

Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd

Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2025

The Trustees (who are also Directors of the company) submit their annual report and the audited consolidated financial statements of Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd and its subsidiary for the year ended 31 March 2025. This report constitutes the Strategic Report and the Trustees' Report required under the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland ((FRS 102 effective 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS 102))), in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the group and charitable company.

Reference and administrative information

Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd was established as a voluntary independent hospice since 1989. It was incorporated in June 2000.

Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd is registered with the Charity Commission NI (Charity Number NIC101906), is a company limited by guarantee and is registered with the Companies Registrar (Company number NI038737). It is also recognised as a charity by HM Revenue and Customs, XN 47329/2. The Trustees and Secretary of the charity are listed on page 2. The principal and registered office of the charity is also listed on page 2 together with details of the professional advisers and bankers.

Structure, governance and management

Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd, by virtue of common Trustees and power to govern operations, controls the activities of Southern Area Hospice Services Lottery Limited, which has the objective of raising funds for the Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd. Southern Area Hospice Services Lottery Limited operates a weekly lottery to generate funds for the Hospice.

Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd is governed by a Board of Directors (who are also known as Trustees for the purposes of the Charity Law). It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Board of Directors – ensuring good governance

The Board of Directors (Trustees) are listed on page 2. The Directors are responsible for approving the strategies and policies and for ensuring that these are implemented. The Board of Directors meets regularly to comply with its statutory responsibilities. In the reporting period, the Board had 6 full Board meetings and several workshops to consider the rebranding of the Hospice and the capital project – further information on pages 13.

The Chairperson is accountable to the Board of Directors and responsible for the efficient running of Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd with the help of the Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team. The Directors (Trustees) are not remunerated.

The Board Committee structure is well embedded and operating effectively. It is as set out below.

The Clinical Governance Committee provides oversight and scrutiny of service provision (clinical governance, service quality, patient safety, and clinical standards); service performance; service development and clinical leadership. The Committee is chaired by Patrick Loughran and has 4 members including him. It met 4 times in this reporting period. In the last reporting period, the Medical Advisory Committee developed and broadened its scope. It further became a committee, under the responsibility of the Director of Care and Lead Consultant, reporting to the CEO and Clinical Governance Committee. During this reporting period this way of working has bedded in well with the Clinical Governance Committee noting continued substantial improvements in reporting on all matters to them. This Committee meets quarterly and had its 4 required meetings in this reporting period.

The Resources Committee provides oversight and scrutiny of Human Resources, Income Generation, Finance, IT, Support Services (facility management services, administration, health, and safety and GDPR) and Investment Management. The Committee continues to have a demanding agenda but has continued to note that the significant direction of travel in improving the robustness of reports is very positive, ensuring the

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resources available are used and accounted for appropriately. They have also been ensuring that transformation continues to take place in the areas it has responsibility for. The Committee consists of five members of the Board of Directors and is chaired by Donna Houston. In this reporting period, the Committee met 6 times. Throughout this period the Committee agreed to schedule its meetings on a quarterly basis with additional meetings being called as necessary to deal with scheduled or emergent matters.

The Audit and Risk Committee provides oversight and scrutiny of strategic risk management; internal audit; external audit; and management responses identified by any audit process. All of this is to ensure the adequacy of assurance for all corporate governance matters relevant to Southern Area Hospice Services. In addition, the Committee can request any other specific work required to adequacy of governance, assurance, and probity. The Committee has 3 members, 2 of whom are Board members, and the 3rd is a co-optee. This year whistleblowing and fraud became a standing agenda item to reflect best practice. The Committee is chaired by Monica Duffy and in this reporting period it met 6 times. On 1 of these occasions, it was a joint meeting with the resources Committee to consider the budget for 2025-26.

The Remuneration and Nominations Committee met twice in the reporting period and is chaired by Orla McPolin. Its functions from a remuneration perspective are to set CEO and Director salaries, pay-scales for the remainder of the organisation and to ensure compliance with equality legislation. Its Nomination functions are to ensure good board governance is maintained, to recommend appointments to the Board, and to oversee the appointment of the CEO and Directors.

The Capital Development and Infrastructure Committee is responsible for ensuring that capital projects deliver the desired outcome, progress to plan and budget and that key risks are identified and managed. The Committee is involved in projects from concept to delivery with a focus on the capital works needed to futureproof the estate requirements for the Hospice. It has 4 members – 3 Board members and 1 co-optee – and is chaired by Roger Wilson. It met twice during this reporting period though additional regular updates were provided to the Board to update them on work that was underway to further develop the business case to consider how best to improve the infrastructure requirements of the Hospice into the future. Further details on this project are on page 13.

It should be noted that co-optees to Committees of the Board are not Trustees and therefore not Directors.

Conflicts of Interest

As a matter of good governance, actual and perceived conflicts of interest are reviewed on a regular basis. All Board members and senior managers are required to make an annual declaration regarding any conflicts of interest, and a schedule of responses is maintained. In addition, the declaration of conflicts of interest is a standing agenda item for each meeting of the Board and its Committees, with all present being asked to declare if they have any conflicts of interest regarding any agenda items. There were no significant matters managed during the reporting period.

Appointment of new Trustees

New Trustees are recruited by open recruitment by existing Directors to fulfil specific roles and skills on the Board. The potential Trustee is then interviewed by the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary of the Board regarding their willingness to become a Trustee and their potential contribution to the Hospice is considered. Following this, any potential Trustee is presented to the Board for their consideration and approval. There were no new Trustees appointed during this reporting period.

Induction and training of Trustees

Induction and training for new Trustees is similar to those set out for all employees of the charity. They are given an overview of the aims, objectives, and achievements, introduced to the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team, are provided with a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Hospice UK manual on Director responsibilities and details of the recent financial performance of the charity. All new Trustees meet with other existing Trustees, and they are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events should they facilitate the undertaking of their role.

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Retirement and rotation of Trustees

The term of office of a Trustee shall be for a maximum of three terms of three years each. A retiring Trustee of the board may be re-elected under these terms. The Trustees who retire in accordance with this regulation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last election but where persons who become Trustees on the same day retire (unless they otherwise agree among themselves), they are determined by lot.

Management

The Board is responsible for governance at a strategic level and meets regularly with the Chief Executive who is responsible for day-to-day management of the company supported by the Senior Leadership Team. The Chair of the Board meets regularly with the Chief Executive outside of formal meeting structures and processes. The Committees of the Board also meet regularly with the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team to review performance and address any emergent issues.

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team comprises of the Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Care, and the Director of Development. Pay and remuneration is set by appropriate benchmarking and approved by the remuneration committee. Total cost of the Senior Leadership Team salaries and wages is £353,743 in this reporting period.

Objectives and Activities

The Hospice supports patients with complex, life-limiting conditions to live well with their condition from the point of diagnosis right through to end-of-life. SAH provides patient-centred, wrap-around support for patients' physical, emotional, spiritual, and social needs. It also supports families and carers with their emotional and social needs.

The Hospice's services fall into 2 main categories: inpatient services and community-based services. The services in both areas are holistic in nature, comprehensively supporting the patient and their family. We have extremely professional and expert multi-disciplinary teams who ensure that our services, both in the inpatient unit and community, are of a high quality, evidenced based and safe. The Hospice has received funding from the Department of Health's Cancer Charities Support Fund to better support patients with a palliative cancer diagnosis. This funding enabled a further development of its community services to ensure a more targeted and multi-disciplinary approach that works in a collaborative way with other service providers in the Southern Trust area. This funding ended in the reporting period. The Hospice acknowledges and thanks the Cancer Charity Support Fund for its funding. However, the Hospice is disappointed that there have been no funding streams put in place by Commissioners to help sustain these services which have demonstrated they are needed and not only are of high quality but give patients and their families considerable care and support to help them to be managed better outside of more costly acute services. Following an internal review of the services developed with the Cancer Charity Funds a decision was made in this reporting period that the Hospice would sustain the services at risk whilst it grew income to mitigate the risk.

Details of the Hospice's services and the activity levels of each of these services are provided in the Strategic Report section.

Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd is a member hospice of Hospice UK and became a full member of the All-Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care in the reporting period. We continue to develop links with other hospices at both a local and a national level.

Public Benefit

This has been another exceptional year due to the continuing cost-of-living challenges on income generation and on our operating costs. Our focus has been on continuing to provide services in a safe and effective way. The report demonstrates that the Hospice has had a successful year in this regard.

Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd continues to meet the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102 and in line with its charitable objectives as detailed throughout this report.

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Volunteers

The charity is involved in the community and is dependent on voluntary help. Our 250 volunteers make a huge contribution to the work of the Hospice, bringing a diversity of skills and experience. Our volunteers contribute across many areas of the charity including reception and administrative duties, helping patients at mealtimes, providing reflexology and counselling as well as transporting patients to and from Hospice appointments and working in the Hospice gardens. Volunteers contribute greatly to various fundraising activities and provide general assistance with many fundraising events. The volunteers bring an extra dimension to the atmosphere of the Hospice. Their skills and contribution enhance our service and make an impact on the lives of our patients, their families, and our staff. The Hospice could not operate without the invaluable contribution of volunteers to its various departments and events and are deeply appreciative of our volunteers. In June 2024 we held a successful event to recognise the contribution of our volunteers, this was attended by 100 volunteers.

In Gratitude

The Board wish to convey their sincere thanks to our staff and the many volunteers who have so generously given their support to the organisation. With the continued support of our staff and volunteers, we look forward to continuing to enhance the delivery of our charitable services within the community.

Acknowledgements

The Board wish to sincerely thank all individuals, communities and companies who have supported and donated to us throughout this year, including many fundraising events and many supporters have yet again overwhelmed us with their generosity. The Hospice is extremely grateful for this support and financial assistance – it could not provide its services to the community without this.

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Strategic Report

Achievements and Performance

Overall

The Trustees are pleased to report that significant progress was made towards achieving the Hospice's objectives (detailed on pages 6 above). The Hospice covers the Southern Health and Social Care Trust geographical area, which includes counties of Down, Armagh and parts of Tyrone.

Care Services

We provide both inpatient and community support. Our Hospice Team is a multi-disciplinary team working together to provide specialist palliative care and treatment to patients and their family. Our experienced team focus not only on physical care but also on emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing. We tailor our services to individual needs and those of the family. The main aim of our Hospice services is to help patients who have received a palliative diagnosis live and die well with their condition.

Our Inpatient Clinical Team consists of consultants, doctors, nurses, health care assistants, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists. The Patient and Family Support Team consists of chaplains, social workers, and counsellors and complementary therapists.

The Hospice Community Outreach Team offer patients, and their families care in their home or at our Wellbeing centres in Newry and Dungannon. These services involve patient support, carers support, counselling, bereavement support and an Out of Hours Nursing Care at Home for those at end of Life. Our Community Team consist of nurses, social workers, chaplains, physiotherapist and complementary therapists.

Inpatient Services

Our 12-bed Adult Inpatient Unit continues to provide holistic care for patients with complex symptoms, those at the end of life, and those requiring respite care. A highly trained, multidisciplinary team supports both patients and their families, focusing on the whole person—addressing not only physical health but also emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

This year, we had 226 new admissions, with a total of 239 patients receiving care. Bed occupancy reached 90%, an increase from last year's 87.3%. The average length of stay was 16.3 days, rising from 15.1 days the previous year. First-time admissions accounted for 166 patients, while 73 were readmitted. Of those cared for, 138 patients were discharged either back home with improved symptom management or to their preferred place of care.

Beyond nursing and medical support, inpatient therapy sessions totalled 7,301 this year, a significant rise from last year's 5,781. Patients and their families benefited from 6,525 face-to-face therapeutic support sessions and 776 telephone support sessions, provided by social workers, chaplains, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and complementary therapists.

Session type	Session numbers	Session numbers	Session numbers
	2024/5	2023/4	2022/3
Social work	2,151	2,209	1,911
Chaplaincy	2,890	2,655	1,811
Physiotherapy	974	492*	1,461
Occupational Therapy	1,065	196**	Service not available
Complementary Therapy	221	229	248
Total	7,301	5,781	5,431

Note:

* Staff vacancy from April – December 2023

** new service introduced in January 2024

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Community Services

Our Community Services model offers integrated, multidisciplinary palliative support for adults over the age of 18 and their families. This service provides physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual care to individuals with palliative illnesses. Support is delivered either in the patient's home or at one of our Wellbeing centers in Dungannon or Newry. Depending on patient and family needs, services can be provided individually or as part of a group.

Over the past year, we received 458 new referrals to SAHS community services, with 664 individuals actively receiving support—an increase from last year's total of 614. We provided 7,360 therapeutic sessions to patients, carers, and bereaved families, marking a rise from last year's 6,854 sessions.

Of those receiving support, 562 were affected by cancer, while 102 had non-cancer-related palliative conditions.

Breakdown of sessions delivered:

- 296 Patients supported
- 136 Carers/relatives supported
- 232 Bereaved individuals supported
- 1,702 sessions delivered at home
- 2,493 sessions provided at Wellbeing Centres or community settings
- 3,165 telephone or virtual sessions conducted
- 936 one-to-one patient support sessions
- 486 one-to-one carer support sessions
- 576 one-to-one bereavement support sessions
- 729 counselling sessions
- 1,966 complementary therapy sessions
- 878 group sessions

Group work consists of

- Living Well Café for patients and Carers in our Wellbeing Centres.
- Monthly Family Night Bereavement groups for parents, teens, and younger children
- Bereavement Journey
- Bereavement Walking Group
- Bereavement Walk in Café

OOH Nursing Care at home.

Our Out-of-Hours Nursing Service was launched in July 2023 to provide on-call nursing care for patients at home who have a cancer diagnosis and are nearing the end of life. The service was extended to all palliative patients from November 2024. The service is available 365 nights per year and operates between 22:00 and 08:00 and is delivered in the BT35 postcode area and Newry City areas.

The service ensures timely and effective symptom management of patients referred who are in the final days of life. It supports families, helping them recognise and navigate the dying process with confidence. The service also reduces loneliness and social isolation for both patients and their loved ones. Emotional and spiritual support is provided throughout this critical time.

During the reporting period, 67 patients and their families received care, bringing the total number of supported individuals since July 2023 to 100. The service has enabled patients to remain at home, in comfort, symptom-free, and in their preferred place of death.

Key service statistics for 2024/25 include:

- 257 nights of active service
- 1,542 telephone support sessions
- 377 home visits

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Additional achievements in Care Services

Significant investments were made during the reporting period to enhance the Care Services team and to make sure that we continue to develop the expertise of the whole team. This included the following:

Investment in people and training

- 2 Specialty doctors recruited.
- Interim Pharmacist recruited.
- 1 staff member undertaking the Specialist Palliative Care Social Work Award is nearing completion of the programme.
- 1 staff member undertaking the MSc Advance Nurse Practitioner Course is nearing completion of the programme.
- Specialist Nursing Practice & Non-medical Prescribing programmes commenced
- Training placements provided for medical and nursing students at both under and post graduate level.

Additional collaborative and partnership work by the Care Service team in the Hospice include:

- The Reflexology service has expanded to 80 hours per week, with the addition of six volunteer reflexologists.
- Specialist Palliative Medicine Out-of-Hours telephone advice is available to SHSC Trust medical staff, both in the community and hospital settings, through collaboration with Trust Consultant colleagues.
- The Patient and Family Support Team Manager chairs the Northern Ireland Association of Palliative Care Social Workers.
- The SAH Advance Nurse Practitioner Trainee serves as Chair of the Senior Nursing Group.
- Ongoing collaboration with Life and Time and SHSCT to co-design and deliver sessions within the Community Palliative Care Out-of-Hours Nursing Service ECHO Network.
- The Out-of-Hours Nursing Service and its impact was presented at the first-ever nursing presentation in the Palliative Care Congress Conference.
- The impact of our counselling services and advanced care planning was highlighted in a dedicated Motor Neuron Disease workshop.

Infection management

The SAHS inpatient unit operates within a well-established facility, where patient rooms are compact and lack ensuite amenities. While the building's age presents operational and maintenance challenges, infection prevention and control measures remain exemplary, consistently achieving high compliance standards. A collaborative approach among staff ensures that infection control procedures are carried out efficiently and consistently, reinforcing the hospice's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of IPC practices.

Our Team

The staff within all functions of the Hospice have continued to show resiliency and commitment throughout the reporting period. The Board of Directors would like to thank all staff for their ongoing dedication and commitment to the Hospice.

Staff Objectives and Performance

Employees are set objectives which outline their responsibilities, and which are reviewed regularly to ensure compliance. There is an increased focus on developing staff to strengthen their performance and allow them to attain their maximum potential which in turn benefits the Hospice and our patients. Training is refreshed as required to ensure adherence to all requirements.

During the reporting period, we have further developed the training provision for our Care Services team and others to enhance our skills base, knowledge, and learning.

Inspection

All care services are the subject of unannounced, annual inspections by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA). The latest inspection took place in March 2025. We are pleased to report that the report from this inspection was positive, particularly in relation to the quality of care provided and infection

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control standards. Inspectors were extremely complimentary about the knowledge, motivation, and commitment of all staff they spoke with. We were advised that the standard of care we provide is excellent and of a very high standard. We were further advised that there was excellent communication within and across teams. The inspections commended the good management of what is recognised as an aged facility. They further advised that they observed good governance, management and leadership in the Hospice.

Income Generation

The response from all supporters this year was incredible. Once again, their commitment to the Hospice has proven to be incredibly impactful. Despite the ongoing formidable challenges faced by our local community, support groups, and businesses they have continued to rally behind our cause with amazing generosity and support.

Thanks to the tremendous kindness of our supporters, we achieved an outstanding total income of £3.42 million for the year. This extraordinary accomplishment was made possible through the success of various campaigns and initiatives, as individuals and businesses enthusiastically took up their fundraising efforts. As we do each year, we extend our thanks to John Dalzell OBE, who completed his 33rd Annual Christmas Sit Out and made an incredible donation of £116,000.

We are very grateful for the legacy donations received this year, totalling £218,000, these donations show the extraordinary generosity of our supporters, whose thoughtful inclusion of the Hospice in their Wills ensures a sustained and meaningful impact for years to come.

Whilst operating in very challenging economic conditions our Corporate and Trust partners played a pivotal role this year by raising an amazing £495,000, exemplifying their commitment to our cause. The Hospices annual Lights Campaign held in the run up to Christmas which provides a source of hope and joy during what can be a challenging time for those who attend generated £102,000 this year. The ever-popular Car Draw raised its highest ever total of £125,000, which is a fantastic accomplishment by all involved. Local schools fund raised a fantastic £30,000 for Hospice care and our amazing Supporter Groups which are located across the Southern Trust donated a total of £158,000.

Some further information about how funds have been raised:

Community: Community fundraising, which traditionally serves as the cornerstone of our support, has delivered remarkable results raising £1.08 million. This was achieved against a backdrop of an increasingly competitive fundraising environment, an ongoing cost of living crisis, and global issues impacting people's ability to give. We extend our deepest gratitude to our generous community members for their continued support, as their contributions make a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve.

Event Income: This year we received a remarkable £951,000 of event income, reflecting a growth of individuals opting for experiential fundraising events. Participants ran marathons, jumped out of planes, and undertook challenging treks and walks, creating lifelong memories while supporting our cause. We are grateful for the enthusiasm and dedication of these supporters, whose efforts have contributed significantly to our fundraising success.

Corporate Donations: Corporates donated a fantastic £381,000 this year. This reflects the commitment of local businesses to support the Hospice's work despite a difficult economic landscape. We recognise the critical role they play in addressing societal needs and driving positive change and highlights a growing recognition among businesses of the relationship between corporate philanthropy and long-term business sustainability.

Trust Donations: Trust donations are a growing source of funding for the Hospice, and this year, we were privileged to receive donations, totalling £94,000. We were delighted and honoured to again receive a donation from the Brian Conlon Foundation.

Donor Development: Donations received in memory of a loved one totalled £168,000 whilst Regular Givers raised £53,000. Gift Aid is an important revenue stream as it allows the Hospice to claim an additional 25% of each donation amount from the government. This year Gift Aid donations generated £159,000 of income. We encourage all eligible donors to sign up for Gift Aid, helping us maximize the impact of their contributions.

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Lottery: The Hospice's lottery program generated a notable contribution of £79,628 to the Hospice after all costs and prizes. This despite having staff challenges to focus and develop lottery income. The table below illustrates the main areas of fundraising income during the year.

Income source	Amount raised £000's.
Community Fundraising	1,076
Legacies	214
Corporate	381
Events	951
Individual/regular donations	53
Gift aid	159
Trusts	94
Lottery	79

To achieve such exceptional results amidst an extremely challenging and competitive funding environment is a testament to the unwavering commitment of our staff, volunteers, community, and corporate supporters. The Hospice extends its sincere thanks to every individual who has stood by our side, demonstrating their incredible support. We are profoundly indebted to every person who has played a role in our continued success.

Communications

The Communications Team has been bedding down during the reporting period. There have been some challenges due to changes within the team. That said the need to improve our communications, and digital presence remains, and the Hospice is committed to delivering on this so that we can reach more patients who need our services and grow our supporters. The main initiatives in the reporting period were the development of our new brand and website which are detailed below.

During this year considerable evidence was provided to the Health Committee who are conducting an inquiry into access to palliative care in N. Ireland. For the Hospice, this included not only talking about the services we provide but also the need to improve access to services. One of the key components of improving access is to substantially change the funding model that the Department of Health has with each Hospice in N. Ireland. We have submitted a written submission, hosted a visit for members of the Health Committee to visit us and given oral evidence. The Inquiry is expected to report in 2025.

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Branding and website

We are deeply indebted to receiving funds from Dormant Assets NI delivered by the National Lottery Community Foundation to help us with this work under their improving the sustainability of charities initiative. We appointed independent expert providers to work with us on reviewing our current brand and website. This involved significant consultation with the Board and then staff within the Hospice. External stakeholders were also consulted as well. The information emerging from this confirmed we needed to significantly improve our web presence, and we needed a completely new brand to better position us across our geographical area. On the 1st April 2025 the Board approved a name change and new logo –



From the 18th June 2025 the trading name for Southern Area Hospice Services will be Evora Hospice. The Hospice plans to change its legal name in the reporting period 2025-26. Work on the embedding the new brand and website will continue into the next reporting period.

Improving the infrastructure of the Hospice

The Capital Development Committee have developed a roadmap to deliver on the strategic imperative of the Hospice (as set out in its strategy 2023 - 2028) to improve the accommodation of the inpatient unit to meet future needs and expectations. During the reporting period work has continued on the business case to determine the best option for the Hospice going forward. Key partners (SHSCT and Department of Health) are being kept informed and being consulted as appropriate.

On the 1st April 2025 the Board considered the updated business case and decided that having considered all the information and analysis that they should accept the updated business case in its entirety recognising that much more work needed to be done on this. They agreed that we should now communicate to our internal and external stakeholders that we have the vision and ambition to build a new hospice in the Newry area. It was further agreed that an engagement period with stakeholders should now occur to ascertain views and opinions to shape and refine the Hospice's ambition.

A feasibility study was also completed to understand what the scope and capability would be for a capital fundraising campaign. This reported that whilst there should be capability an ongoing assessment of the costs to deliver the preferred option vis-à-vis the ability to raise the funds is carefully monitored as the projects developed. The Board has agreed to appoint a senior resource to develop and deliver a capital income strategy and to set up a new Committee of the Board to provide strategic direction on funding and marketing. These matters will be taken forward in 2025-26.

Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028 Year 2

During the reporting year, the Senior Leadership Team managed the implementation of actions planned for year two in the strategic plan agreed last year. The Strategic Plan covers a 5-year period from 2023 - 2028. The Hospice does not underestimate the challenge it faces in continuing to deliver this strategy, but it is fully committed to ensuring that specialist palliative care services are delivered to meet the growing need of the local communities.

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In summary, the strategy has been designed to respond to the following key strategic drivers:

- The increasing demand for palliative care services, in terms of the number of patients requiring palliative care and the extent of palliative care required.
- The growing complexity of cases and conditions being cared for requiring more specialist input.
- The need for a service delivery model that is patient-centred with the flexibility to adjust how and where the care is delivered, according to individual patient's evolving needs and preferences.
- The need to build capacity and capability so that SAHS can provide the same level of specialist care equally across all care settings and equally across the geographic region.
- The pressures on the availability of trained palliative care staff, and the need to build resilience within staffing structures while the labour pool is being developed.
- The pressures on funding, as a result of inflation and rising operating costs, as well as squeezes on funding sources.

The Hospice's strategic aims within the strategy are:

- To develop its delivery model into a wrap-around holistic service that can respond to patient choice and seamlessly provide multi-disciplinary care in an inpatient unit, in the home or through community hubs, as required.
- To protect the unique strengths that it has in its specialist palliative care skills and inpatient facilities.
- To firmly establish its role as a leading provider of specialist palliative care services in Northern Ireland.

A summary of the objectives which have been achieved in Year 2 (2024-25) are included in the table below:

Key area	Objectives achieved
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Achievement of designated body status- Review of recruitment & selection process & policy resulting in reduced time to hire- Introduction of succession planning process- Introduction of new performance appraisal process- New Leadership Development program
Innovation and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review of Out of Hours nursing service- Introduction of office vibe enabling measurement of employee engagement and peer to peer recognition- Established a program of wellness events
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Preparatory stages of EMIS project (new Medicine & patient management system)- Improved reporting on donations and expansion of recorded donor base- Completion of network upgrade and renewal of IT firewall security protection
Income generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review of investment strategy- Several new campaigns launched
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Work completed on Brand & Website projects to be launched in Q1 2025/26.
Capital project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Feasibility study completed and Business case refined

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Financial review

The financial statements are presented in the standard format required by Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective 1 January 2019 – (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and cover the activities of Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd and its subsidiary Southern Area Hospice Services Lottery Limited. The statement of financial activities (SOFA) shows the gross income from all the sources and the split of activity between restricted and unrestricted funds.

Results

The net operational deficit for the financial year was £122,731, this was considerably lower than our expected year end position. Total income for the year was below budget which led to a reported deficit. This was mainly impacted by a substantial decrease in legacy income along with a reduction in the value of investments following a period of global economic uncertainty. Costs were also slightly above budget impacted by the Agenda for Change pay award for the year being higher than expected.

Reserves Policy

SAHS' policy is to continue to build reserves in order to maintain adequate cover for committed expenditure and the running costs for a period equivalent to six months' operating costs and other obligations arising from the implementation of the strategic plan. It is considered that six months is prudent in order to ensure continuity of service during any period of reduced income.

A Capital Reserve to set aside funds to carry out identified capital projects was established by the Trustees in 2015. The Capital Development and Infrastructure Committee (as referenced above) is responsible for progressing capital projects; the execution of agreed plans will require a spend in the current year and this work is underway.

The Trustees have succeeded in maintaining reserves this year to meet committed expenditure and the running costs of the charity for a period equivalent to 6 months annual expenditure. The Trustees believe that the period of 6 months is necessary in order that there is continuity of service and will continue to work in accordance with this policy.

Legacies

The Hospice's income from legacies decreased considerably from the previous year to £217,924. Due to its nature, legacy income is difficult to predict. This has been disappointing, but work continues to be done to improve the Hospice's capability to maximise this income stream. It is recognised that before legacy income is likely to significantly increase developments are needed to pipeline prospective donors.

Balance Sheet

The cash position of the group and the charity as of 31 March 2025 remained strong with £6,695,384 and £2,946,838 respectively held within investments and in the bank. (2024: £7,017,480 and £2,860,180 respectively). The Trustees are satisfied with the returns during the year given the economic environment. In accordance with the Investment Policy a proportion of available investment funds have been placed with a Discretionary Fund Manager to avail of potentially improved returns than that currently available from cash deposits. The Resources Committee continue to review the current investment strategy and policy.

Taxation

As a charity, the company can recover most tax deducted at source from its investment income and is not liable for corporation tax on its other income or on capital gains. Recovery is therefore made of tax credits and tax deducted from income received under deed of covenant or gift aid.

Future Plans

1. Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028

At the time of reporting Year 3 – 2025/26 objectives are agreed by the Board.

- Investment in People and Training:
 - Strengthen the medical model in the Hospice to build resiliency and capacity to deliver specialist palliative care to meet the need. This year this will include appointing a new consultant and in addition having a Nurse Consultant fully trained and in post.
 - Continue to enhance talent management across all teams in the Hospice to ensure appropriate succession planning, and improved development of emerging leaders.
- Innovation and Collaboration
 - Expand community services delivery to include a hospice at home model of care. This is funding dependent and whilst we are keen to continue to explore this, we have not been able to dedicate or identify funds to do so.
 - Continue to develop closer and seamless collaborations with the SHSCT to meet the needs of our patients. This will focus on progressing appropriate contractual arrangements with the relevant Trust departments.
 - Enhance employee recognition.
 - Develop staff intranet to enhance internal communication and involvement of all staff across the Hospice.
- Technology
 - Implement an electronic patient management and prescribing systems.
 - Strengthen database utilisation to improve supporter information to optimise income from donors.
 - Report on how AI technology could be used to improve capability in fundraising and implement recommendations.
- Inpatient Unit
 - Continue to progress the capital infrastructure project to address the deficiencies and restrictions in the Inpatient Unit to meet current and future needs and provide an efficient work environment in terms of layout and running costs. This will include working with supporters and other stakeholders to further develop the vision and ambition of developing a new hospice in the Newry area.
- Funding
 - Continue to manage investments to optimise yield in a changing external context.
 - Continue to grow revenue income.
 - Launch a new approach to regular giving.
 - Recruit a resource to develop a capital income generation strategy and to begin development and start income generation.
- Communications
 - Deliver a communications plan to improve external and internal communications.
 - Embed the new Hospice brand.
 - Ensure delivery of the new and optimisation of new website.

2. Funding and Income Generation

Like other health and social care organisations the Hospice continues to face increasing costs from pay parity as well as in other areas, many driven by the cost-of-living crisis and inflationary pressures. Considerable analysis has gone into the establishment of the budget for the year ahead and our future anticipated costs. We continue to be challenged on an annual basis to produce a positive operating budget, particularly so in the current year due to the new costs associated with the delivery of our strategic aims. We believe that this investment however will result in a more resilient service and drive increased income in future years. Despite planned increased investment in people & technology and the continuing need to maintain our ageing facility, a budget with a small surplus has been agreed this year.

Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd

Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2025

The Hospice's reliance on receiving substantial income from the public remains unchanged. In the reporting year, we generated £1.08 million from our communities which is around 19% of our total income. The amount we will need to generate in the current and future years is expected to increase.

It is clear that the costs to run the Hospice are growing at a faster rate than our income. Substantial efforts have been made on all fronts to manage this and rapidly grow income. This work continues into 2025-26 when the impact of the continued rise in costs has considerable impact on the ambition of the Hospice to expand services.

The Hospice's comprehensive strategic plan includes a focus on reducing reliance on conventional income sources by diversifying revenue streams. This involves the development of corporate support, seeking to grow donations from charitable trusts, increasing future legacy donations and growing regular donations and continuing to maximise returns from investments.

Once again, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supports us – we simply cannot accomplish what we do without your invaluable support.

Principal risks and uncertainties

Risk management

The Trustees and Senior Leadership Team identify and actively manage the major risks to which the charity is exposed. This involves:

- An ongoing review of the risks which the charity may face.
- The assessment of the level of exposure presented by each identified risk.
- The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks.
- The implementation of procedures designed to minimize the impact on the charity should any of the risks materialise.

Major risks which have been identified and discussed by the Trustees include loss of reputation, perhaps due to adverse publicity, leading to a fall in public confidence in the charity and a consequent reduction in voluntary income; a short-term fall in the value of our investment portfolio; and maintaining the highest security of our information and systems to prevent loss of data or funds.

Further risks which have been heightened by the current economic climate include: a fall in income, either voluntary through donations and fundraising because the public has less capacity to give, through insufficient funding support from the Government or through declining donations from our subsidiary company; significantly increasing costs, mainly related to increased staff and related payroll costs. As reflected earlier in this report, actions being taken to mitigate risk include: developing alternative and innovative ways to generate income; having a focus on closely managing costs; a review of staffing structures to build future resilience; review of our IT service provision, security and resilience, working in conjunction with our third party providers who provide professional advice in this regard; the ongoing review of processes and procedures to create efficiencies; and the introduction of new initiatives to improve the experience of our employees. The Trustees take all appropriate steps to moderate and manage the operational risks to which volunteers, staff, and assets of Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd are exposed. The Audit & Risk Committee oversee the risk register which is regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects any potential risks related to the strategic plan. The Senior Leadership Team reviewed the format of the Risk Register and introduced a simplified less detailed format which enables risks and mitigating actions to be more clearly identified. This has been approved by the Audit & Risk Committee and Board of Directors and is in use in the year 2025/26. Having considered all the identified risks, the Trustees do not consider there to be a risk to the going concern status of the organisation. As is evidenced above, we continue to prudently adapt our ways of working and processes as required to best position the Hospice for the future. The Senior Leadership Team, in conjunction with the Board, are constantly monitoring this. The Resources Committee considers the financial position regularly.

Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd

Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2025

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have prepared the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (2015);
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

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

Southern Area Hospice Services Ltd

Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2025

Subsidiary undertakings

The charity took over control of the Southern Area Hospice Services Lottery Limited at the start of 2015.

These financial statements include Southern Area Hospice Services Lottery Limited.

Exemptions from disclosure

The company has taken exemption from the requirement to produce a separate statement of financial activities for the charity under section 408 and a charity cash flow statement as the results are included in the consolidated statements.

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

The charity holds no funds as custodian trustees on behalf of others.

Statement of disclosure of information to auditors

In the case of each Trustee/Director in office at the date the Directors' report is approved:

- so far as the director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the group and charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the group and charitable company's auditors are aware of that information.

Independent auditors

The Board agreed the appointment of AAB Group Accountants Limited (previously FPM Accountants) for a further year having sought assurance from AAB that they could provide the services required and ascertained that the costs for this reflected the market. The Board have decided not to appoint an internal auditor provider and have instead set up an assurance framework. This framework will enable the Hospice to ensure expert providers are sourced for each aspect of the assurance framework.

Approval of the Trustees' Report, which constitute the Strategic Report and the Directors' Report. By order of the Board.



P Loughran
Trustee/Director

Date: 1st July 2025