



Belfast

Annual Report 2014-15

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



Citizens Advice Belfast has advocated and cared for the people of the city for over 50 years and continues to represent those who are marginalised, isolated, experiencing challenges and feel

there is no hope.

It was with humility and immense pride that I took on the role of Chair in January 2015. I am committed to ensuring the Board leads, governs and supports our Director and her team to address the great challenges we face today and that we do so as one team.

We have brilliant and dedicated staff, volunteers and trustees and I pay special tribute to our stalwart volunteers who make up two thirds of the team and alongside our staff are the backbone of the organisation.

In 2015 we were awarded Investors in People, achieved our highest ever audit result, appointed

a new Director, introduced new services such as FaceTime, recruited new Trustees and involved everyone in developing our Strategic Plan. We are currently working towards achievement of Investors in Volunteers, Silver Investors in People, Trustee Board training, development of in-house training and the delivery of innovative services to our partners and users.

I thank all our funders, partners and service users for helping us deliver our aims whilst maintaining our core values. I thank our Director Linda Williamson for her inspirational leadership and management of our highly skilled and devoted volunteers and staff. Finally I welcome and encourage you to join us in supporting our plans to build a better life for the people of Belfast.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Traynor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lucy Traynor, Chair

DIRECTOR'S REPORT



The theme of our AGM this year is impact. This is something that drives volunteers, staff and trustees forward in everything that we do – to leave a footprint and legacy whenever we can. As an

organisation we impact everyday with the clients who need our services, often at times of crisis and with nowhere else to turn – it is something that has kept me personally connected to the organisation for almost 25 years.

Last year 40 volunteers worked with us giving 14,300 hours – the financial value of this time is more than £95,000.

It is extremely important to me that we give back to those who give their time and we were delighted in March to receive the award of Investing in People which pays testament to our ethos.

We continue to deliver innovatively to maximise service delivery as we have seen the value that it brings to our services.

I have no doubt that the next year will bring new challenges. We operate in competitive times yet it is a time when true partnership working will be needed to deliver the best outcomes for our clients.

As ever the Trustee Board, led by Lucy Traynor from January 2015, will be an invaluable source of guidance, support and strategic direction. Thank you to all our staff and volunteers for commitment, dedication and huge efforts – it makes Citizens Advice Belfast a great organisation to be part of and to our funders – we couldn't do what we do without you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linda'.

Linda Williamson, *Director*

Everything was falling
apart - Citizens Advice
Belfast helped me get
back on track.



MISSION STATEMENT

Through service excellence, we exist to create positive impacts for individuals and communities, by providing clarity and solutions on the issues affecting them.

OUR AIMS

Citizens Advice Belfast exists to

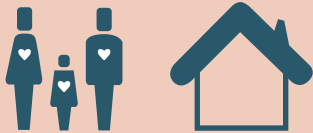
- To provide the advice people need for the problems they face in Belfast and beyond
- To improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives by having strong relationships with those who are affected and with the decision makers who create them.

£8.5M

Money that clients received in
benefits because of our intervention

This money was then spent within the local economy

HIGHLIGHTS 2015



FAMILY SUPPORT

January 2015 saw us commence a partnership with Extern on their Intensive Family Support Service. This is to provide a benefit service and a steps to work project. The service works with families experiencing difficulties and long term unemployment. The project to date has provided extensive support to those families by phone and face to face.



BELFAST HOMELESS

We launched our Homeless project, a direct result of people sleeping rough near our City Centre Offices. We asked those working with the homeless what someone living on the street would need. With the help of the then Lord Mayor Nicola Mallon we asked for donations of gloves, hats, chocolate, cereal bars and mints. We had an overwhelming response and delivered 150 individual bags to the homeless of Belfast.



INNOVATION PROJECT

January 2015 saw us begin a new service working with people affected by stroke and acquired brain injury in delivering advice at critical points in their illness. We collaborated with Macmillan Cancer Support, Chest Heart and Stroke and the regional acquired brain injury unit. This project was successful in that it showed the value of advice in the overall clinical treatment of a patient.



SOCIAL MEDIA

In November of 2014 Citizens Advice Belfast moved into the Social Media arena and set up a twitter account. This has proved very successful on many fronts including, raising our profile as a Charity, building up an extensive network of followers and publicising our services.



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

We were delighted in March to receive the award of Investing in People which pays testament to the ethos of Citizens Advice Belfast. We value those who work with us and strongly believe in investing in them.



CITIZENS ADVICE BELFAST

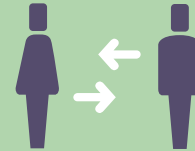
In 2014-2015 we were called forward by the Charity Commission NI, the process was made much simpler through effective communication with the Commission staff.

FUTURE DIRECTION



GROWTH

We will diversify our funding base to raise unrestricted funds while devising, developing and implementing new business models to make these funds work harder for the good of the organisation.



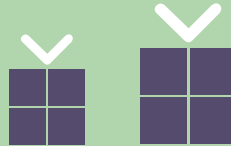
PEOPLE STRATEGY

We will involve, communicate, value and recognise those who work with us. We will create opportunities for training and development, work towards Investing in Volunteers accreditation always ensuring that we motivate our team.



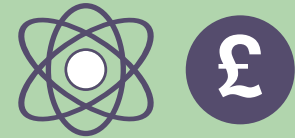
ADVICE SERVICES

We will innovate, collaborate and invest to deliver advice services adequate to everyone's needs.



PROMOTING THE ORGANISATION

We aim to be recognised as leaders in our field of expertise to the corporate world, benefactors and supporters and through appropriate campaigns and fundraising to raise the profile of the organisation as a charity.



EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL PRUDENCE

We will ensure that the organisation is fit to deliver its charitable aims.



PERFORMANCE



30%

Increase in telephone enquiries



50,000

Calls, working in partnership, to our single number for advice 0300 1 233 233



20%

Increase in contacts overall



36%

Increase in problems



£8.5M

Benefits to clients



14,300

Volunteering hours



90%

Client satisfaction



85%

Problems solved



30%

Increase in income generated

Number of problems that we dealt with

51,165

Issues such as:

consumer, debt, social security
education, employment
finance, health, housing
immigration, legal, relationship
signposting, tax, travel and utilities

ACCOUNTS

Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account) For the year ended 31 March 2015

Unrestricted	Restricted	2015	2014	Total	Total
	Notes	funds	funds	£	£
		£	£		
Incoming resources					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Voluntary income	2	52,258	758,130	810,388	734,703
Investment income	3	240	-	240	146
Other incoming resources	4	43,931	-	43,931	-
Total incoming resources		96,429	758,130	854,559	734,849
Resources expended					
Charitable activities		29,315	724,321	753,636	752,618
Governance costs	5	2,500	-	2,500	2,500
Total resources expended		31,815	724,321	756,136	755,118
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers					
		64,614	33,809	98,423	(20,269)
Transfer between funds					
		(3,780)	3,780	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		60,834	37,589	98,423	(20,269)
Net movement in funds/Net income/(expenditure) for the year					
		60,834	37,589	98,423	(20,269)
Total funds brought forward					
		128,313	21,533	149,846	170,115
Total funds carried forward		189,147	59,122	248,269	149,846

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a separate statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

ACCOUNTS

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2015

	Notes	2015		2014	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11		154,810		220,810
Current assets					
Debtors	12	3,605		6,955	
Cash at bank and in hand		113,124		-	
		116,729		6,955	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(23,270)		(77,919)	
Net current assets/(liabilities)			93,459		(70,964)
Net assets			248,269		149,846
Funds					
Restricted income funds			59,122		21,533
Unrestricted income funds			189,147		128,313
Total funds			248,269		149,846

The financial statements were approved by the board on 18 August 2015 and signed on its behalf by

L Traynor
Director

P Reid
Director

Citizens Advice Belfast Board Members 2014-2015

Catherine Anne Davies *Chair*

Htaik Win *Vice Chair*

John Gibbons *Treasurer (Resigned 5 November 2014)*

Lucy Traynor

Cliff Radcliffe

Mark Patton



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Belfast
City Council



Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust

Cystic
Fibrosis Trust



WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT

