



AN AAB GROUP COMPANY

**Belfast**  
1-3 Arthur Street,  
Belfast,  
Co Antrim,  
BT1 4GA  
Tel: 028 9024 3031

**Dublin**  
Unit 5B, Fingal Bay,  
Business Park,  
Ballynaggon,  
Co Dublin, K32 NY57  
Tel: 01 6943500

**Dungannon**  
Howard House,  
30 Northland Row,  
Dungannon,  
Co Tyrone,  
BT21 6AP  
Tel: 028 8775 0400

**Malinbeg**  
Unit 1, Building 10,  
Central Park,  
Malinbeg Rd,  
Newtownabbey,  
Co Antrim, BT36 4PS  
Tel: 028 9083 0801

**Newry**  
Dromedary Mill,  
The Quay,  
Newry,  
Co Down,  
BT35 8QS  
Tel: 028 3026 1010

Registered Office Address

www.fpmaab.com | info@fpmaab.com

**PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND**  
**Company Limited by Guarantee**  
**Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended 31 March 2023**

Company No: NI30225  
Charity No: NIC104724

**Award Winning Advice...**



FPM Accountants Limited and FPM Accountants (Ireland) Limited are part of the FPM Group and branded as FPM, an AAB Group company. FPM is the trading name of FPM Accountants Limited and FPM Accountants (Ireland) Limited, which is regulated by Chartered Accountants Ireland for a range of Investment Business Activities in the United Kingdom. AAB Group is an independent member of Accredited and TAA with associated firms throughout the UK and worldwide. FPM Accountants Limited is registered in Northern Ireland.



**FPM ACCOUNTANTS LIMITED, AN AAB GROUP COMPANY**  
Reg No: NI022968 | VAT Reg: GB 187 4499 49 | IE 328 3821 PH

Teresa Campbell FCA, Paddy Harty FCA,  
Seamus Keating FCA (ABRP), Feargal McCormick FCA,  
Gary Diney FCA FRP, Michael Farrell FCA, Lowry Grant FCA,  
Michelle Hawkins FCA, Maedha McLellan FCA CTA

Seamus Keating is authorised to act as an Insolvency Practitioner in UK and Ireland by Chartered Accountants Ireland.

**PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND**  
**Company Limited by Guarantee**  
**Table of Contents**  
Year Ended 31 March 2023

---

	<b>Page</b>
Company Information	2
Report of the Trustees	3
Independent Auditors Report to the members	17
Statement of Financial Activities	20
Balance Sheet	21
Cash flow statement	22
Notes to the Financial Statements	23-29

**PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND**  
**Company Limited by Guarantee**  
**Company Information**

---

Trustees	Mr S Buchanan	(Chairperson)
	Mr R Winter	(Vice-Chairperson)
	Miss J Hadden	(Treasurer)
	Miss S Kelly	
	Mrs A Crawford	
	Mrs P Lowry	
	Mr N Galway	
	Mr I Hontavilla	
		Mrs P Lewsley-Mooney CBE
	Mrs C Yeomans	(Resigned 16 November 2022)
Secretary	Mr J Gillen	
Address for correspondence	7 Crescent Gardens Belfast BT7 1NS	
Registered Office	7 Crescent Gardens Belfast BT7 1NS	
Auditor	FPM Accountants Ltd Chartered Accountants 1-3 Arthur Street Belfast BT1 4GA	
Bankers	Bank of Ireland 4-8 High Street Belfast BT1 2BA	
Registered Charity No.	104724	
HMRC Charity No.	XR86639	
Registered Company No.	NI30225	
Key Management Personnel:		
	Mrs J O'Loughlin	Chief Executive Officer until 30th June 2022
	Mr A Herron	Chief Executive Officer from 27th June 2022
	Mr J Gillen	Director of Corporate Service & Finance
	Mrs A Stallard	Director of Service Delivery & Development (Acting) from 1 August 2022

## PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND

### Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023

---

#### REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023

The Executive Committee are pleased to present their annual Directors' report together with the consolidated financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31 March 2023, which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a Directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

The financial statements comply with the Charities NI Order 2008, the Companies Act 2006, the Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

#### Chairs Report

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our 2022-23 report, my first as Chair of PlayBoard. Taking on this role has been made easier by the outgoing Chairperson, Patricia Lewsley-Mooney CBE, who ably steered the organisation over the past number of years. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the wider staff team, I would like to thank Patricia for her hard work, dedication and leadership throughout her term.

I would also like to express my thanks to our outgoing CEO, Jacqueline O'Loughlin, who retired in June 2022 after 18 years' service as CEO. During her time, PlayBoard achieved many significant gains for children and young people's play, not least the embedding of the right to play within both the Children's Services Cooperation Act and the Children and Young People's Strategy. On behalf of the Board and staff team, I would like to acknowledge Jacqueline's contribution to Playboard and the play sector, and to wish her all the best for her well-deserved retirement.

As in previous years, our annual report provides you with a snapshot of Playboard's activity and impact. I would encourage you to look at our website, follow us on Facebook or Twitter, and sign up to our E-Play, which will keep you a breast of all that we do in Leading the Play Agenda in Northern Ireland.

It has once again been a challenging year for PlayBoard and our colleagues across the wider voluntary sector, with the absence of a functioning Executive and local Assembly impacting significantly on both service funding and policy development. However, despite our many frustrations, the past year has once again been both busy and significant for us.

When we consider the many reported concerns about mental and physical health outcomes for our children and young people, it's not hard to see why advocating for the child's right to play is at the core of everything Playboard does. Play is not a luxury, play is not entertainment, play is not something you do when the real 'school' work is done. Play is vital to every aspect of a child's health, wellbeing and achievement potential.

In the current social, political and economic environment, it is critically important for us to continue to promote the right to play for every child in Northern Ireland. Consequently, this year, advocacy, campaigning and lobbying at all levels continued to be the cornerstone of PlayBoard's work. Our focus, as always, has been on making Article 31 of the UNCRC - 'Right to Play' - a reality for all children; this requires extensive research, analysis, communications and public campaigning. I am therefore pleased to report that our representative and capacity building role has been greatly enhanced with membership growth.

Over the year, Playboard's membership continued to increase, with numbers now standing at over 1,600, which is an in-year rise of 16%. PlayBoard has 1500 Members within Northern Ireland, but continues to increase its global reach, as we now have 112 Members from 17 different countries across the world, and we continue to welcome everyone who advocates for children & young people's play. Our increased members and reach lends considerable weight to our ongoing lobbying and advocacy for play and playwork, and provides us with a clear play-focused mandate going forward

## PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND

### Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023

---

PlayBoard has continued working to promote the holistic benefits of play for children & young people. For children, the desire to play is natural and instinctive, and PlayBoard advocates play as a means of allowing children to develop their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. These attributes have become even more important, given the challenges faced by children and young people, parents, carers and wider society over recent years.

We pride ourselves on our ability to form, strengthen and maintain good relationships with a wide range of stakeholders and sectors. Being inclusive, responsive, and relevant has assisted us, ensuring genuine stakeholder participation in all that we do. We are committed to continually working collectively with others, and building strong alliances to improve societal outcomes around play.

The demand for PlayBoard's support, training and resources over the years has stretched beyond Northern Ireland, which, increasingly, includes the Republic of Ireland (RoI). Our profile and affiliations across the island of Ireland have grown in the last number of years, and I look forward to seeing this work develop further over the coming years.

On behalf of the Board and wider staff team we would like to thank you, our members, funders and play ambassadors, for your continued support and belief in our vision for a playful future for all our children and young people. We look forward to working collectively with you as we strive to achieve the vision laid out in our strategic plan.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of all our funding agencies who contribute to making PlayBoard the organisation that it is. Our continued robust practices and professionalism will ensure our ability to navigate what professes to be difficult times ahead for the whole of the voluntary and community sector.

Finally, the last word must go to our fantastic staff team who, with skill, determination and unfailing enthusiasm, do an amazing job in leading the play agenda. Thank you all!

Stuart Buchanan  
Chairperson

#### PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

PlayBoard is Northern Ireland's leading play NGO. The organisation works strategically at both a policy and grass roots level. Representing a strategic network of individuals and organisations both within, and related to, the play sector. PlayBoard exists to promote and to advocate on behalf of its membership, and the children and young people it represents. PlayBoard supports and develops the interests and aspirations of its membership with the aim of providing an independent voice for the play sector.

PlayBoard works with and for its members and the wider play sector to promote, create and develop quality play opportunities aimed at improving children's play experiences, holistic development and overall quality of life across Northern Ireland, and in the Republic of Ireland as required.

PlayBoard provides support to any child or young person, individual or organisation whose ethos is based around the child's right to play - to express their views and participate in the decision-making process as it relates to play and wider community planning issues. PlayBoard supports the play sector through the provision of play-based information, training and advice on a range of areas including play qualifications, committee governance, charity law, fundraising, best practice development, human resources, advocacy and school age childcare development.

## **PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023**

---

In line with our mission statement, the principal activity of PlayBoard during the year was: Leading the Play Agenda. This took many forms, including promoting the benefits of children's play to ensure the holistic development of the child; ensuring there was adequate investment in children and young people through training and quality play projects, advising and assisting in the administration of funding to play services and engaging in political lobbying in a local, national and international context.

PlayBoard has delivered advice, support and training to the sector through one of its thematic support programmes, that is the School Age Childcare Bright Start programme. Further, a number of Workforce and Play Development programmes were delivered e.g. Positive PlayGrounds, Taking Outdoor Seriously (TOPS) Award and the Play Advocacy programme.

PlayBoard's Youth@Play programme provided an explicit connection between playwork and youthwork outcomes, establishing a clear alignment between both areas and embedding playwork approaches as a means of enhancing delivery of the youthwork curriculum. PlayBoard's training programme for youth workers delivered 84 sessions to 78 youth workers, while providing a range of additional support. Collectively our activity has helped to bring children and young people together, support the playwork workforce and build capacity and awareness of play across the sector.

PlayBoard's OUR Generation programme strives to improve relations between communities and build peace using a play methodology. OUR Generation is a cross-border partnership project delivered through seven regional organisations and is funded through the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), to build positive relations and emotional resilience in communities impacted by the Troubles/Conflict across the island of Ireland. It is hoped that the overall project will reach 35,000 children, young people and the adults who support them during the life of the project. Programmes provided will include accessible, age-appropriate prevention, early intervention and recovery activities delivered on a cross-border and cross-community basis to support the mental and emotional well-being of children and young people within local communities.

Children and young people will engage in programme design and delivery, including provision of peer support, developing skills and confidence to improve well-being within their communities and act as agents of change, building peace for future generations. Using play, PlayBoard will build resilience in children and young people by recognising and celebrating difference, in turn supporting their positive mental health and well-being.

The organisation continues to administer the Bright Start programme on behalf of The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety through the Regional Childcare Partnership as part of Northern Ireland's emerging Childcare Strategy. PlayBoard represents the play sector in Northern Ireland on a number of National and International Forums including: Four Nation Children's Play Policy Forum, the Play Safety Forum, the International Play Association via the Northern Ireland branch (IPA NI) and the European Network for School Age Childcare as well as multiple local networks and forums including Childcare Partnerships, CINI Early Years Alliance, NICCY Participation Forum, All Party Children and Young People's group, Childhood, Transition and Social Justice Initiative.

#### **PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT**

PlayBoard's direct beneficiaries are children, young people, parents, carers, child-minders, playworkers and play-based organisations. Further the children and young people who are supported by those organisations can be viewed as indirect beneficiaries.

## PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND

### Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023

---

#### **BENEFITS**

The following benefits will be achieved from PlayBoard's purposes:

- Increased effectiveness and efficiency of community and voluntary sector organisations concerned with the provision of play-based activities in Northern Ireland, resulting in enhanced outcomes and service delivery and, consequently an improved quality of life for those children & young people;
- Increased self-awareness, resilience, competence and confidence among children & young people. The development of children and young people's social skills and abilities and an enhanced sense of purpose and fulfilment through play;
- Enhanced knowledge and capacity of children, young people parents, carers, child-minders, playworkers and play based organisations to make healthier lifestyle choices through play;
- Increased knowledge, understanding and awareness of the importance of play opportunities in supporting child development among beneficiaries involved in delivering play-based activities;
- Enhanced ability of the play sector to provide advice & information to statutory sector bodies and agencies, funders and others to exert a positive influence on the development of policy and
- Provide statutory authorities and others with opportunities to connect with young people in a positive manner. The immediate beneficiaries are those community and voluntary sector organisations and statutory bodies and agencies and others concerned with play provision activities; Raised awareness about the child's right to play and the cultivation of a society that favours equality and diversity and challenges prejudice related to the right to play in Northern Ireland;
- Improved governance within Management Committees; resulting in improved sustainability of their community Play Groups or Childcare centres;
- Connecting children & young people to their communities through play, resulting in positive citizenship and behavioural change;
- Increased opportunities for children & young people to engage in play activities that bring both communities and people together, leading to greater social cohesion, improvements in health and fitness, well-being and personal fulfilment;
- Enhanced mental health and well-being of children and young people which builds self-esteem, independence, resilience and respect for self and others.
- Through advice, support, training and play based activities beneficiaries are supported to develop new skills and coping mechanisms.

Benefits will be evidenced in the following ways;

PlayBoard operates an outcomes-based accountability framework, which is used to measure the impact of all areas of work. The following mechanisms are used to measure impact;

## PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND

### Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023

---

Feedback and evaluations of the work and impact from children and young people who participate in PlayBoard programmes and who participate within the play organisations PlayBoard provide support, advice, and training. This enables PlayBoard to conduct internal reports of the play-based organisations concerned and carry out both internal and external evaluations of both their work and that of PlayBoard.

Evidence is derived from engagement and feedback from children and young people, community and voluntary sector representatives, reports produced by statutory sector bodies and agencies as well as funders and other likeminded organisations.

Evidence of impact is gleaned through analysis of social policy wherein play is now included.

Regular satisfaction and impact surveys are conducted with PlayBoard members, school age childcare providers, parents, carers and interested stakeholders.

#### **Private Benefits**

PlayBoard can confirm that there will be no private benefits and our purposes are not harmful to any of the identified beneficiaries.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

The year 2022/23 has been one of change for the organisation at Senior Management level. Following the retirement of Jacqueline O'Loughlin, PlayBoard carried out a recruitment process where Alan Herron was appointed as Chief Executive Officer in June 2022 with Angela Stallard subsequently taking on the role of Director of Service Delivery and Development (Acting).

The impact and legacy of Covid-19 on PlayBoard's delivery continued to be felt throughout the year, with online approaches still in situ; however, as restrictions eased, we were able to return to office working under a Hybrid Working Policy.

Throughout the year, PlayBoard continued to work to promote the benefits of play for children and young people. Ironically, the pandemic shone a spotlight on the importance of play and how essential it is for children and young people to have the time, space, and permission to play, especially following the challenges faced during Covid-19.

During the year, PlayBoard was delighted to receive funding from the Department of Education (DE) to deliver the 'Taking Outdoor Play Seriously (TOPS)' and 'Positive PlayGrounds' programmes (PPgds). Funded via Covid-19 Recovery monies the Department could see the benefits and need for outdoor play for children following lockdown and school closures. Twenty schools took part and despite the many challenges faced, 10 schools successfully secured PlayBoard's prestigious TOPS Award for quality play delivery with a further 10 commencing their journey to embedding a quality outdoor play ethos through the Positive

PlayBoard continued to deliver a broad range of key services against the core themes within its overarching strategic plan as we sought to advocate for, deliver and develop play across twelve strategic objective areas:

1. Advocating for play.
2. Building our evidence based on practice and experience.
3. Strengthening our voice.
4. Developing and delivering a quality framework suitable for several sectoral contexts.
5. Promoting and developing the playwork workforce.
6. Delivering playwork.

## PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND

### Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023

- 
7. Working with councils, schools, and childcare settings to enhance understanding and knowledge of play and playwork.
  8. Developing strategic alliances, collaborations and new partners to promote the health and inclusion benefits of play e.g. PHA, disability sector.
  9. Enhancing our cross-border profile to share learning and develop new relationships and partnerships.
  10. Advancing PlayBoard's economic growth.
  11. Developing PlayBoard's competence, capability and capacity.
  12. Enhancing organisational leadership, culture and growth.

The Trustees Report provides an overview of the broad range of activities delivered in support of the key aims which underpin the Strategic Plan, namely:

Aim 1: Being the authoritative voice for play.

Aim 2: Promoting quality in play and playwork practice.

Aim 3: Increasing and improving opportunities and conditions for play.

Aim 4: PlayBoard's organisational growth and development.

Some highlights under each key strategic aim includes (not definitive):

Aim 1: Being the authoritative voice for play.

- Strategic representation on 30+ networks, forums, partnerships including UK Play Safety Forum, UK Play Policy Forum, DoE Sectoral Partnerships, Network Youth NI, All Party Groupings, Childcare Partnerships, NICCY Participation Forum etc.
- Representing the school age childcare and play sector on the newly established Early Years and Childcare Strategy Reference Group and Stakeholder Forum.
- In partnership with the Mae Murray Foundation undertaking 'Let Me Play' an Inclusive Play Park Study and subsequent report.
- Play Safety Forum 'Including Disabled Children in Play Provision' statement published and launched as part of 4 Nations Policy event, ongoing presentations to various forums and councils.
- Presented internationally on our work at 'Play on Early Education' conference in Athens, at the Children's Research Network conference in Dublin, online at the Australian National Sports Convention and at IPA World online events.
- Undertook consultation with children from school age childcare on behalf of DE on their vision for an Early Years and Childcare Strategy.
- Ongoing engagement with senior government officials across a range of departments aimed at enhancing the commitment to delivering quality play opportunities.
- Facilitated quarterly Play Development Forum meetings and site visits with council and DE.
- Increased social media followers across Facebook by 17% and Twitter by 5%.
- 12 E-Plays issued in year and 4 E-Play updates.
- Within the year, PlayBoard has increased its membership by 13% from the previous year, rising from 1,414 members at the beginning of April 2022 to 1,596 at the end of March 2023.

Aim 2: Promoting quality in play and playwork practice.

- During the past year PlayBoard has worked hard to support the delivery and provision of CPD opportunities. In seeking to do this we have worked strategically with a range of partners including government departments, Childcare Partnerships, local authorities, training providers, colleges and employers to promote greater access to training and qualifications, greater choice of courses and greater access to variety of approaches to learning.
- Inclusion on newly formed Sectoral Partnership (Dept Economy driven) representing playwork. Five meetings attended.

## PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND

### Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023

- 
- Input to the National Occupational Standards Review (4 Nations group, representing PETCs across the 4 Nations) and participation on PETCUK and PETCNI.
  - The profile and professionalism of playwork has been enhanced, and training and practice has stimulated collaboration and cross-sectoral mobility within the children's workforce.
  - DE Getting Ready to Learn (GRTL) – four webinars delivered in year to Early Years practitioners.
  - Childcare Partnerships – face-to-face and online training specific to the school age childcare/play sector; with tender renewal into 2024.
  - Bright Start – ongoing quality, governance and monitoring support for 50 SAC projects. 25 cluster sessions were delivered reaching 250 participants.
  - Early Years Development Funding allowed PlayBoard to deliver 2 x training sessions to 91 individuals representing 37 organisations. 37 Play Resource packs (small play equipment, Space to Play book and a number of play documents) distributed.
  - This year concluded our Youth@Play programme delivering 84 sessions with 78 youth workers achieving Level 2 and 31 youth workers achieving Level 3.
  - Spaces 2 Be, OUR Generation project have delivered 115 sessions to children & young people, practitioners and parents with 674 attending. 3 seminars were also delivered with 191 attending.

#### Aim 3: Increasing and improving opportunities and conditions for play.

- Hosted small scale Playday event in 2022 (first since pandemic) with approx. 50 children in attendance.
- Play delivery included 70 community play sessions for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council during July and August 2022; 191 children in attendance at six pop up play sessions for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council; 3 Street Play sessions for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.
- This year we developed a partnership with Radius Housing and facilitated two pilot programmes for two new housing developments (indoor afterschool play / street play programmes).
- We were delighted to be approached by Maghaberry Prison to re-establish a play programme developed during DE's Play Matters programme. Sessions were held with fathers in the prison to highlight the importance of play, how play can reconnect families, and play planning for a Christmas Families Party.
- A focus this year was 'Play in times of Hardship' which became the theme for our annual AGM and seminar event. Staff presented on our new 'Play in times of Hardship' resource and low-cost play ideas. The resource has been very well utilised and received. We were pleased to receive support from DE who provided hard copy versions of the resource for distribution.
- Following this theme our internal Eco Committee linked in with local supermarkets over the Christmas period and staff provided play sacks for children and families which were distributed via local foodbanks.

#### Aim 4: PlayBoard's organisational growth and development.

- Redevelopment of PlayBoard's website.
- This year seen the formation of four internal subgroups who are each progressing areas of work – Eco Committee, Play and Leisure Committee, Playday Committee and Fundraising Committee.

The financial year has also seen PlayBoard develop its work in the Republic of Ireland. Various strands of work have included Play Strategy development with Kerry County Council, training programmes with Cobh Youth Services and Dublin City Childcare Committee. PlayBoard were delighted this year to secure a joint post for the Republic of Ireland with National Childhood Network (NCN). The post holder has settled well into the post, based in Monaghan. She has been instrumental in establishing connections to pro-actively advocate for play by developing relationships with key stakeholders including political representatives, government officials, colleagues, and practitioners from across the children's sector. PlayBoard plan to strengthen the objectives for the post, including income generation, throughout the new financial year.

## **PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023**

---

Towards the end of 2022, PlayBoard staff team undertook a Strategic Planning Review Day aimed at enhancing staff awareness of the strategic vision. Several group exercises encouraged collective ownership and understanding of our operational activity and key aims. A key outcome of the day was a shared vision for the future of play and a desire to achieve Play Sufficiency within Northern Ireland.

#### **PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS**

PlayBoard's vision is of 'A society where the right to play is both valued and realised'. In seeking to achieve our vision, PlayBoard will continue to represent the voice of children, young people and the play sector, advocating and lobbying on their behalf with local and regional government officials, departments, Councillors and MLAs. PlayBoard will continue to build the capacity of the sector to fully engage with children and young people, providing play experiences that support the holistic development and overall health and well-being of children and young people through the provision of training and quality play projects.

PlayBoard will

- Design, develop and deliver play training programmes aimed at both the playwork sector as well as wider sectors that have an interest in, or an influence on play.
- Lead on the completion of research aimed at highlighting the impact of play on individuals and communities.
- Proactively engage with government Departments and Councils with a view to influencing policy and practice.
- Advocate and lobby for children and young people's right to play.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to all who has an interest on play.
- Deliver focused area-based community development projects centred on enhancing play experience within communities.

The three-year Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 has successfully finished its second year of activities. An annual operational plan was agreed for April 2023 - March 2024. The impact of Covid still impacts on how support and services are fully delivered as part of this plan.

Some of the key challenges and changes for the next year include:

- Completion of the operational plan so that PlayBoard meets its strategic aims and objectives.
- Ongoing support to the play sector in recovering from the impact of Covid.
- Home and office working will continue until the challenges associated with this in the delivery of services have lapsed and it is safe to fully return to the office.
- Completion of contractual service level agreements in the delivery of face-to-face services.
- Continued focus on supporting the play sector regarding the impact of the Children and Young People's Strategy.

PlayBoard has been award grant funding from the Department of Education to deliver, develop and further children and young people's play throughout Northern Ireland. PlayBoard is recognised as the Department's strategic partner for play in NI, a major achievement for PlayBoard, which no other organisation has achieved,

PlayBoard will look to develop both its strategic and operational plan to ensure that it is fit for purpose during the economic downturn, appraising different work methods and areas of delivery that will support the organisation in achieving its strategic aims.

#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The results for the year are set out in the attached financial statements. The total funds held at the end of the year are shown in the notes to the financial statements.

Initial review of the results for the year suggests an overall deficit of £32,043. The results need to be

## **PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023**

---

#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

considered in light of the £33,427 depreciation charged in the year. Therefore, the reality is that PlayBoard made a small trading surplus of £1,384. PlayBoard will continue to enable the organisation to become more sustainable so that it can achieve its aims and objectives.

#### **DESIGNATED FUNDS**

The Executive Committee recognise that purchasing, renovating and furnishing the building at Crescent Gardens has a financial impact on the organisation. £232,861 of the unrestricted general fund has been designated for such activity. The Executive Committee also agreed that an unrestricted designated business development fund be implemented and any unrestricted undesignated reserves above £424,050 be allocated to this fund to enable PlayBoard to meet its aims and objectives.

£24,404 of the depreciation charge this year has been set off against this designated fund brought forward. This leaves a designated fund balance to be carried forward of £1,131,787.

#### **RESERVES POLICY**

PlayBoard's reserves policy explains to existing and potential funders, donors and other stakeholders why a charity is holding a particular amount of reserves. A good reserves policy gives confidence to stakeholders that the charity's finances are being managed and can also provide an indicator of future funding needs.

The aim is to provide sufficient funds to cover any unforeseen costs which may arise, recognising the volatile grant environment as well as allowing for the payment of any liabilities which would arise should the company cease to operate. In the Executive Committee's view, the reserves should provide the charity with adequate financial stability and the means for it to meet its charitable objectives for the foreseeable future.

PlayBoard's reserves policy will be used to assist in strategic planning by considering how new projects or activities will be funded. It will inform the budget process by considering whether reserves need to be used during the financial year or built up for future projects and it will inform the budget and risk management process by identifying any uncertainty in future income streams.

The Executive Committee have established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed should equate to six months' total resources expended. Any call upon the use of reserves will be at the approval of the Executive Committee which will examine the rationale for doing so and agree an amount where appropriate. The Executive Committee have agreed a level of reserves of £424,050 needed to cover six months.

At 31 March 2023, the level of "free reserves", excluding fixed assets and designated funds were £424,050.

#### **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

Company Number: NI30225

Inland Revenue Charity Number: XR86639

Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland: NIC104724

Registered Office: 7 Crescent Gardens, Belfast, BT7 1NS

## PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND

### Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023

---

#### OUR ADVISORS

**Auditors** FPM Accountants Ltd  
Chartered Certified Accountants & Statutory Auditor  
Unit 1, Building 10  
Central Park, Mallusk Road  
Newtownabbey  
Co. Antrim  
BT36 4FS

**Bankers** Bank of Ireland  
1 Donegall Square S,  
Belfast  
BT1 5LR

**Solicitors** Cleaver Fulton Rankin  
50 Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7FW

#### STRUCTURE, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

##### STRUCTURE

PlayBoard NI is incorporated under the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, being a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital. The company is governed by its Articles of Association since its incorporation on 6 December 1985. PlayBoard is also a charity and has been formally admitted by the HM Revenue & Customs, as such, for income tax purposes and is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and abides by the legal requirements to submit an annual monitoring return form providing information on the charity's activities, governance and finances.

##### GOVERNING DOCUMENT

PlayBoard is governed by its Articles of Association. The Executive Committee confirm that they have complied with their duty within the Charities Act NI 2008 and have amended the Articles of Association in line with the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, which were agreed on the 8th October 2013. PlayBoard will carry out a governance health check and make any recommendations arising from this on its Articles of Association at its next AGM in November 2023.

##### MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

PlayBoard is a membership body for the play/playwork sector. The Directors of the company are also Charity Trustees for the purposes of Charity Law and under the company's Articles are known as members of the Executive Committee. In addition, three Honorary Office Bearers are elected to serve on the Committee: these being a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Honorary Treasurer. All the Executive Committee members have

##### APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS

Up to 10 Executive Committee members which include PlayBoard Honorary Officers are nominated and duly elected by PlayBoard at its Annual General Meeting. Committee members are appointed for a period of three years. Executive Committee members elected to an Honorary Officers post may extend their tenure to a maximum of six years. The Executive Committee can also co-opt up to four additional members to fill a skills gap in the Committee make up as they see fit.

## **PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **Report of the Trustees** Year Ended 31 March 2023

---

#### **COMMITTEE INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

New Executive Committee members undergo induction training to brief them on good governance, their roles and responsibilities, their legal obligations under charity and company law, the committee and the decision-making processes, the strategic and operational planning processes, the organisational structure and key organisational activities.

As part of their induction Executive Committee members are provided with the following:

- PlayBoard's Articles of Association
- PlayBoard's Vision Mission & Values
- PlayBoard's Strategic Plan
- PlayBoard's Operational Plan
- PlayBoard's Trustee/Directors' Roles and Responsibilities
- PlayBoard's Finance & Personnel Committee Terms of Reference
- PlayBoard's Code of Conduct / Conflict of Interest policy
- PlayBoard's Skills Audit
- PlayBoard's organisational chart
- PlayBoard's Audited Accounts
- PlayBoard's Principles of Good Governance
- The Code of Good Governance Northern Ireland
- PlayBoard Risk Register

#### **GOVERNANCE**

The Executive Committee ensures the good governance of the organisation by setting its strategic objectives and policy direction through PlayBoard's three-year strategic plan and monitoring progress on this through the annual operational planning process.

The Committee meets every six weeks and the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee which specifically deals with the human and financial resources of the organisation meets on a quarterly basis. The Chief Executive, appointed by the Committee, manages the day to day operations of the organisation. To facilitate effective operations, the Chief Executive has delegated authority, within terms of delegation approved by the Committee, for operational matters which include the application and monitoring of the agreed strategic and operational objectives as listed in the Strategic and Operational Plans.

In the course of the year PlayBoard Executive Committee met every six weeks to considered the potential impact of the recession over the next year on the organisation, including the threats to PlayBoard's income streams, how and when they might materialise and what PlayBoard would have to do to confront any constraints to the organisation's income.

The Executive Committee assessed the possible strategic and operational risks in determining the costs for the coming year and has agreed a budget that enables PlayBoard to continue to be fit for purpose both financially and operationally.

#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Executive Committee members and staff have an obligation to act in the best interests of PlayBoard and its beneficiaries, present and future. Executive Committee members need therefore to be sensitive to the possibility that their activities outside the organisation (including holding office or being otherwise involved in organisations, companies, political parties or) could be perceived as having a bearing on – or coming into conflict with – the objects and integrity of the organisation. Executive Committee members have a duty in law to avoid conflicts of interest and must not take part in any discussion or decision in which there is such a conflict.

## PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND

### Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023

---

Each year both Executive Committee members and staff will be asked to complete a declaration of interests form to declare any affiliated connections through the following: Spouse, domestic partner, child, mother, father, brother or sister or close associates; any corporation, business or non-profit organisation of which you are serve as staff , officer, board member, partner, participate in management or are employed by; any trust or other estate in which you have a substantial interest or as to which you serve as a trustee or in a similar capacity. Disclosure forms are monitored as part of the risk register controls.

At the start of each Executive Committee meeting, members will be asked to declare whether any agenda items raise a potential conflict of interest. This will be recorded and reflected in minutes. Where a conflict of interest occurs, the Trustee concerned will withdraw from the meeting for that item on the agenda. It is the potential, rather than the actual, benefit from which the conflict of interest arises which requires authority, in order to avoid a breach of trust and to ensure transparency.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

PlayBoard have designed and implemented a robust and comprehensive risk management toolkit that lets the Executive Committee identify the risks involved, assess how likely is it to happen and what would the impact be to the organisation. These then let the Trustees plan and implement controls that will mitigate the risk while monitoring and reviewing the identified risks within the register.

Through the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee on a quarterly and annual basis wherein both the strategic and operational risks are assessed to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to Strategic risks, which are those risks arising from major events that could impact across the whole of PlayBoard e.g. major overspend or serious damage to the reputation of PlayBoard and Operational risks, which are those arising from the day-to-day management of activities within teams and less likely to impact upon other teams or PlayBoard as a whole.

The health and well-being of our staff, members and most importantly children and young people remains paramount, so PlayBoard continues to access and monitor risks associated with Covid-19 mitigating were possible.

Where a safe space is not permissible, PlayBoard continues to take appropriate measures to protect staff and our members with activities via online and other multimedia platforms.

The Executive Committee are continually assessing the impact of Covid-19 and implementing measures to ensure PlayBoard remains fit for purpose, this is being done in the following ways;

The Board meet on a six weekly basis to examine the following;

- Ensure PlayBoard have an effective risk management procedure in place taking account of Covid-19 related risks, for example cyber security and data protection, as well as a return-to-work risk assessment and policy.
- Ensure PlayBoard communicates with funders to confirm that funding will still be provided.
- Review the financial status of PlayBoard questioning management's rationale and underlying assumptions in their financial assessments, keeping up to date of the current financial position, taking any action if needed, being realistic with projections and focusing on essential spending only, reducing overheads where possible.
- Ensure that PlayBoard continue to look for new funding opportunities, while confirming that current activities and commitments are met, reviewing if any projects can be delayed or cancelled.
- Consider cash reserves, which can be used to help cope with unexpected events if needed.

PlayBoard continues to monitor all procedures associated with risk management and ensure that continuous risk assessment feeds into any decision making and business processes that will mitigate its

## PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND

### Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023

---

exposure to the major risks identified.

#### **PAY POLICY FOR SENIOR STAFF**

The Trustees (Executive Committee) all give of their time freely and no Trustee received remuneration in the year.

The organisation has adapted the National Joint Council (NJC) pay scales for its use for many years, were the Finance & Personnel through an evaluation made a recommendation of pay points for each grade within the organisation including the Senior Management Team. These pay scales at the time were set based on an external benchmarking exercise against roles with similar job roles and levels of responsibility. Cost of living increases are assessed by the Finance & Personnel Committee before going to the Executive Committee for agreement.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES**

The Executive Committee (who are also the Directors of PlayBoard for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Executive Committee to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Executive Committee 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 Executive Committee 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 the income and expenditure of the charitable company 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 Charities SORP.
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Executive Committee 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 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.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Executive Committee are continually assessing the impact of Covid-19 and implementing measures to ensure PlayBoard remains fit for purpose, while protecting both its staff and members by moving activities

## PLAYBOARD NORTHERN IRELAND

### Report of the Trustees Year Ended 31 March 2023

---

to an online model where a safe space is not available. As a result of the actions above, these accounts are considered to be prepared on a going concern basis.

#### Statement as to disclosure to our auditors

In so far as the Executive Committee are aware at the time of approving our trustees' annual report:

- there is no other relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the trustees, having made enquiries of fellow directors and the group's auditor that they ought to have individually taken, have each taken all steps that he/she is obliged to take as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

By order of the Board of Trustees



Stuart Buchanan  
Chairperson

Date:

5/7/23