



The Road Ahead NI

Trustees Annual Report

April 2025 - March 2026



Trustees' Annual Report – Activities and Achievements

Overview of the Year April 2025 – March 2026

The past year has been an extremely busy and productive period for The Road Ahead NI as the charity received its charitable status in February 2025. The Road Ahead NI has continued to grow and develop its services to meet the increasing needs of individuals and families affected by road traffic collisions across Northern Ireland.

One of the most significant milestones during the year was the opening of our new premises on O'Hagan Street, Newry. This dedicated space has provided the charity with a central base from which to coordinate our services and deliver a range of therapeutic workshops, support sessions, and community activities. Having a welcoming and safe environment has allowed service users (both adults and children) to come together, connect with others who have had similar experiences, and access specialist support in a comfortable and supportive setting.

Throughout the year, the demand for our services has continued to grow. Road traffic collisions have a devastating and often lifelong impact not only on those directly involved but also on families, friends, and the wider community. The Road Ahead NI exists to ensure that no one has to face this journey alone.

Our work focuses on providing practical, emotional, and therapeutic support to individuals and families affected by road traffic collisions, while also helping people to rebuild their confidence, wellbeing, and sense of connection with their community.

Mentoring and Peer Support

A key element of The Road Ahead NI's work is our peer mentoring service, which connects individuals affected by road traffic collisions with trained volunteer mentors who have lived experience of similar circumstances.

Many people affected by traumatic incidents report feeling isolated or burdensome to their families, particularly where several members of a family or community have been affected by the same incident. Our mentoring service offers a safe, non-judgemental space where individuals can speak openly with someone who understands the challenges they may be facing.

During the year, **95 adults and 23 children** accessed our mentoring service. Our dedicated team of trained volunteer mentors provided emotional support, practical guidance, and signposting to other services where appropriate. For many people, this support provides an important first step in their recovery journey.

Trauma Counselling and Therapeutic Support

The Road Ahead NI continues to prioritise access to specialised trauma counselling for those affected by road traffic collisions. We work with a network of qualified trauma counsellors across Northern Ireland to ensure that individuals can access professional support within their local area.

This approach helps remove barriers such as travel distance and ensures that people can receive timely, appropriate support when they need it most.

Over the course of the year, **64 adults and 7 children accessed trauma counselling** through The Road Ahead NI. The charity fully covers the cost of these sessions, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent anyone from receiving support.

In addition to counselling, we also delivered a range of therapeutic workshops designed to support emotional wellbeing and trauma recovery. These included activities such as:

- Art therapy
- Mindfulness and meditation
- Breathwork sessions
- Yoga and movement-based wellbeing sessions
- Reflexology and holistic therapies
- Reflexology training
- Wreath making workshops

These workshops provide gentle and supportive ways for people to explore and process their experiences while also connecting with others who understand the impact of trauma.

Throughout the year we delivered **12 adult workshops and 6 Childrens Art Therapy workshops attended by 77 adults and 12 children** respectively.

Children and Young People's Services

The Road Ahead NI recognises that children and young people can be deeply affected by road traffic collisions, whether through bereavement, serious injury, or witnessing traumatic events.

During the year we continued to provide specialist support for children and young people, including:

- One-to-one trauma counselling
- Play therapy
- Creative therapeutic workshops
- Family-based support sessions

These services help young people to safely explore and express their emotions while building coping skills and resilience.

A total of **23 children and young people engaged** with our services during the year.

Referral Pathways

The Road Ahead NI continues to receive referrals from a wide range of sources, reflecting both the growing awareness of our services and the strength of our multi-agency partnerships. Our referral pathways ensure that individuals and families affected by road traffic collisions can access support through a variety of routes, enabling timely and appropriate intervention.

During the year, referrals were received from both statutory and community-based services, as well as through self-referral. Statutory referrals included Health Trusts, GP services, and multi-disciplinary teams (18 referrals), alongside PSNI Family Liaison Officers (9 referrals) who play a key role in supporting families following traumatic incidents.

Self-referral remains a significant pathway into the service, with individuals accessing support directly through email and social media (20 referrals), walk-in appointments (8 referrals), and the charity's website (8 referrals). In addition, partner organisations (3 referrals) continued to play an important role in signposting individuals to The Road Ahead NI.

This broad range of referral sources highlights the increasing demand for trauma-informed support services and demonstrates the trust placed in The Road Ahead NI by both professionals and the wider community. It also reflects the accessibility of the service, ensuring that individuals can seek support in a way that feels most comfortable to them.

Community Engagement and Connection

In addition to therapeutic support, The Road Ahead NI organised a range of community events and activities aimed at bringing people together in supportive and informal environments.

As part of our commitment to responding to the wider impact of road traffic collisions, The Road Ahead NI has developed its **C.I.A.R.A (Community Intervention and Response Approach)** programme. This initiative provides outreach support to communities, groups, and individuals in the immediate aftermath of a road traffic collision where there has been significant community impact. These incidents can often affect large numbers of people (both adults and children), including witnesses, peers, and the wider community, many of whom may experience trauma-related responses but may not traditionally access support services.

The programme was piloted in November following a tragic road traffic collision in Newry which resulted in the death of a local man and had a profound impact on the community, including a high number of witnesses. Through this pilot, The Road Ahead NI provided timely, trauma-informed support within the community, offering a safe space for individuals to process their experiences, access information, and be signposted to further support where needed.

The charity plans to further develop and strengthen the C.I.A.R.A programme, recognising the importance of early intervention and community-based support in reducing the longer-term impact of trauma.

Many individuals affected by road traffic collisions experience long-term isolation. Our events provide opportunities for people to reconnect socially and build supportive relationships with others who understand their experiences.

Throughout the year we **organised 4 community events and activities**, including family days, social gatherings, memorial and wellbeing events. These activities were attended 480 participants.

In November 2025, The Road Ahead NI hosted our annual Memorial Day for Road Victims at the Mourne Country Hotel, Newry, bringing together 210 individuals to remember loved ones and reflect on the impact of road traffic collisions. The event provided a safe and compassionate space where those attending could connect with others who have experienced similar loss, offering mutual comfort, understanding, and a sense of not being alone in their grief. Alongside the physical event, we also delivered a virtual memorial through our Facebook page, which was viewed by 699 people. This ensured that individuals who were unable to attend in person could still take part in a meaningful way, honouring their loved ones and feeling connected to a wider community of support.

Education and Awareness

Alongside our direct support services, The Road Ahead NI also works in partnership with Road Safe NI Charity to raise awareness of the wider impacts of road traffic collisions and the importance of trauma-informed support for those affected.

We continue to work collaboratively with partner organisations, community groups, and statutory agencies to ensure that individuals affected by road traffic collisions are aware of the support available and can access services as early as possible.

As part of our ongoing commitment to education and awareness, The Road Ahead NI recently organised two dedicated trauma-informed workshops. One workshop was specifically tailored for individuals bereaved by road traffic collisions, while the second was designed for survivors and others affected. These sessions provided participants with a greater understanding of trauma and its impact on their physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing. Feedback from participants highlighted the value of increasing knowledge and normalising their experiences. Building on this, the charity plans to further develop its psychoeducational and trauma-informed learning programmes to support individuals in understanding and managing the effects of trauma.

Communications and Media Engagement

The Road Ahead NI continues to place a strong emphasis on raising awareness of its services and the wider impact of road traffic collisions through digital platforms and media engagement.

Over the reporting period (April 2025 – March 2026), the charity's Facebook page has experienced significant growth and engagement, reaching over 14 million views and generating 135,400 content interactions. The page has also grown to over 12,000 followers, reflecting increasing public awareness and engagement with the charity's work. Social media continues to play a vital role in promoting services, sharing important messages, and providing a platform for community connection and support.

In July 2025, The Road Ahead NI was delighted to receive funding from the Halifax Foundation to support the development of a new website. This has enhanced the charity's online presence, providing a more accessible and informative platform for individuals seeking support, as well as improving referral pathways and communication with stakeholders.

The charity has also developed strong relationships with national and local media outlets, including U105 and the BBC. Throughout the year, The Road Ahead NI has contributed to a range of media engagements, including television news interviews, radio discussions, and panel contributions. This has included participation in national programmes such as the BBC Radio 2 Jeremy Vine Show, alongside numerous appearances on BBC news platforms.

These media opportunities have played an important role in raising awareness of the realities and long-term impact of road traffic collisions, while also highlighting the support available through The Road Ahead NI.

Looking Ahead

As the charity continues to grow, The Road Ahead NI remains committed to expanding its services to ensure that individuals and families affected by road traffic collisions receive the support they need.

The opening of our new premises and the continued growth of our programmes has strengthened our ability to respond to the increasing demand for trauma-informed services across Northern Ireland. The Trustees remain deeply grateful to our volunteers, partners, funders, and supporters who make this work possible.

Together, we will continue working towards a future where no one affected by a road traffic collision has to travel their journey alone.

Structure, Governance and Management

As The Road Ahead continues to grow, the Trustees recognise the importance of further strengthening governance and are in the process of establishing an advisory board. This will bring together individuals with additional professional expertise, including financial specialists, business owners, and those with lived experience relevant to our work, to support the ongoing development and sustainability of the charity. It is planned that quarterly board meetings will be implemented to enhance strategic planning, decision-making, and accountability.

The Trustees are committed to maintaining strong governance arrangements, with appropriate policies and procedures in place, including safeguarding, data protection, and financial controls. Robust financial management processes are in operation, including dual authorisation of payments and regular financial oversight, ensuring transparency, accountability, and compliance with regulatory requirements.

The Trustees are delighted to have secured funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, which has enabled the appointment of a Service Co-ordinator to support the increasing demand for our services. The charity continues to actively seek additional funding to develop further staffing capacity, ensuring that all individuals and families who reach out to The Road Ahead NI receive timely, appropriate, and high-quality support tailored to their needs.

Trustees and Committee Members

The Road Ahead NI is currently governed by a Board of five Trustees who provide strategic oversight and ensure the charity operates in line with its aims, values, and regulatory requirements.

The wider management committee brings a diverse and valuable range of skills and professional experience, including backgrounds in social work, financial management,

social care, education, nursing, youth work, human resources, fire and rescue services, and wider healthcare. This breadth of expertise strengthens the charity's ability to respond effectively to the complex and varied needs of those we support.

Volunteers and Partnerships

Volunteers remain at the heart of The Road Ahead NI, playing a vital role in the delivery and development of our services. We currently have a dedicated team of approximately 20 volunteers who contribute their time, skills, and lived experience across a wide range of roles. These include business and charity development, administration, peer mentoring, fundraising, financial support, quality assurance, data gathering and monitoring, grant writing, and supporting the delivery of events and workshops.

The commitment and passion of our volunteers enables the charity to operate effectively and respond flexibly to the needs of those we support. Their contribution is invaluable, and the Trustees would like to formally recognise and thank each volunteer for their ongoing dedication and support throughout the year.

The Road Ahead NI has developed and strengthened a broad range of partnerships across the statutory, voluntary, and private sectors. These partnerships are essential in ensuring that individuals and families affected by road traffic collisions can access timely, appropriate, and holistic support.

Our statutory partners include GP surgeries, Community Mental Health Teams, local district councils, Primary & Secondary Schools, local regional colleges, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS), the PSNI Family Liaison Officer (FLO) team, and the PSNI Collision Investigation Unit.

Our voluntary and community sector partners include Road Safe NI Charity, Davina's Ark, the Confederation of Community Groups, Crisis Café, Clanrye Group, youth organisations, sports clubs, Caring Coins, Community Advice NI, The Brain Injury Foundation, and Cruse Bereavement Support.

Our private sector partners include JMK Solicitors, CRASH Services, BBC, U105 and we work with 23 Counselling Agencies from across the province.

These collaborative relationships strengthen our referral pathways and enhance our ability to provide a coordinated, multi-agency response. This ensures that individuals and families not only receive emotional and therapeutic support, but can also access practical advice, advocacy, and specialist services tailored to their needs.

Financial Overview

The Road Ahead NI continues to operate with strong financial oversight and a commitment to transparency and accountability. During the financial year ending 31 March 2026, the charity reported a total income of £108,712.38, comprising both restricted and unrestricted funding.

Restricted income of £22,000 was received through grant funding, including support from The National Lottery Community Fund (£20,000) and the Halifax Foundation (£2,000). Unrestricted income, totalling £86,712.38, was generated through donations and fundraising activity, providing essential flexibility to respond to emerging needs and sustain core services.

Total expenditure for the year amounted to £75,583.28, reflecting significant investment in direct service delivery and organisational development. The largest area of expenditure was trauma counselling, £28,220.00, demonstrating the charity's ongoing commitment to ensuring access to specialist therapeutic support for those affected by road traffic collisions.

Additional key areas of expenditure included rent, utilities, and IT costs, £12,323.78, associated with the opening and operation of the charity's new premises, as well as equipment, maintenance, and renovation costs, £9,914.21 to create a safe and welcoming environment for service users. Investment was also made in support projects, £7,246.97, advertising and marketing, £7,482.76 which contributed to a prestigious launch of the charity and the creation of a promotional video which raises awareness of services, and fundraising activities, £3,768.28, to ensure future sustainability.

The charity maintained careful control of operational costs, including governance, volunteer support, and administrative expenses, ensuring that the majority of funds were directed towards frontline services.

At the end of the financial year, The Road Ahead NI carried forward a balance of £45,191.10, which will be reinvested into service delivery, including trauma counselling, therapeutic programmes, and the continued development of the organisation's capacity to meet increasing demand.

The Trustees remain committed to securing additional funding to sustain and expand services, ensuring that all individuals and families who seek support receive timely, appropriate, and high-quality care.

Future Plans

Looking ahead, The Road Ahead NI is committed to building on the progress achieved over the past year and continuing to develop and strengthen its services in response to growing demand. A key priority is to secure further grant funding to sustain and extend the current Service Co-ordinator role, ensuring the charity can continue to provide timely and effective support to those accessing its services.

The charity also plans to develop a dedicated children and young people's service, recognising the significant impact that road traffic collisions can have on younger individuals. This will involve seeking funding to support the design and delivery of tailored therapeutic interventions for children and families.

In order to strengthen organisational capacity and sustainability, The Road Ahead NI aims to secure funding for additional roles, including an administration and accounts position and a part-time fundraising role. These roles will support the continued growth of the charity, enhance operational efficiency, and enable a more strategic approach to income generation.

Further funding will be sought to support the delivery of adult trauma counselling and to expand the provision of therapeutic group interventions, ensuring that individuals have access to a range of support options that meet their needs.

The charity also plans to establish a service user engagement forum, providing a structured opportunity for those with lived experience to contribute to the development, design, and evaluation of services.

This will ensure that the voices of those we support remain central to the ongoing growth and direction of The Road Ahead NI.

The Road Ahead NI

- Trauma Counselling Service -

April 2025 - March 2026



565
Sessions



71
People Supported



64
Adults Supported



7
Children Supported



520
Adult Counselling
Sessions



45
Children's Counselling
Sessions



Total Cost : £28,220

The Road Ahead NI - April 25 - March 26



MENTORING BREAKDOWN

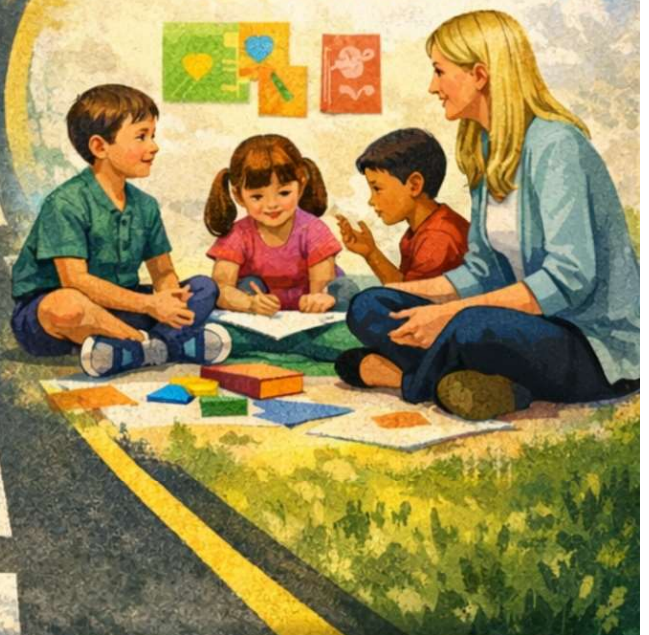
Adults: 95

USED PEER MENTORING



Children: 23

**SUPPORTED THROUGH
ONE TO ONE &
GROUP THERAPY**



Mentoring Service:

Our peer mentoring service connects individuals affected by road traffic collisions with trained volunteers who have lived experience. This provides a safe, understanding space to talk, feel heard, and receive guidance and support.

Children's Support:

Children are supported through trauma informed counselling, play therapy and group art therapy workshops.

The Road Ahead NI - April 25 - March 26

Referrals

Total Referrals

66

Adult Referrals

55

Child Referrals

11

Referral Source Breakdown:



Health Trusts / GP / MDT : 18



PSNI Family Liaison Officers : 9



Email / Social Media Self Referrals : 20



Walk in Self Referrals : 8



Website Referrals : 8



Partner Organisations : 3



The Road Ahead NI - April 25 - March 26

Anniversary Memorials

f **183 people**
remembered
on The Road Ahead NI
Facebook page



Our online World Day of
Remembrance for Road Victims



YouTube video
was viewed
699 times

Our Memorial Day physical
event was attended by
210 people



