

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2023

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 2023.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Charity registration number NIC107581

Company registration number NI661550

Principal office and registered office 3rd Floor
Ascot House
24-31 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast
BT2 7DB
United Kingdom

The trustees Ms C Bailey
Ms G Clarke
Ms M Crawford
Ms G McCormick
Dr A Simpson
Mr R Gowdy
Dr S McDermott

Auditor Muir & Addy
Chartered accountants & statutory auditor
Muir Building
427 Holywood Road
Belfast
BT4 2LT

Bankers Bank of Ireland
1 Donegall Square South
Belfast
BT1 5LR

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2023

Structure, governance and management

Governing Document

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee with charity status. It was incorporated on 20 May 2019 following the closure of the Family Planning Association (FPA). Through their Board of Trustees and staff team they hold much of the history associated with FPA in Northern Ireland (FPA NI) and the role it played in contributing to the improvement and change in societal attitudes towards sexual and reproductive health. This work continues and evolves through Informing Choices NI (ICNI).

The company is governed under its Articles of Association which established the objects and powers of the company. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law. Under the requirements of the Articles of Association the number of trustees shall not be less than five nor more than nine persons appointed by the board. The initial term of office will be two terms of three years. Upon satisfactory completion of two terms Trustees are eligible for one further term of up to three years at the Board's request.

The trustees of the company have a mix of skills. In the event of particular skills being lost due to retirement or resignation, suitable individuals are approached to offer themselves for appointment as trustees.

Trustee induction and training

Most new trustees are already familiar with the work of the charity. New trustees are encouraged to attend suitable training courses to familiarise themselves with both the work of the charity and their responsibilities as directors.

Risk management

The trustees have carried out a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and where appropriate have put in place systems and controls to mitigate the effects of those risks.

Key management

During the year in review the day to day running of ICNI was overseen by the CEO in conjunction with a Senior Management Team reporting to the Board of Trustees.

Objectives and activities

ICNI aim to champion informed choices around sex, sexuality and reproductive health and emotional wellbeing.

We value integrity, equality and diversity as well as open and honest communication and are committed to providing high quality standards and innovative practices in everything we do.

We are committed to delivering the above through advocacy, counselling, education, information and training.

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2023

Achievements and performance

Strategic goal one - Improve the quality, consistency and accessibility of ICNI's services so we can continue to support and serve the diverse society in which we live

Throughout 2022/23 our helpline continued to provide a local, safe, and trusted voice for all those seeking information around abortion during what was a significant time of change. Our pregnancy counselling service provided 337 sessions. Of these 287 were for post pregnancy counselling and 50 for pregnancy choices counselling. Our contraception and sexual health patient information leaflets continued to be a much valued and vital source of information with 155,000 copies distributed to healthcare settings and community organisations throughout Northern Ireland. We continued to increase our online and digital presence. Our website is continually reviewed to ensure all information is accurate and up-to-date and received over 38,000 hits. In February 2023 we also launched a sexual health podcast called Big Sexy Talk.

Strategic goal two - Sexual and reproductive health services will be readily accessible to meet the needs of all citizens in Northern Ireland

In June 2022, the United States Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade which paved the way for individual States to restrict or ban abortion rights. While reproductive rights were being curtailed in the United States, in December 2022 the Secretary of State instructed the Department of Health to commission abortion services. Early medical abortion care recommenced within the Western Trust, and the Northern Trust began providing medical abortion up to 12 weeks in pregnancy. The UK Supreme Court ruled that legislation introducing Safe Access Zones did not "disproportionately interfere" with protesters' rights. ICNI also held a series of "Big Sexy" events to strengthen relationships between policy makers across the political spectrum. These were attended by 26 MLAs and Councillors.

Strategic goal three - High quality, consistent and inclusive relationships and sexuality education will be available within all schools and expanded within community settings

Following two years overshadowed by Covid-19, the biggest success for our Speakeasy programme was a return to face-to-face groupwork with the programme delivering a total of 102 sessions to 212 participants in the Belfast and South Eastern Trust areas. Speakeasy also continued to work on specific-themed workshops including reproductive health and menopause, LMP-Abortion, and intergenerational sessions that included parents and young people. We intend to continue developing these in the year ahead. ICNI secured funding from the PHA Making Life Better Through Short Term Funding Programme for a pilot masculinity project within the Belfast Trust area. This delivered sessions to 41 participants. We also commissioned a survey of political attitudes around RSE which showed overwhelming support amongst MLAs to reform its teaching in Northern Ireland.

Strategic goal four - People with learning, sensory and/or physical disabilities will have access to high quality information, educations, support and training programmes

As usual our Just Ask programme was in high demand, delivering 369 sessions, to 445 individuals. It continues to be challenging trying to accommodate all requests with only two project officers and increasing referrals. However, we were delighted that the programme won the Making a Difference (Team) Award at the National Learning Disability and Autism Awards in March 2023. Our Talk Together Project, focusing on the impact of loss and bereavement on people with a learning disability and autistic people produced a report, "It's Difficult But It's Not Rocket Science," in January 2023. We produced a comic, 'The Adventures of Bubble Bear' which incorporated themes around personal space, boundaries, appropriate/inappropriate touch, and public and private space; and developed an animation around sexual consent.

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2023

Achievements and performance *(continued)*

Strategic goal five - Be a resilient and robust organisation equipped to respond to demands of external environment

ICNI is a non-profit making organisation and the Statement of Financial Activities can be found within our audited accounts. The surplus for the year on unrestricted funds was £5,271 increasing the charities unrestricted reserves to £52,272. This is sufficient to cover six months running costs. Cashflow continued to be strong throughout the year with all funders continuing to pay on time and our training department continued to generate unrestricted income. We continued to monitor expenditure and kept costs to a minimum as the organisation continues to grow into a robust and leading sexual and reproductive health employer and brand.

Financial review

The company is a non-profit making organisation. The results are set out in detail on page 12. The company had net incoming resources for the year of £8,854. The principal funding sources of the charity are by way of grant, principally from the Public Health Agency and Department of Health.

Reserves policy

The trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the funding of the organisation. Unrestricted free reserves are currently £52,272, as detailed in note 18, and this level of reserves would be sufficient to fund the organisation's running costs for a period of six months at current levels of spending and cover redundancy payments for the current staff. The primary aim of the charity is to use the resources at its disposal to further its charitable activities, and any increase in reserves will occur only if appropriate.

Plans for future periods

Following the launch of our Big Sexy Talk podcast, the first series of which focused on abortion, we are planning future series on a range of issues, with season two set to shine a spotlight on the teaching of RSE. ICNI will be campaigning in 2023/24 to reform the education curriculum to ensure that our children and young people are provided with the comprehensive and scientifically accurate information and support they need to make informed choices regarding their sexual and reproductive health.

With the commissioning of abortion services, we will continue to advocate for additional resources to provide pregnancy counselling services, in order to best meet the needs of all people who may wish to avail of this support. We will also provide information workshops to increase awareness of abortion services, offer training to professionals, and continue working to reduce the stigma within this area of reproductive healthcare.

We will continue to develop our education programmes and resources. Our Speakeasy programme will create a new animation to support parent-child dialogue around relationships and sexual health, and produce a new programme leaflet. We will also continue to develop our Bubble Bear brand by creating a new series of comics.

Following a recommendation from our Talk Together research report we have received additional funding from the Ideas Fund to design and deliver a training programme for staff around loss and bereavement. This will come to fruition in 2023/24. We were also successful in securing funding for a project idea around menopause and women with a learning disability from Round 2 of the Ideas Fund's grant cycle. This project is again in partnership with an Ulster University researcher and will run from January 2023 until March 2024.

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2023

Plans for future periods *(continued)*

We intend to build on our pilot masculinity programme within the Belfast Trust area, by delivering further sessions in 2023/24, and continue to deliver Relationships and Sexuality Education Awareness Training to secure additional unrestricted funding.

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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

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

Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

The auditor is deemed to have been re-appointed in accordance with section 487 of the Companies Act 2006.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees' annual report was approved on 15 November 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Dr A Simpson
Trustee

