

## The Pantry Newcastle Limited

### Trustee's Annual Report

#### Year Ended 31 March 2025

The Trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025 which complies with the requirements for a directors' report and accounts under the Companies Act 2006. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

#### Trustees of the charity

The directors of the charitable company are its trustees for the purposes of charity law. The trustees who have served during the year ended 31 March 2025 and since the year end were as follows:

Jennifer Jane Elizabeth Maccabe

Patricia Mary Rooney

John O'Neill

Vivienne Quinn

Maggie Burch (appointed 04/06/2024)

Michael Gordon (appointed 04/06/2024)

Gary Campbell Law (appointed 04/06/2024)

Karen Helena Law (appointed 04/06/2024)

Bryan McNulty (appointed 04/06/2024)

#### Objectives and activities

The association was established to relieve poverty, hunger and financial hardship, promote social inclusion, protect and preserve public health and well-being and to promote the benefit of the inhabitants who are in need of assistance as a result of their poverty or social and economic circumstances (hereinafter called "the beneficiaries") in Newcastle and its surrounding areas in County Down, Northern Ireland in particular but not exclusively (hereinafter called the "area of benefit") without distinction of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic identity, political or religious opinion, by associating the statutory authorities, community and voluntary organisations and the beneficiaries in a common effort to relieve poverty and financial hardship with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said beneficiaries and in particular:

(a) to relieve poverty and hunger of the inhabitants who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress or at risk of social exclusion in the area of benefit by any charitable means and in particular through the provision of emergency food aid, relief goods, funds, training, clothing, advice and care;

(b) the relief of sickness among the inhabitants by the provision of healthy nutrition and food hygiene practice and the provision of services required to ease their suffering;

(c) to promote or assist in the promotion, facilitation and organisation of community capacity building and community development programmes and projects for the benefit of the inhabitants within the area of benefit who have need of such assistance as a result of their youth, age, disability or infirmity, or social or economic circumstances, in an effort to increase the abilities, skills and self-confidence of such inhabitants.

For the purposes of the articles 'socially excluded' means people who are excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors: unemployment; financial hardship or low income; race; poor educational or skills attainment; substance abuse or dependency including alcohol or drugs; disability; nationality or ethnic origin; or have experienced a lack of sensitivity to cultural issues.

The Pantry Foodbank provides emergency food hampers to those in need living in the Newcastle and surrounding areas in County Down. Such people are identified by agencies such as Saint Vincent de Paul, Citizen's Advice Bureau, CAP, Home Start, Sure Start, PIPS, local churches. These food hampers also include cleaning products and toiletries. Clients are referred by said agencies. We have a chat with them, identify gaps in care and signpost to other agencies if necessary. We operate in Newcastle on a Tuesday afternoon from 2-4pm and provide emergency food aid for at least 3 days.

## **The Pantry Newcastle Limited**

### **Trustee's Annual Report**

#### **Year Ended 31 March 2025**

##### **Public benefit statement**

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 charity's objectives and activities as well as providing public benefit.

##### **Achievements/Performances in the period**

We have been in operation for a number of years and operate from the Methodist Church based in Newcastle. We are fortunate that they have allowed us to use their premises to provide Front of House location and storage, and as a result our overhead costs are minimal.

Within the past 12 months we have seen a continuous increase in the usage of the foodbank by the local community. Due to various factors such as the cost-of-living crisis including the energy/fuel crisis, the economic financial downturn whereby we went into lockdown, businesses closed and people lost their jobs. Therefore, our local community had been left in a greater need and those presenting for food parcels increased. The pandemic left a major impact on our services and the economy in general and a lot of smaller businesses have closed, therefore leading to an increase in unemployment in the area.

In order to consider everyone's safety we delivered the food parcels to the people's home within the community and continue to do so as we move forward. In terms of our communication and public relations strategy, we hold regular meetings of the PR sub-committee, looking at ways of ensuring that we target those most in need. We visited schools and businesses, increased our social media presence and print press, making regular contributions therefore raising awareness and profiling the foodbank in the area.

Our main sources of income during the last financial period have been through donations, fundraising and various collections. There were also various fundraising initiatives held throughout the year. We have had numerous supermarket, shop and street collections in our local towns which has proved to be a very successful exercise in raising the profile of the Pantry Foodbank and highlighting the need for a foodbank in this area. Also, various voluntary groups, church groups, schools, clubs and individuals have donated generously to the Foodbank throughout the year.

In terms of expenditure this has increased significantly due to the greater demand on our service. Our main expenditure in the financial year was purchasing food supplies which included both tinned food, fresh vegetables and also meat supplies as demand increased and therefore as a result, we had to purchase food when stock was depleting or in low supply.

Due to the rise in energy prices, we were made aware by the statutory agencies that some of our most vulnerable clients were unable to heat their homes, as a result we made a management decision to assist those most in need with the purchase of emergency coal/blocks which were delivered to their homes. This was led by the urgent need at the time.

Thus, even though our donations of food have increased, and we have raised the public profile of the Pantry, there is still a significant expense for us to cover stock costs. We also have Public Liability Insurance cover for our volunteers and clientele. The Pantry Foodbank has no paid staff and all volunteers have provided their help at no cost whatsoever to the Foodbank, which we are extremely grateful for.

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

As we move forward ahead in the year ahead, it is imperative for our continued sustainability and growth, that we have the available resources to continue to meet the increase in demand in our local community. The year ahead will be challenging for the Pantry foodbank as we are in a 'cost of living' crisis with fuel prices increasing dramatically, which therefore financially impact on the family household income. Food poverty is on the increase as those facing food/fuel poverty have to make the choice between heating the house or putting food on the table, therefore we will be focusing on raising the profile of the Foodbank in the

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area to ensure that those most in need are able to avail of our services, especially those in the surrounding rural areas.

We need to ensure that The Pantry Foodbank has the finances to deliver our objectives and we will be developing stronger cohesive links with the various voluntary and community groups, schools and businesses to reach those in isolated rural areas. Also, due to the increase in unemployment figures and the uncertainty for many businesses we need to ensure we have available resources to meet demand. We plan to hold various fundraising events, street collections, any other activities to promote and raise awareness of the need for a foodbank in our community.

We also looking to engage with the media on regular basis and monthly articles in the local newspapers. Also enhance and develop strategy regarding social media and X (formerly Twitter) to engage with all sections of our community and ensure that our service is reaching those most in need.

## The Pantry Newcastle Limited

### Trustee's Annual Report

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

#### Trustees' responsibilities

##### Trustee's responsibilities statement

The Trustees (who are also Directors of the charity company for the purpose of Company Law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity 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 Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable 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 operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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.

##### Small Companies Exemption

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees on **24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025**.

J O'NEILL

*JOHN O'NEILL*

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**MR JOHN O'NEILL**

**CHAIRPERSON**

K Law

*Karen Law*

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**MRS KAREN LAW**

**TREASURER**