own school to meet new people, it helped me realise we are all the same"

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Achievements and performance *(continued)*

Towards the end of this audit period Springboard was awarded funding for M-Space, a wellbeing programme. The programme will support young people aged 14-25 years old residing in areas of socio-economic deprivation. Young people will increase their social and emotional capabilities and improve their wellbeing through a variety of interventions including sustained group workshops, one to one mentoring, peer to peer sessions, training and youth-led wellbeing events. The project will also impact the wider community by supporting the leadership development of 15 youth Mental Health Ambassadors, who in turn, will actively promote positive mental health and wellbeing to their peers and families. As a result of the grant the Springboard staff team will also become upskilled in a wide range of specialist training and become more effective as trauma informed practitioners, and better equipped to support young people.

The 2024-2025 year has been pivotal for the organisation. Beyond the significant progress made by participants in their programmes, as evidenced in evaluation and impact data captured, it is significant 94% of young people said their participation had a major positive impact on their life, and that 97% said they would absolutely recommend Springboard to their friends. Springboard remains committed to continuing to support positive change.

Financial review

During the twelve-month period ended 31st March 2025 Springboard Opportunities net income was £284,424 £ (2024: deficit of £26,762).

Principal funding sources

The organisation had a range of funding sources during the audit period. The principal funding sources for the organisation were Community Relations Council, PEACEPLUS for the Journeys programme, Department for Economy Skills for Life and Work programme for HeadStart, UK Shared Prosperity Fund for YouthStart & Multiply, International Fund for Ireland for Directions and Wall2Wall. Funding was also secured through The Executive Office and Comic Relief through Community Foundation for N Ireland.

The Peace Plus programme has resulted in a trade debtor of £1.2million in the year, and a corresponding trade creditor of £551k in the year. This accounts for the SEUPB money due and the element of this which is due to the Peace Plus partners.

Investment powers and policy

Under the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the charity has the power to invest in any way the Directors wish. However aside from retaining an amount in reserves each year (if available) most of the charity's funds are spent on activities as agreed with funders. The Directors have operated a policy of ensuring reserve funds are held in an interest-bearing account.

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Financial review *(continued)*

Reserves policy and going concern

The policy of the charity is to establish and maintain sufficient levels of reserves which ensure Springboard's core activity could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty or emergency such as asset recovery, funding gaps in allocation and / or meet contractual obligations should the organisation have to reduce/close. This includes redundancy pay, amounts due to creditors and commitments made under leases.

In light of this policy, members of the Audit, Risk & HR Committee (ARHRC) review reserves and risks on an ongoing basis, with Directors carrying out an annual examination of the charity's requirements for reserves and consideration of the main risks to the company. This examination takes account of the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match variable income with fixed commitments and the nature of the reserves. The Directors have concluded that to allow the charity to be managed efficiently, and to provide a buffer, a general reserve which equates to approximately 3-6 months of expenditure should be available. Directors continue to explore the level of reserves and are considering ways in which additional funds can be raised. They are also aware this may be difficult given the backdrop of limited resources and ongoing constraints around funding and therefore are also committed to ongoing economies should circumstances arise where reserves are required. The next review of reserves will take place at the Annual General Meeting in October 2025.

The total reserves held at the period end were £1,055,946. Unrestricted reserves freely available to spend, therefore excluding fixed assets, restricted reserves and designated reserves amounted to £927,772 which was in line with the target level. Restricted reserves at the period end equated to £115,976. The trustees believe this represents a sufficient level of reserve to ensure that the going concern assumption is appropriate.

Plans for future periods

Over the next twelve months Springboard plans to build on the learning and experiences of services and activities as outlined above, as aligned within our company objectives. During 2025-2026 the organisation will continue to deliver contracted programmes and develop new programmes secured at the latter end of the audit year, ie MSpace from the Comic Relief Mental Health Fund in NI, APEX Housing Conflict Awareness and Transformation Project and the ACCEPT PEACEPLUS project. Fundraising will also continue to underpin sustainability, further support young people and contribute to building a peaceful and cohesive society.

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.

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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;
- 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

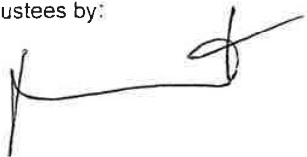
Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- 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 a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 14 October 2025 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



J Redpath
Trustee