

**Ladybirds Children's Services**  
**Company No. NI670029**  
**Trustees' Report For The Year Ended 31 March 2025**

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The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

## **Objectives and Activities**

### **Aims and Objectives**

The objectives of LADYBIRDS are to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of women, children and family's resident in the Ards North Down region to improve the conditions of their lives.  
In particular to:

1. Providing high quality daycare and childcare and parenting in a safe and nurturing environment and to encourage and develop their abilities and confidence by organising activities that will enhance their health and wellbeing and their social and intellectual development.
2. Providing facilities and recreational and educational activities for the care and development of children and young people during out-of-school hours and school holidays.
3. Increasing parental recognition of the needs of children and young people and the value of a structured childcare provision and encouraging them to become involved in the activities of the Charity.
4. Advance education, relieve poverty and promote good health by the provision of advice and support to parents/guardians and offer training programmes aimed at developing good parenting.
5. Contributing to the professional development of those working in daycare and childcare.

### **Public Benefits Statement & Declaration**

The public benefit for Ladybird Children's Services are for the purposes of benefiting children, parents/guardians and families resident in the Ards North Down area are:-

- Enhance the development and education of children and young people - Enhance social and intellectual development of the children and young people taking part in the day and childcare activities
- Improve health, confidence and capabilities of parents/guardians who take up offered training and support
- Provide facilities and recreational and educational activity for children and young people during out of hours and school holidays - Encouraging parents and guardians to become involved in the activity of the charity
- Developing the skills and ability of the staff
- Provide advice and support to parents and guardians and offer training aimed at providing good parenting

No harm arises from these purposes. Incidental benefit may arise from transferable skills training offered to Board members to fulfil their duties.

LADYBIRDS has been providing onsite childcare, playgroup, mums and tots groups, parenting programmes and early intervention initiatives for 27 years, formerly operating as a community association, to ensure caring responsibilities are not a barrier to engagement on programmes for women. It has now registered as full time daycare with South Eastern Healthcare Trust, to widen participation and improve the programmes and services provided to the children. Care is provided for children who attend programmes of support and for supporting women who are returning to the workplace and who chose to support a social economy childcare setting.

Provision is split into relevant age categories and rooms - Babies aged 0-2 years, Wobblers aged 2-3, pre-pre-school aged 3-4 and pre-school aged 3-4. Plans are in place to expand to offer afterschool service and to look for a second venue to extend the places available to parents due to the current waiting list. Ladybirds Childcare unit works closely with Early Years organisation to ensure a quality accessible service in Kilcooley and Ards North Down, for the community sector.

LADYBIRDS provides a community resource for children, and advances early years and play development through the delivery of childcare programmes, parenting courses and initiatives, mentoring and guidance. It aims to ensure all children reach their developmental milestones and full potential through fostering a nurture based play programme, delivering evidence based programmes such as Media Initiative and Incredible Years which supports diversity and positive parenting training for the Early Years sector.

1. Provide a welcoming space to deliver positive play development to enable all children to meet their developmental milestones and meet their full potential.
2. To deliver positive parenting programmes for the relief of poverty and disadvantage.
3. Ensure children feel safe and secure and valued.

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**Ladybirds Children's Services  
Trustees' Report (continued)  
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025**

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**Aims and Objectives - continued**

4. Welcome all parents regardless of background, religion, race, marital status, political belief, sexual orientation, gender, or disability.
5. Promote equal opportunity and gender equality.
6. Providing safe and satisfying group play, in which parents are encouraged to take part in the development of the lives of their children.
7. Increase parental recognition of the needs of children & young people and the value of a structured childcare provision.
8. Encouraging parental recognition of the needs of children & young people and the value of structured childcare provision designed to meet their needs.
9. Promoting and supporting children & young people in developing Good Relations within their community and in other communities.
10. Promoting activities that will enhance the health & well-being of children & young people.
11. Doing all such other lawful things as are necessary for or conducive to the attainment of the above aims.

**Special Needs Support**

Ladybirds provides support for children with additional and special needs. It has facilities including a sensory garden with musical wall, acrylic mirror panels, wizzy dizzy to help with physical and sensory needs, water tray with different levels and mud kitchens to explore different textures and sensory train where we will grow our own food and experience colours and smells. Our sensory room including bubble tower, Infinity Tunnel, softie with fibre optic lights, activity wall panels, weighted blanket, selection of sensory mobile tactile toys, fibre optic rug, projector which displays scenes onto the wall, interactive keyboard and colour changing bench and a sensory mood cube. The centre will continue to develop the sensory programme to become a centre of excellence for children with additional needs.

**Out of School Support / Holiday Clubs**

Ladybirds provides out of school support in the form of Breakfast Clubs, Afterschool's Clubs and Holiday Clubs and Summer Schemes to support children and working parents. The schemes are focused on play development and encouraging children reaching their full potential, developing their confidence and self-esteem.

Summer Schemes are based in disadvantaged areas targeting hard to reach families who otherwise would not avail of summer scheme provision.

**Achievements and Performance**

**Main Achievements**

**Staff Training**

Staff continue to participate in Continuous Personal Development (CPD) throughout the year, aligned to their Personal Development Plan. Training included:

- Safeguarding
- Paediatric First Aid
- Manual Handling
- Level 2 Award in Food Safety & Catering
- CCLD Level 5 Childcare Leadership & Development
- CMI Level 3 Project Management - Food Allergy & Intolerance
- Adverse Childhood Experiences Level 1
- Level 2 Trauma Sensitive Approach
- SEN Level 2
- Level 5 Leadership and Management

**Health & Wellbeing**

Working in partnership with the Public Health Agency and the South Eastern Healthcare Trust, LADYBIRDS delivered a varied health and wellbeing and health promotion programme for both children and parents. This included nutritional advice, cooking on a budget, physical activity, therapeutic horticulture and arts and crafts for positive mental health. Ladybirds also operates an onsite Foodbank which is assisting the issues of Food Poverty, which were heightened during COVID 19.

**Parenting & Young Women**

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# **Ladybirds Children's Services Trustees' Report (continued) For The Year Ended 31 March 2025**

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## **Main Achievements - continued**

Ladybirds has developed a comprehensive parenting support programme which is delivered face to face and digitally. It provides an intensive support programme for young women aged 16-25 who are at risk of not reaching their full potential and parents who require additional support and friendship.

## **Ending Violence Against Women & Girls**

Ladybirds works with the South Eastern Domestic Violence Partnership, a consortium of organisations supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse and coercive control. The organisation responded to the consultation on the NI Executive policy development to ensure the voice of local families, women and girls were heard at a regional and policy making level.

## **Lobbying & Advocacy**

The organisation lobbies local, regional and national Government, meeting with decision makers and policy lead, to promote the support of families and children in the Ards and North Down region, on key areas which are impacting local families including poverty, affordable childcare, early years support and children with additional needs.

## **Promoting Intergenerational Engagement**

Ladybird Children's Services recognises the valuable contribution older people provide to the local community and utilise their skills through our intergenerational programmes. Ladybirds currently partners with Oakmount Residential Home, to develop understanding of intergenerational working, older peoples issues, respect and understanding. All generations are included in our family events, which have been paused due to the Covid situation.

## **Education & Training**

Parental educational support is encouraged through our parenting programmes. This is provided both face to face and digitally via Zoom and Teams to maximise engagement and participation. We facilitate employability support, CV building and job search for those parents who are seeking to escape the poverty trap. We have a dedicated Parenting Room in the Ladybirds Centre.

## **European Mobility (Erasmus+)**

LADYBIRDS has been engaged in a number of Erasmus+ as an associate partner. This has enabled us to develop international links, develop good practice and share innovation/knowledge exchange. This work will conclude in Summer 2023, due to Brexit. The centre will explore the Turing Scheme as an alternative and continue to work with the British Council for International engagement.

## **Financial Review**

### **Financial Position**

Restricted reserves are used for the purposes intended as per the conditions of funding for each fund. LADYBIRDS's restricted reserves balance related to the timing differential receipt of funding and expenditure. These reserves should balance at zero when programmes are completed. There is a designated fund for the building project, to future proof the organisation and remove the ongoing risk of premises being sold.

Unrestricted reserves are used for items in keeping with the organisations charitable aims and objectives including redundancy liability. At the end of the current year, the charity shows a surplus of £35,873 (2024: Deficit £15,414) with the accumulated funds of £45,413 (2024: £9,540) which includes expenditure which has been capitalised for a period in the future.

### **Additional Note**

#### **Plans for future periods**

LADYBIRDS aims to

- a) Complete the purchase of the building to implement an enhanced Children & Family Centre service for Ards North Down and strengthen the rural services for women,
- b) Ladybirds is continuing to work with NI Housing Executive to develop an onsite provision in Kilcooley estate
- c) Progress the digitalisation project to improve access to LADYBIRDS programmes via online platforms.
- d) Develop social economy to help sustain the organisation, making it less reliant on grant income.
- e) Secure funding to upgrade the building

#### **Funds held as custodian trustee**

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**Ladybirds Children's Services  
Trustees' Report (continued)  
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**Additional Note - continued**

LADYBIRDS does not hold funds on behalf of others.

**Structure, Governance and Management**

**Governing Document**

Ladybird Children's Services is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association and is a Company Limited by Guarantee with charitable status. LADYBIRDS is registered with HMRC for charitable purposes. On appointment to the Board of Directors, the Trustee receives induction training to ensure they are aware of the responsibility of their post. The roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors are contained in the Board induction Manual and detail the strategic level of their decision making powers. Operational matters are delegated to the Operations Manager who reports to the Board at meetings held at least 6 times per year. There are Board Sub-Groups including Staffing and Finance.

It is a family and childcare centre, registered with the South Eastern Trust, managed day to day by an Operations Manager and a team of qualified staff. It is open Monday to Friday, 07:30 am to 17:30pm.

**Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities**

The trustees (who are also the directors of Ladybirds Children's Services 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 trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statement unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing the financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

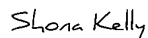
The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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.

**Small Company Rules**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees' report was approved by the board of trustees and signed on its behalf by:



Shona Kelly

Trustee  
Date

19 Dec 2025



Nicole Weir

Trustee