

The Men's Advisory Project

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name The Men's Advisory Project

Charity registration number NIC105833

Company registration number NI038175

Principal office and registered office Floor 5
Glendinning House
6 Murray Street
Belfast
BT1 6DN

The trustees

Dr Pauline Irving
Ms Margaret McIlvenny
Ms Patricia Lewsley Mooney CBE
Mr Peter McGowan
Mr Robert Magee
Mr Jake McKibbin
Ms Lorna Smyth

Auditor Hill Vellacott
Chartered accountants & statutory auditor
22 Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7BA

Bankers Co-Operative Bank
PO Box 250
Delf House
Southway
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT

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Structure, governance and management

The Charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up on 22 March 2000. It is governed by a memorandum and articles of association.

On appointment new trustees are briefed on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the content of the constitution, the committee and decision making processes.

Risk management

Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the trust face by the trustees.

Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects.

Objectives and activities

The Charity's main aims and objectives are;

to make things better at home for men who have experience or are experiencing domestic and sexual abuse;

- to provide support and facilitate men to understand their options and make their own choices and decisions;
- to put men in touch with organisations that can help them further;
- to offer crisis intervention and support to men living in or when leaving domestically abusive relationships;
- to offer support and counselling services to men who have previously left a violent or abusive relationship and who are still experiencing the effects;
- to offer a range of services to men and women who want assistance and support to deal with their emotions post facing domestic abuse and experiencing the systems and services available to support their gendered needs post abuse;
- to offer a voice to men who have used our services and to male victims of domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. We guarantee to support male victims to have a voice and have their experiences heard at all levels of government by ensuring that they are part of the Men's Advisory Project at all levels from volunteer to Board Member and inform our decision making.

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Strategic report

The following sections for achievements and performance and financial review form the strategic report of the charity.

Achievements and performance

Over the past year The Men's Advisory Project has continued to work as the lead, specialist agency supporting men who have faced abuse in Northern Ireland. The requirement from services post the Covid pandemic saw only a limited reduction. We worked hard to follow and administer BACP guidelines and develop safe processes, policies and procedures to support and upskill our counsellors to work safely online and via telephone and as they returned to offering services face to face. Service user numbers have continued at a high level in all areas of the country, due to the continued dedication of staff and volunteers and the excellent network of other agencies, both statutory and community and voluntary, that we work with each day to ensure male victims and survivors have specialist and quality assured services to support their wide-ranging needs.

We have seen an increase in service users who have faced intra-familial domestic abuse and we worked hard to understand this stigmatised and hard to reach group. Especially we have begun the work to support younger men who have faced domestic abuse their entire lives and have had limited support for this trauma or in how to manage their lives without support outside these homes. Outreach fully qualified volunteer counsellors work in each Trust area in Northern Ireland and are supported by coordinators in the Western Trust and Belfast areas. Support required by men from rural areas was at the highest since our inception and we have learned that a blended approach to service delivery will continue to support men who live far from other services. Support from the PCSPs allowed us to support this additional work and we must thank them for their understanding and support as we further develop services to men and offer them the security of information regarding legal services and being part of a safer community. The Men's Advisory Project has been rated very good or excellent by the majority of its service users and we wish to uphold this standard in coming years.

Lack of support by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive via Supporting People means we are unable to provide floating support and outreach services to men facing homelessness due to domestic abuse. This prevents us from having the ability to carry out the dedicated work required to support traumatised and homeless men who have faced abuse. We are bereft that men who are homeless due to abuse are being placed into mixed use Hostels without dedicated and specialist support and we cannot understand the inequality of support for those abused men and their families who are homeless or at risk of losing their tenancies due to domestic abuse. This difference in provision is one we will examine with others as the year progresses.

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The majority of men we support are in Crisis, still living with their abuser or facing extensive dangerous post separation abuse. The men therefore initially require a safe space where they can receive informed, non-judgemental services of Crisis support to allow them to understand and explore their options and to risk assess and safety plan to exit the relationship and/or live safely with their children. These men often require therapeutic support from the first call and we have been responsive to to these needs, ensuring only counsellors are employed in the Charity. This year we provided 4221 counselling hours and supported 1011 men across all of Northern Ireland in focussed and dedicated 1-2-1 support. Without the support of volunteer counsellors and specialist support workers Northern Ireland would not have a service for male victims of abuse. We thank them wholeheartedly. This lack of funded service provision is a disgrace, can only show dedication to inequality and is something for our Assembly to face in the upcoming years.

In this year the Men's Advisory Project supported Government in Advisory Groups, Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnerships, Consultations and Operational Boards. We put the needs and voice of male victims of domestic and sexual abuse into all arenas. Importantly, we represent the needs of men who have lost their lives to Domestic Homicide and represent the learning needs and inject the voice of the male victim into each Domestic Homicide Panel convened to support a man who lost his life. This year we have take part in six panels.

We wish to thank our partner organisations in Victim Support Northern Ireland, Nexus, Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid, Foyle Family Justice Centre, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Allstate Foundation, Northern Ireland Housing Executive the Women's Aid Federation, Rape Crisis Northern Ireland, Holy Trinity and Women's Support Network and the Departments of Health and Justice for their support.

Financial review

Details of the results for the year are set out in the statement of financial activities on page 13 and the related notes.

The trustees have reviewed the reserves of the Charity and strive to ensure there are adequate reserves to cover any unforeseen expenditure in the future.

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Plans for future periods

In 2024, The Men's Advisory Project will continue to develop the current services and will offer further services of education and support to ensure others know more about male victims and understand how to better support men facing abuse. We wish to become more sustainable and to have our counselling quality assured and seek course approval. We will actively fund raise to ensure that we become more robust in terms of IT provision and seek Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation to provide additional security to future funders. We wish to provide additional training to external agencies and hope to support men in a wider sense by the development of this arm of the Charity. The Charity attracts funding from the Health and Social Care Board, the Halifax Foundation, Tudor Trust and various local Policing Community Safety Partnerships. We have been greatly supported by these funds to further develop services within communities. This funding has allowed men to access housing, primary health, civil and criminal justice and to feel seen as victims and survivors of abuse. We plan to put the voice of male victims further into the heart of government and work hard to have men and their experiences better recognised in policy development and governmental consultation. We also wish to develop closer links to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Department of Communities to ensure that male victims of abuse are supported in their homelessness post abuse or in the significant difficulties they face. Finally, we hope to develop closer working relationships with other significant services providing support to those who have faced of domestic or sexual abuse to ensure than an apparent hierarchy of victims is removed as we move forward. We recognise that to truly support victims we must work together as a sector to offer a wide range of services and support mechanisms. We aim to work in Partnership with other organisations to deliver services to ensure this takes place.

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- 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 charity will continue in business.

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The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

The trustees' annual report and the strategic report were approved on 19 December 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



Ms Patricia Lewsley Mooney CBE
Trustee