

**Northside Family Resource Centre Company Ltd by Guarantee
Company Limited by Guarantee**

Directors report (continued)

The directors present their annual report and the audited financial statements of the company for the financial year ended 31 December 2021

Reference and Administrative Details

The company is a not for profit company with a registered office at 26/28 Clonconnane Road, Ballynanty, Limerick. The companies registered number is 252414.

Directors

The names of the persons who at any time during the financial year were directors of the company are as follows:

Lisa Jane Ahern Resigned 11th July 2021

Gerard Bracken

Raymond Mulcahy

Yvonne Murphy

David Tobin

Matt Cannon

Ciara Daly Joined 12th October 2021

Aoife Prendergast

Aoife Prendergast held the position of company secretary during the financial year.

Principal activities, Objectives and Business Review

The principal activity of the company is the promotion and development of the community. The directors are satisfied that the company is meeting its objectives and that there are no foreseeable changes in the nature of these activities in the future.

The company operates as a family resource centre on the north side of Limerick city. It is a company limited by guarantee. The company operates a simple structure of management. The centre has a clear commitment to discovering our community's capacities and assets while allowing flexibility to respond to the needs as and when they emerge. The centre aims to :

- Engage in community development supporting local community peoples commitment to investing themselves and their resources in the effort.
- Provide structures which facilitate local people to support each other and search for ways to improve the quality of life in the area.
- Ensure services are in place that meets defined needs of individuals, families and the community, positively affecting families both directly and indirectly.
- Provide interventions and compensatory programmes which are open to all while supporting those most disadvantaged and socially excluded to avail of such services.
- Exploit the skills of local residents, the power of community based organisations, and the supportive functions of local institutions.
- Share the responsibility and ownership of the centre through a management structure that respects the needs, values and cultural differences in our community and is committed to developing a Family Resource Centre with a focus on strong local involvement at all levels of management and decision making.

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Achievements and performance

Northside FRC sought to ensure measurable outcomes for the community that demonstrate improvements in their quality of life. To guide NFRC in its ambition, the Company engaged a Strategic Consultant to evaluate its work and create a 5 Year Strategic Plan. NFRC adopted an outcomes-based planning approach based on the framework developed by Ireland's National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, "Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures." The 5 National Outcomes aim to ensure that children and young people:

1. Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing.
2. Are achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development.
3. Are safe and protected from harm.
4. Have economic security and opportunity.
5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world.

The outcomes and key findings are aligned with the 5 National Outcomes. This planning process begins with the end in mind and then determines the actions and activities which will best achieve that end.

An outcome-led approach allowed the VBOM to demonstrate progress in implementing its action plan – to show that it is 'making a difference' – by identifying relevant ways of measuring progress and tracking these indicators over the lifetime of the action plan. Each action will contribute to the achievement of one or more of the above-named outcomes.

In 2020, an extensive audit of existing supports and services located within the catchment was also undertaken to ensure the FRC is not competing with or replicating existing supports and services. This is an increasingly important consideration as resources have become scarcer and there is a more pressing need to account for their effective use. This audit was also utilised in 2021 to identify gaps in social opportunities and service provision.

1.0 Vision and Mission

The VBOM of Management reviewed the Vision and Mission of the Organisation and have been adopted as follows:

1.1 Vision

A just and inclusive society.

1.2 To provide safe, welcoming, and supportive opportunities that empowers the community to develop and realise its full potential.

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2.0 2021's Key Activities

2.1 Active & Healthy (Health, Physical, Mental & Emotional)

Service Provision

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in an increase in demand for mental health support, food and essential home supplies and check-in calls for those vulnerable or isolated. While meeting the new and increased demands NFRC also endeavoured to maintain existing service levels.

NFRC runs an affordable and accessible **counselling service** to individuals/families in the community. This support helps clients to identify the issues and stressors that confront them, provide immediate assistance, and help to contribute to improved personal relationships and mental well-being. Pre-Covid-19 the counselling service experienced a high demand and running at capacity with waiting lists. It is noted more women than men avail of this support service.

There has been an increased number of counselling sessions between 2018 and 2019. Covid-19 created difficulties in meeting needs, however, **the counselling service** is running at capacity and is currently unable to meet the existing demand.

The FRC provides **Creative Therapies** at the Centre which supports & enables adults and children to deal with personal issues through the medium of Art. The Centre also provides **Play Therapy** to enable children to deal with any issues through the medium of play and touch. There is an increase in demand for these supports and a reduction in therapists due to Covid-19.

The FRC runs **infant massage** courses which is aimed towards babies (from 6 weeks to 6 months) and parents. In 2021, despite Covid-19 NFRC continued to deliver Infant Massage to vulnerable parents and their babies.

2.2 Learning & Development (Education and development)

The Learning and Development outcome is dedicated to:

- Learning and development from birth
- Social and emotional wellbeing
- Engaging in learning
- Achieving in education.

Service provision

The FRC supports education via a variety of programmes, ranging from supports for children right up through adult education courses. A range of tertiary education opportunities are also available from other institutes which are in very close proximity, these include:

- Technological University of Munster
- University of Limerick

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Limerick College of Further Education

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) - who manage and operate further education colleges and a range of adult and further education centres delivering education and training programmes.

The FRC provides a range of **adult and community education courses and programmes**. The range of programmes are diverse and changes on a regular basis to meet the needs of the community. In 2018 90 training courses were held. In 2019 adult education were attended by 52 participants during 34 sessions totalling 84.5 hours. In 2020; all classes moved online, learners were supported to complete their formal education and 90 learners received QQI awards. In 2021, education adapted to maximise the benefit of blended learning where needs were of the learners was prioritised. 77 Learners received 113 QQI awards.

The FRC has a **dedicated youth work team working with young people** aged from 10 to 20 years. The team aims to engage young people in creative, inclusive, and developmental youthwork programmes to assist them to reach their full potential. They run a range of projects and programmes. The Centre remained open to young people throughout 2021 by constructing a temporary dedicated space for young people to meet. In 2022 the design phase of a purpose-built youth space will be completed with the build completed in 2023. The need for a dedicated space was identified by the young people themselves.

The FRC ensures children in North Limerick have access to a high quality, child centred affordable **childcare services** where they are supported to reach their full potential. In 2021, the gap in speech and language attainment amongst 0- to 6-year-olds was identified as a priority. As a result, the Family Resource Centre successfully recruited a Speech and Language Therapist and embedded that therapist into Sunshine Childcare Service. In Kings Island Crèche funding was secured for a Family Support Worker with recruitment due in early 2022 and the Senior Afterschool Service successfully appointed a Mental Health Worker dedicated to that age Group.

Providing guardians with opportunities to access work or education or respite. Services provided are also analysed under Outcome 4: Economic Security. The audit identified an undersupply of childcare, evidenced by waiting lists for places.

2.3 Safe and Protected (Safe from harm and neglect)

Family Support strengthens positive informal social networks through community-based programmes and services. The main focus of these services in 2021 was on early intervention aiming to promote and protect the health, well-being and rights of all children, young people and their families. At the same time particular attention is given to those who are vulnerable or at risk.

The length or extent of support provided often depended on the needs of families; it could be a short time, e.g. supporting a mother after the birth of a baby, or long term, e.g. supporting a family who is

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not coping due to bereavement, addiction, intellectual disabilities, mental or physical health issues. Support was frequently provided in the form of parenting skills, budgeting, nutrition, childcare and homework support. The Safe and Protected outcome is dedicated to:

- Secure, stable, caring home environments
- Safety from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Protection from bullying and discrimination
- Safety from crime and anti-social behaviour.

Service provision

As a response to Covid-19, a **friendly call initiative** was expanded by NFRC to not only meet the needs of Older People but all vulnerable people in the community. The purpose of this was to meet the increased demand for mental health support, food and essential home supplies, activity packs for families and check-in calls for those vulnerable or isolated. The increase in demand came from many new people who had never used FRC services before, such as older people cocooning and people asking for food.

The **Meals on Wheels** programme supports older adults to remain in the home and ensure access to nutritionally balanced food on a regular basis. Northside FRC has an HSE-compliant kitchen which is staffed by qualified chefs who prepare and cook dinners which are delivered direct to those who need it. Meals costs €5 per day.

Due to Covid-19, the FRC has reported an increase of phone calls for the Meals on Wheels service in the first 3 quarters of 2021. In the last quarter of the year there has been a significant drop in demand for Meals on Wheels. Reasons identified are due to the reopening of society and the increase in living costs. The later is a priority concern as Older People are forced to prioritise heat over food during the Winter months. The demand for meals on wheel for other vulnerable groups, for example, children living in homelessness has declined when compared to 2020.

In 2021 the FRC has recommenced groupwork with the older people. However, Covid-19 has reduced availability of community spaces and suitable accommodation is hindering provision.

Through the friendly call service and **Meals and Wheels**, additional **issues with isolation and loneliness** in the community were identified by Staff and Clients in 2021. To meet these needs the FRC began visiting isolated Older People in their homes subject to government guidelines. The service is based on listening and befriending and any additional needs identified are referred to the Coordinator of Older People's Services or the relevant agency. This service experienced a significant increase in demand in 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions. The FRC is responding to this demand by creating a volunteer befriending service in 2022.

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2.4 Economic Security (Adequate income)

The Economic Security outcome is dedicated to:

- Protecting from poverty and social exclusion
- Living in child/youth friendly sustainable communities
- Providing opportunities for ongoing education and training
- Providing pathways to economic participation and independent living.

Service provision

The provision of **affordable childcare** facilities is recognised as being important for the social and economic wellbeing of a locality. There are clear economic benefits from the provision of childcare; childcare enables the primary caregiver to participate in the workforce but can also make a significant contribution to a child's emotional and educational development in the early years of their life.

The FRC aims to ensure children have access to a high quality, child centred childcare service where they are supported to reach their full potential. Providing parents with opportunities to access work or education or with respite & low-income families. Services provided are analysed in detail in Outcome 2: Learning & Development.

The FRC hires members of the local community, often providing a route back to employment through **Community Employment** (CE). The FRC employs a large number of people on the CE scheme and these often progress to further employment. The direct employment at the FRC provides opportunities to upskill, get labour market ready, build confidence, network, build communication skills and develop time management.

Community Education programmes provided by the FRC provide practical skills and improved personal confidence. For example, the cooking on a budget programme helps people to eat better and to make food more affordable for those on low incomes. Education is also crucial to economic development in a community and can be read about in more detail under Outcome 2: Learning & Development.

The FRC aims to provide practical financial advice and information to the Community. The FRC hosts a social entitlement clinic which provides advice and information to members of the community in relation to their rights and entitlements and refers them to other supports and services as required. The FRC ran 49 sessions in 2019 with 245 people benefiting from the program. These information sessions did not run formally in 2020 due to Covid-19, however informal advice was provided over the phone.

2.5 Connected and Respected (Participation in positive networks)

Social participation and being part of the community greatly benefits the health and wellbeing of children, families, and the wider community. Participating in community activities strengthen social networks and inter-personal ties which in turn encourage positive interactions.

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The benefits of this are wide ranging and include better quality of life, improved physical and psychological health, and reduced mortality. The Connected and Respected outcome is dedicated to:

Ensuring a sense of own identity and being free from discrimination

Ensuring people are part of a positive network of friends, family and community

Ensuring people are civically engaged, socially and environmentally conscious

Ensuring people are aware of rights, responsibilities and respectful of the law

Supports and Services

The FRC has a wide variety of support and services which encourage and enable social participation. Covid-19 had a significant impact on the delivery of **programmes which enabled social participation**. A large number of groups and programmes were reintroduced in the 2nd half of the year.

2021 was an unprecedented year. The Staff and Volunteers responded by adapting service provision and meeting the demands of the Community in an ever-changing environment.

Reserves policy

The companies reserves policy is set out in note 13 to the financial statements. This reserves policy is subject to annual review by the board of directors,

Structure, Governance and Management

The company is a not for profit company limited by guarantee. The company does not have a share capital and consequently the liability of members is limited, subject to an undertaking by each member to contribute to the net assets or liabilities of the company on winding up such amounts as may be required not exceeding one Euro (€1) .The company was established under a Constitution which established the objects and powers of the company and is governed under its Constitution and managed by a Board of Directors.

The company has eight directors who meet on a monthly basis and are responsible for the strategic direction of the company. At these meetings the board of directors are provided with the key performance and risk indicators. The company is run on a day to day basis by the administrator who is responsible for ensuring that the company meets its long and short term aims and that the day to day operations run smoothly.

The board held 11 meetings during 2021 with an average attendance of 80%.

Likely future developments

COVID 19 had a significant impact on the Company's income and expenditure. While self-generated income fell in some service areas there were two significant income streams introduced as a direct consequence of Covid-19. NFRC was successful in securing monies from the Covid-19 Stability Fund which covered 6 months of utilities in 2021. In addition, the Emergency Wage Subsidy Scheme greatly reduced the Centre's wage bill. As a result there is a significant surplus. This surplus is once-off with shortfalls predicted for 2022. Given the level of surplus the Voluntary Board of Management have committed to two capital projects. Firstly, there will be a significant capital investment in the existing building where the ground floor will be extended and redeveloped to incorporate a youth space. In addition, the 1st floor will be reconfigured to increase workstations to accommodate the increase in headcount. Members have also committed to investing in the design phase of Kings Island Crèche to extend the premises and increase numbers.

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Events after the end of the reporting period

As noted above, COVID 19 continues to have an impact on the community in general. There have been no other significant events affecting the company since the year end.

Accounting records

The measures taken by the directors to secure compliance with the requirements of sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014 with regard to the keeping of accounting records are the implementation of necessary policies and procedures for recording transactions, the employment of competent accounting personnel with appropriate expertise and the provision of adequate resources to the financial function. The accounting records of the company are located at 26/28 Clonconane Road, Ballynanty, Limerick.

Relevant audit information

In the case of each of the persons who are directors at the time this report is approved in accordance with section 332 of Companies Act 2014:

- so far as each director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's statutory auditors are unaware, and
- each director has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditors, FDC and Associates Ltd have expressed their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014.

Approved by the board of directors on _____ and signed on its behalf by:

Director: David Tobin

Director: Gerard Bracken