

## **Aspire (N.I.)**

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

# **DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT**

for the financial year ended 31 August 2023

The directors present their Directors' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and Trustees' Report, and the unaudited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 August 2023.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" 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).

The Directors' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Directors' Annual Report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the directors of Aspire (N.I.) present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances for the financial year 31 August 2023.

The company is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102, the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

### **Objectives and Activities**

Aspire (NI) exists to deliver on its principal activity to work with children in Northern Ireland in poverty to help close the educational gap between the rich and poor. We are a faith driven charity based in Craigavon, Northern Ireland that work with local youth workers and churches to provide free services for children from lower income families to support and equip them in education.

#### Objectives

Aspire (NI) has been established to help close the educational attainment gap by partnering with schools and relevant agencies to:

1. Provide relationships that enable young people to recognise their skills and full potential.
2. Provide facilitators to encourage young people in education and help them to take ownership of their own education.
3. Help those from lower income families by providing free tuition services
4. Help young people to learn outside of the classroom by providing fun based educational activities outside of school hours
5. Give young people the opportunity to explore faith.

#### Activities

##### *Aspire Sessions*

These offer a place for young people to work in a supervised and supportive environment after school. We provide facilitators who encourage the young people and provide them with support. The facilitators are youth workers from local churches or organisations. Our young people are provided with laptops, resources, and refreshments.

##### *Aspire Tuition*

For young people who take part in our after-school sessions who are struggling with any subjects, Aspire will endeavour to link this young person to a suitable tutor from our bank of volunteers who are qualified in this subject and provide a period of free tuition.

##### *Aspire Activities*

Education is not just what happens in the classroom but can be fun too. Aspire activities are monthly activities for young people run by local churches and youth groups where learning is combined with leisure such as sport or music lessons.

### **Achievements and performance**

The outcomes we set out to achieve with Aspire are the prevention or relief of poverty and the advancement of education for children and young people in Northern Ireland. We achieve these outcomes through counselling/support, providing free education and training by working with schools. The benefits are improved literacy and numeracy of young people from low-income backgrounds. These benefits of Aspire extend to schools, families and communities in areas of deprivation.

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2022/2023 has been a great year for Aspire. We expanded our work in Belfast, ran a cross community camp and 8 academies. We have worked in 25 schools this term. We also ran a uniform exchange, a back to school day in Belfast and a kids summer scheme in Craigavon.

Aspire has had another year of growth in 2022/23, expanding our reach in Belfast and running more academies across Craigavon and Belfast. Running homework clubs in 25 schools and running summer schemes, camp and parents nights.

We ran our Aspire Academy in 2022/23 across Craigavon providing training in art, business, youth work, music production, wellbeing and barista for secondary age children and art, music and gaming for primary age children. In Belfast we ran football, art and music academies for secondary age children.

Our young people have been performing well in school and we have been able to track their success in education, behaviour and attendance. We saw 89% of our young people achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C. This was a 5% increase on last year.

We were able to run a cross community camp programme and brought 34 young people from different backgrounds away to Crawfordsburn Scout Centre. The young people were able to take part in different sporting activities and we ran a programme looking at the history of Northern Ireland. The young people then planned a future town based on what they have learnt. We had special guests from education, youth work and faith backgrounds.

Many people have continued to bless and support Aspire financially. We have increased our monthly giving this year and ran fundraisers. We have held a pub quiz, took part in the marathon, ran a charity football match, a comedy show and a dance challenge.

We have received grants this year from UK Youth, LFT Trust, KFC, Bentley, Allen & Overy Foundation and the Education Authority.

We feel like we are now finally back to working to our full strength after the pandemic and are set to continue to grow and expand in 2023/24.



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### **Financial Review**

From incorporation Aspire has been successful at raising enough funds to cover its running costs. The purpose of Aspire is not to be a profit-making company, however it must remain sustainable in order to function and continue to aid the Children in need.

Reserves policy – the aim is to achieve a level of unrestricted free reserves equivalent to six months running costs, which the trustees believe is essential to the ongoing work of the charity.

### **Financial Results**

At the end of the financial year the company has assets of £48,086 (2022 - £39,070) and liabilities of £766 (2022 - £5,664). The net assets of the company have increased by £13,914.

### **Public Benefit**

The direct benefits which flow from our purposes include improvement in the wellbeing, self-esteem and opportunities for children from a lower income background.

These benefits are demonstrated through our feedback from the children and their educational results. These purposes does not lead to harm.

The charity's beneficiaries are the children from lower income families.

The Charity has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities entered into during the year have helped to achieve the organisation's objectives and activities, as well as providing public benefit.

### **Directors**

The current directors are as set out on page 3 and below

Carol Little

David McBride

David Wylie

Ian Bingham

Leonard Adamson

Megan Collins

Jamie Curran – resigned 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the directors retire by rotation and, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

### **Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards**

The company engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. Aspire (N.I.) subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Companies Act 2006
- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)

Approved by the Board of Directors on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Leonard Adamson

Director

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### **STATEMENT OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

for the financial year ended 31 August 2023

The directors are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law) including FRS102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland". Under company law the directors 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 company and of the net income or expenditure of the company for that period.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the relevant financial reporting framework, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in operation.

The directors confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

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

Approved by the Board of Directors on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Leonard Adamson  
Director