

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

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 M Crawford Dr A Simpson Mr R Gowdy Dr S McDermott Mr L Allamby Ms G McAnee Ms K Murray Ms C Johnson	(Appointed 27 November 2024) (Appointed 24 June 2025) (Appointed 2 September 2025)
Independent examiner	John Beacom FCA Muir Building 427 Holywood Road Belfast BT4 2LT	

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.

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Structure, governance and management *(continued)*

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 2025

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

In 2024/25 our specialist pregnancy counselling service provided 768 sessions, representing an 82% increase compared to the previous financial year. Of these 686 were for post pregnancy counselling and 82 for pregnancy choices counselling.

Our counselling service continues to show an above average attendance rate at 90% and clinical outcomes and routine evaluation reported 83% clients showed clinical or reliable change as a result of the counselling support they received. This places ICNI in the top 25% of UK psychological services.

The waiting list for the service was eradicated by early 2024, following investment from the Department of Health Strategic Planning and Performance Group.

We distributed over 40,000 sexual and reproductive health information leaflets to healthcare settings and community organisations, while also increasing accessibility by making digital copies available on our website. This expanded resource offering contributed to sustained growth in our online presence, with our website receiving nearly 45,000 visits over the year.

Our Big Sexy Talk podcast was shortlisted in two categories, Best Sex and Relationships Podcast and Best Hosting Duo/Trio, at the Irish Podcast Awards. A notable episode featured Nick Mathison MLA, Chair of the Education Committee, who shared insights into his personal experiences with relationships and sexuality education (RSE) and discussed the committee's ongoing inquiry into this vital area.

Our helpline responded to nearly 1,000 calls, continuing to offer confidential information, support, and reassurance across a wide range of sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing issues.

We also actively promoted the Sexual Health Action Plan during Sexual Health Awareness Week. As part of our campaign, we sent Valentine's Day cards to MLAs to raise awareness of the Plan's objectives and encouraged open conversations about sexual health among policymakers.

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

Abortion care in Northern Ireland continued to evolve, with surgical provision extended to 21 weeks and 6 days. Department of Health data recorded 2,792 abortions in 2023/24, an increase of 624 from the previous year. This rise reflects both expanded access and successful collaborative efforts by ICNI, the Department of Health, and sector partners to improve public awareness of available services.

ICNI remained an active contributor to the Northern Ireland Abortion and Contraception Taskgroup (NIACT), co-authoring its second progress review, published in April 2024. The report identified improvements in access to contraception and abortion, while highlighting gaps in telemedicine provision and first trimester screening. The review was launched at a high-profile conference in Parliament Buildings, hosted by ICNI and attended by key stakeholders.

In October 2024, ICNI hosted a second conference to mark the 20th anniversary of a landmark Court of Appeal judgment on abortion in Northern Ireland. The event reflected on the judgment's legacy and addressed ongoing stigma surrounding abortion care. Speakers included Professor Sir Michael McBride (Chief Medical Officer), Audrey Simpson (former FPA CEO), journalist Amanda Ferguson, Patricia McKeown (UNISON), Dr Laura McLaughlin (South Eastern Trust), and Maeve Taylor (IFPA).

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

In February 2025, we brought together MLAs for a roundtable focused on pregnancy loss. The event launched ICNI's new Pregnancy Loss Policy, shared client experiences from our specialist counselling service, and presented findings from our survey on workplace support and paid leave following pregnancy loss.

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

In August 2024, ICNI hosted a panel discussion on RSE at Féile an Phobail in Belfast. The discussion, chaired by ICNI's Director of Advocacy and Policy, featured Nick Mathison MLA (Chair of the Education Committee), Lauren Bond (Secondary Students' Union), Fergal McFerran (Children's Law Centre), and ICNI's Education and Training Manager. Attendees included representatives from the Department of Education, CCEA, the Public Health Agency (PHA), the Human Rights Commission, and local schools.

In September, the Education Committee launched a mini-inquiry into RSE. ICNI submitted a written response and participated in an informal roundtable discussion with committee members in November. Several MLAs later referenced ICNI's work in committee proceedings. In December, ICNI gave oral evidence, focusing on inclusive RSE for individuals with learning disabilities and autistic people. The committee's report is expected to be published in 2025.

In November, ICNI also contributed to the Regional Annual Sexual Health Conference, where our CEO led a workshop entitled Masculinity: Challenging the Myths and Stereotypes of Being a Man. The session attracted educators, health officials, and community leaders, many of whom expressed interest in further training.

In February 2025, ICNI delivered the Understanding Masculinity programme to young men at Springvale Learning, reinforcing our commitment to challenging gender stereotypes and promoting inclusive messaging around masculinity.

Our Speakeasy programme continued to meet Public Health Agency targets, with over 100 sessions delivered to 56 participants across the Belfast and South Eastern Trust areas.

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

In June 2024, ICNI launched its Menopause Project research report, with strong attendance from project participants, councillors, menopause specialists, and representatives from the community and health sectors. At the event, we announced new funding to deliver menopause training for support staff working with individuals with a learning disability. The training concluded in March 2025 and received positive feedback. Evaluation data is now being analysed to inform future delivery.

Demand for our Just Ask programme remained high, with over 300 sessions delivered to more than 450 individuals across Northern Ireland. Referrals significantly exceeded targets, and despite additional PHA funding, a waiting list for one-to-one support extends into 2026-highlighting the urgent and ongoing need for accessible services.

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Achievements and performance *(continued)*

As part of Sexual Health Week, ICNI hosted Let's Talk About...The Talk, an event exploring RSE with individuals with a learning disability and autistic people. The panel included people with lived experience and professionals, followed by group discussions. This work was further promoted through a short film co-produced with service users from the Happy Days project.

In March 2025, we hosted a conference addressing the barriers faced by individuals with a learning disability and autistic people in accessing services. Lived experience was central to the programme, which helped to foster new partnerships aimed at strengthening future training delivery. A video from the event is available online.

Throughout the year, ICNI delivered training to over 150 participants across a range of topics, including RSE Awareness, Loss and Bereavement, and a new OCN NI Level 1 course on Understanding Relationships and Sexuality for young people. A revised training brochure was also published, introducing two new OCN NI Level 2 courses: Masculinity Awareness and Access to Abortion and Contraception Awareness.

Our CEO also continued to collaborate with Positive Life to develop sexual health training for workplaces and to deliver sessions with their service users.

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 the Independent Examination of our accounts. Net incoming resources for the year were £27,353, bringing the charity's total funds to £118,934, of which £76,175 are unrestricted.

In July 2024, the Health Minister confirmed that the Department of Health's core grant scheme for voluntary and community organisations would remain at 2023/24 levels. In November, a new core grant competition was launched. ICNI was one of just 25 successful applicants from a total of 259.

We also secured significant grant funding during the year: from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust to support our advocacy work until March 2028; the Ideas Fund to extend our menopause research and education project until June 2025; the Fore to enhance our training delivery capacity; and the Halifax Foundation NI to offer counselling services to individuals affected by pregnancy loss, perinatal mental health challenges, or traumatic birth experiences.

Further funding was awarded by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group to support pregnancy choices and post-abortion counselling, and by the Public Health Agency to deliver sexual health information and RSE programmes for individuals with a learning disability and their parents or guardians. An addendum to this funding supported the delivery of additional RSE sessions, a conference, and the development of easy-read literature.

Unrestricted income continued to be generated through our training department. We also secured a new lease on our Belfast premises at a reduced rate, improving cost efficiency and long-term financial sustainability.

This combination of income generation and strategic investment enabled the introduction of new salary scales, enhancing terms and conditions for staff. These developments have strengthened ICNI's capacity to deliver high-quality services, attract and retain skilled professionals, and position the organisation as a trusted and sustainable provider of sexual and reproductive health support across Northern Ireland.

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Financial review

The company is a non-profit making organisation. The results are set out in detail on page 9. The company had net incoming resources for the year of £27,353. The principal funding sources of the charity are by way of grant, principally from the Department of Health, Ideas Fund, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Public Health Agency.

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 £76,175, as detailed in note 16, 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

In 2024/25, we began developing a new three-year Strategic Plan to guide ICNI's work from 2025 onwards. This plan will adopt an outcomes-based accountability framework, enabling us to better measure and demonstrate the impact of our services, advocacy, education, and training programmes. It reflects the evolving needs of the communities we serve as we strive for excellence in sexual health and rights.

As part of this process, we conducted a skills audit of the Board of Trustees, leading to the appointment of Grainne McAnee, whose expertise in academic research and evaluation will strengthen our governance. We will continue recruiting Trustees to ensure diverse perspectives and robust leadership as we move into the next strategic phase.

In November 2025, we will bid farewell to two long-serving Trustees, Audrey Simpson and Mary Crawford. We are profoundly grateful for their dedication and the vital contributions they have made to ICNI's growth. As we prepare for their departure, we remain committed to a smooth transition, welcoming new members who will carry forward their legacy and help us realise our future ambitions.

Looking ahead, we will continue providing specialist pregnancy counselling while actively addressing the stigma surrounding pregnancy loss through the promotion of our Pregnancy Loss Policy and workplace training programmes.

We also plan to strengthen our regional networks, especially within Special Educational Needs schools, to improve the delivery of RSE and develop accessible learning resources. This includes creating easy-read materials on contraception and sexually transmitted infections, alongside a new Bubble Bear comic focused on online grooming.

Building on the success of our menopause and masculinity programmes, we aim to expand their reach and deepen engagement through increased training delivery and new partnerships.

To connect with broader audiences, we will enhance our digital presence by growing our social media channels, producing engaging, high-quality podcasts, and refreshing our website. These efforts will be supported by a new social media policy designed to maximise impact and engagement.

Through these initiatives, ICNI is dedicated to evolving alongside the communities we serve, championing sexual health and rights with innovation, inclusivity, and impact at the forefront.

Informing Choices NI (Trading as ICNI) Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Small company provisions

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

The trustees' annual report was approved on 25 November 2025 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Mr L Allamby
Trustee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Allamby', written over a horizontal line.