

## **Newstart Education Centre**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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).

#### **Chairperson's Report**

A heartfelt congratulations to all the young people who participated in Newstart this year. Your resilience, growth, and determination continue to inspire every person involved in our organisation. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend our warmest congratulations and best wishes for the journey ahead. It has truly been our privilege to support your development and witness your progress.

2024-25 has been a positive and encouraging year. The Board of Directors has continued to guide and oversee our work with dedication, professionalism, and an unwavering commitment to the young people we serve. I want to express my sincere gratitude to each member for their loyalty, insight, and ongoing support.

As in previous years, the success of 2024 is a testament to the exceptional efforts of our staff team, led by our Centre Director, Mary Clarke. Their combined expertise in education, youth work, community development, and social work allows us to deliver a holistic and person-centred service to every young person who walks through our doors. Thank you to Mary and the entire team - your passion and professionalism continue to elevate the work of Newstart.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all our funders, statutory partners, and community collaborators. Your support ensures that every young person, regardless of their background or circumstances, has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Our work would not have the same impact without your partnership. Finally, I extend my best wishes as outgoing Chairperson to everyone at Newstart, not least my colleagues on the Board, Mary, and the team. It is vital work, a lifeline for many young people. I hope it continues to receive the appropriate investment and gains recognition for the critical contribution it makes across the educational landscape.

#### **Director's Report**

I want to begin by recognising the courage, drive, and commitment of all the young people we had the privilege of working with this year. Despite the challenges they faced, their determination to grow and succeed has been a source of inspiration for me and for the entire NEC team. Thank you for placing your trust in us and for allowing us to walk alongside you as you strive toward your goals. You are a credit to yourselves, your families, and your community.

I am also grateful to our Board of Directors, whose leadership and support play a central role in strengthening and developing our work. A special word of thanks goes to our outgoing Chairperson, Jim Donnelly, for his guidance and support. It has been a pleasure to work with you, and your contribution to Newstart has been excellent. Good luck with your future endeavours, and we all hope to work with you again in the future.

Our achievements this year would not have been possible without our exceptional staff team. Their commitment to young people is evident in everything they do - from programme delivery to daily interactions that make young people feel safe, supported, and capable. Thank you to each member of staff for raising the bar and continually striving for excellence.

## **Newstart Education Centre**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

#### **Trustees Report**

As a community organisation, NEC's achievements are made possible through the continued support of a wide range of statutory and voluntary partners. Our holistic and person-centred approach depends on this collaboration, and we extend our sincere thanks to all who contribute to our work.

We also acknowledge and appreciate the commitment of our funders, whose confidence in our organisation allows us to provide high-quality, responsive support to young people and adults. We look forward to continuing these critical partnerships.

#### **Objectives and Activities**

The Charity's purposes focus on advancing education and relieving the needs of young people and adults. Our objectives include:

Providing informal and formal education, training, and holistic learning opportunities for young people disengaged from or excluded from mainstream education.

Offering courses and development opportunities for adult learners, lone parents, economically inactive individuals, and unemployed people.

Supporting young people and families through advocacy, family-strengthening initiatives, and wraparound support services.

#### **Public Benefit**

Our work aims to advance education, promote wellbeing, and support the development of young people and adults within the Lower Falls area of West Belfast and beyond. The benefits include:

Increased inclusion, confidence, and educational attainment among marginalised young people.

Providing an alternative educational environment where disengaged young people can re-engage with learning.

Supporting parents, carers, and families through groupwork, training, and relationship-strengthening initiatives.

Addressing issues including substance misuse, aggression, and emotional distress with targeted interventions.

Enhancing employment prospects for adults through accredited training and skill-based programmes.

Strengthening community networks through meaningful collaboration.

#### **Overview of the Accounting Year**

During the year, NEC delivered several impactful services:

EOTAS - supporting 22 young people to achieve Entry Level to GCSE qualifications.

SPIM - supporting eight young people with Key Stage 3 education, learning and development.

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Twilight and evening provision assisting adults and young people completing a range of learning and qualifications.

Cross-community, cross-border STRIVE Programme - an intensive mentoring, skill and confidence-building programme saw 130+ young people complete.

Early intervention and prevention-focused youth intervention, targeting 30 young people aged 11-13.

Student placements for Community Youth Work degree learners.

Healthy living and capacity building programmes for over 100 people through our family support and outreach initiatives.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

### **Financial position**

The company had net outgoing resources for the year of £6,531 (2024: net outgoing resources of £1,951), which reflected the completion of a number of projects during the year. Unrestricted funds increased by £11,903, while restricted funds decreased by £18,434. The total fund balance at 31 March 2025 was £87,432. (2024 £93,963)

### **Reserves policy**

The organisation's policy is to retain a level of free reserves, which matches the needs of the organisation both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. The organisation has developed a plan to establish and maintain this agreed level for free reserves. The organisation will continue to monitor compliance with this policy on a regular basis and the Board will review the appropriateness of the policy annually.

In reference to our reserves policy, it is good practice to have 6 months running costs and salary contingency plans along with redundancies.

## **FUTURE PLANS**

### **A forecast for the year ahead:**

Continuing EOTAS and SPiM provision for young people outside mainstream education.

Continuing to deliver our intensive youth outreach, cross-community, cross-border Peace Plus-funded programme, STRIVE, alongside our partners

Developing organisational policy, procedures, and training.

Continuing to provide a range of supports to local parents, carers, kindship guardians and broader family members

A programme for upgrading our building, including roof, doors, windows, floors and our IT suite.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Governing document**

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

## **Newstart Education Centre**

### **Report of the Trustees** **for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **Governance of the Organisation**

During the period under review the directors met monthly. Trustees/directors are appointed by nominations made in writing by any existing director. At the General Meeting nominated directors are appointed by election.

##### **Risk management**

The principles of good governance are embedded within all aspects of Newstart Education Centre operations with management and staff being keenly aware of the Boards responsibility of ensuring that the organisation protects itself from financial exposure and reputational damage, A close working relationship is maintained between the Board and management to ensure that operationally staff are aware of the standards required of them by the Board and the Board are always in a position to provide guidance and support to management in the discharge of their duties. This two way relationship is the key feature of Lower Falls Newstart Project Limited governance arrangements and is a key strength in the company.

A conscientious approach to ensuring that contractual project requirements are achieved has been maintained at all times both in the accounting period being reported on and since Newstart Education Centre establishment. Very tight financial controls on expenditure and all financial commitments are maintained at all times and project staff have been trained and have become experienced in budgetary controls. In both these areas ie Project delivery and financial controls management all staff have established close working relationships with funding organisations to ensure all mandatory standards are consistently achieved. Board representatives also actively engage with funding bodies.

The Board, management and staff are fully aware that the nature of the work in which Newstart Education Centre is involved can bring with it a high level of scrutiny to ensure that all activities are fully compliant with funding requirements and, therefore, beyond reproach. The Board of Newstart Education Centre is, therefore, greatly reassured of the company's compliance with the highest of standards of governance on the basis that all monitoring and evaluation of project delivery demonstrates achievement of all funders objectives and that funders' audits and vouching of financial expenditure and the independent examiners report confirm compliance with both probity and regularity in the use of monies received.

##### **TAX STATUS**

The company is recognised by HMRC as a registered charity. The company is entitled to charity tax exemption.

##### **STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The trustees (who are also the directors of Newstart Education Centre for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

**Report of the Trustees**  
**for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES - continued**

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law).

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 affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to 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 hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

**AUDITORS**

The auditors, Lynn Drake & Co Ltd, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 10 December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Miss M Nolan - Secretary