



ANNUAL REPORT

2023/2024

AWARE-NI.ORG



AWARE

OVERCOMING DEPRESSION.
CHANGING LIVES.

**“ I CAN
FEEL
BETTER.”**



We believe you CAN.

**It's good to talk. Take the first step.
aware-ni.org/LET'S-TALK**

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The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared following the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts per the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended by "Amendments to FRS 102 - Triennial Review - Incremental improvements and clarifications" for accounting periods commencing from 1st January 2019).

AWARE Defeat Depression, known as AWARE, 2 Crawford Square, Londonderry, Northern Ireland, BT48 7HR, Company No: NI 30447. Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland with charity registration number NIC100561.



WELCOME

from Bernard McAnaney, AWARE NI Chairperson

Reflecting on this year's annual report, I realised this would be my eighth as Chairperson; my first was for the 2016/17 report. A lot has changed since then, and yet some things haven't. Some of our team have moved on, and team AWARE NI has many new faces. There is a new senior management team, an almost new Board and new faces across the charity in Education and Training, Support Services, Community Outreach, Communications, and Income Generation.

What hasn't changed is the need for AWARE NI's services and support for those impacted by mental ill-health. At AWARE NI, we know only too well that the level of depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety has not decreased in our communities. Ironically, as the stigma around mental health rightly decreases, and as AWARE NI continues to play a leading role in that area, the demand for mental health services and support increases. Unfortunately, some might argue shamefully that statutory services are struggling and often failing to meet that demand due to the lack of sufficient funding for mental health services.

Against that background, it is worth remembering where we were in 2016/17. The Education and Training service had just begun the early stages of the Mindfulness programme, and 'Paws b' had yet to be introduced to primary schools. Last year, over 1,500 primary school children participated in 'Paws b', and 34 teachers and classroom assistants received mindfulness training. In total, our suite of education and wellbeing programmes reached 19,000 people last year, an increase of just over 50% compared to the 2016/17 figure.

Support Services, particularly our mental health peer support groups, were badly affected during Covid. However, last year, there was clear evidence of recovery, with 5,594 people attending support groups. This is a 25% increase compared to 2016/17. The same period saw community outreach events increase from 85 to 197, reaching nearly 21,500 people compared to the 2016/17 total of 4,000 - an incredible fivefold increase.

Something that hasn't changed is that AWARE NI continues to be the most widely followed local mental health charity in Northern Ireland across our website, Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and TikTok, thanks to the creativity of our Communications team. What has changed is the quality of our communication material; it continues to get better year on year.

Of course, none of the above would be possible without funding. In 2016/17, our total income was about £815k, whilst last year, it was nearly £1.8 million. Donations and gifts now represent 42.5% of our income, and when other non-statutory

sources are included, that figure rises to 72%, a remarkable turnaround from 2016/17 when funding from the statutory bodies accounted for 53% of our income. It's now only 28%. Thanks in no small measure to our award-winning Fundraising team.

As important as funding is though, volunteers, many with a lived experience of depression, are AWARE NI's heart and soul. Put simply the charity would not be the same without them.

Finally, another change worth mentioning is the change of address for our Derry office! Having outgrown the old office in Queen Street a good few years ago, we moved to the new Derry base in Crawford Square in September.

So what of the future? I don't possess a crystal ball, but we have AWARE NI's 2024-2029 five-year strategic plan. The strategy is themed across four key areas – Connection, Change, Community, and Finance and Fundraising.

These themes emerged from an inclusive process involving a series of discussions and workshops with our staff, volunteers, and many others who took the time to comment online. Collectively, we had a critical look at where we are now, assessed gaps and aspirations in our service provision, and discussed how we would move forward over the next five years. The targets are challenging, but I firmly believe the AWARE NI family will meet them.

The strategy, therefore, reflects an organisation that is not content to rest on its laurels but is determined to remain relevant to those who use our range of services.

As we look with confidence to the future, I'd like to thank our volunteers, staff, sessional workers, and my fellow trustees for all their support during another very busy and successful year.

BERNARD AND TEAM AWARE NI AT THE BENONE SEA SPLASH





OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

OUR VISION

Our Vision is for a future where everyone can openly discuss their mental health, access services appropriate to their needs, and develop the skills and knowledge to maintain positive mental health.

OUR VALUES

Our Values are that, above all else, we value our service users. We will treat everyone with dignity, respect and compassion. We are transparent in all our work and accountable to our stakeholders.

- **Dignity, respect and empathy:**

We will treat each other and our service users with dignity, respect and empathy.

- **Integrity, professionalism and transparency:**

We are committed to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty and openness in all aspects of our work.

- **Innovation and excellence:**

We are committed to providing high-quality services and to being innovative for the benefit of people using our services.

- **Equality, diversity and inclusivity:**

We are committed to championing equality, diversity and inclusivity in all aspects of our organisation through an intersectional lens.

OUR MISSION

- To promote emotional health and wellbeing.
- To help people build resilience and maintain positive mental health at every stage of their life journey.
- To ensure that individuals living with depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder are aware of and have access to appropriate support.
- To advocate for policies that facilitate access to appropriate support across Northern Ireland.

HOW DO WE EMBODY OUR VALUES?

- We will respect everyone we come into contact with.
- We will listen non-judgmentally.
- We will be positive, polite and professional in our dealings with people.
- We will do what we say we will do.
- We will foster a culture that is caring and compassionate.
- We will lead by example.

Since 1996, AWARE NI has been working to offer support and education to all those in Northern Ireland affected by low mood, depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder.

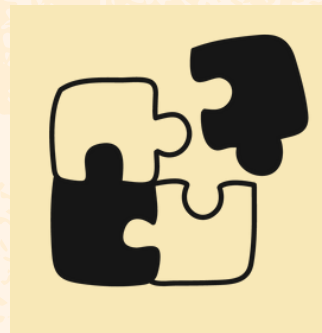
USER-LED

Those who best understand the challenges faced by people affected by depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder are those who have been affected by it themselves. Therefore, we promote a strong user-led, self-help approach, and the organisation's culture is based on the active involvement of its service users, staff, and volunteers.



VOLUNTEERING

We place a high value on the importance of our volunteers who give up their time without financial gain to support others. We actively promote and reward volunteering across the work of the organisation.



CLINICAL STANDARDS

The clinical excellence of our programmes is paramount to our service delivery. Clinical governance of all our programmes and external messages is rigorous, ongoing and embedded within the organisational culture.

OUR ETHOS

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We are committed to working with a wide range of groups, including those based in local communities, those representing a particular community of interest, and other sectoral organisations working with people experiencing mental health problems.



AWARE NI was founded by people with personal experience of depression, its negative impact on their lives and the lack of understanding and support available in the community at the time. This user-led ethos remains a key driver of the charity's work.

As stated in the Memorandum of Association, the charity's objectives are to improve the quality of life of people with, or at risk of, depression and their carers in Northern Ireland. This is to be achieved by:

- Relieving conditions of depression, bipolar and other mood disorders by the provision of mutual support, fellowship and counselling for persons who are or who have been suffering from such illnesses and their relatives.
- Promoting research into the causes, treatment and prevention of depressive illnesses and the dissemination of the valuable results of such research.
- Educating the public regarding depressive illnesses by promoting and encouraging public awareness of such illnesses.
- Acting as a national organisation for all matters concerning the relief of sufferers of depression and manic depressive illnesses and their families.

THE CHARITY'S WORK CURRENTLY INCLUDES:

- Mental health peer support groups in most main towns in Northern Ireland.
- Online support groups.
- Telephone and email support services.
- A wide range of free resources and literature on various mental health issues.
- Free public talks and other events on mental health and related issues.
- Information outreach events in communities across Northern Ireland.
- 'Living Life to the Full', a unique life skills programme based on CBT concepts.
- 'Mood Matters', an education programme delivered in schools, workplaces and community settings.
- 'Mental Health First Aid' training programme.
- Mindfulness programmes, including 'Paws b' and '.breathe', delivered in schools.
- 'My Mind & Me' - a newly developed primary school wellbeing programme based on the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' principles.
- An interactive website offering information and resources.

The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Professional Pathway

IAMAWARE: E-LEARNING PROGRAMME

An interactive e-learning programme that teaches attendees the key concepts around mental health and how to look after their own.

AGE
18+

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Designed to equip your staff with the skills and knowledge they need to help someone with a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis.



AGE
18+

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

A mental health awareness programme for managers equipping them with the skills and knowledge to support their employees' mental health.



AGE
18+

MOOD MATTERS WORKPLACE

A mental health awareness programme for employees delivered onsite in workplaces, helping participants to look after their mental health at work and in their home lives.

AGE
18+

MOOD MATTERS YOUNG PEOPLE

Looks at the 'Take 5 Approach to Wellbeing' to help young people build resilience and maintain positive mental health.

AGE
14-18



MOOD MATTERS ADULTS

Delivered in communities and workplaces. Helps participants learn to manage their mood and to maintain positive mental health.

AGE
18+

.BREATHE

Particularly well-suited to support the transition from primary to secondary school. Explores issues of attention, worry, sleep, and relationships.

AGE
10-12

AGE
9-10

PAWS B

A mindfulness course for primary schools to help children feel happier, calmer, and more fulfilled.

AGE
8-9

MY MIND AND ME

To teach children about the 5 Ways to Wellbeing and to develop language and understanding around thoughts, feelings, emotions and healthy behaviours.

AGE
0-3

MOOD MATTERS PARENT AND BABY

Delivered to expectant parents and parents of children aged 0-3 years. This course looks at mental health during and after pregnancy.

Our Education and Training programmes reached over 19,000 participants in 2023/24. While we conducted many community and workplace programmes via Zoom, we gradually resumed face-to-face delivery, a trend we anticipate will continue in the upcoming year.

Personal Pathway

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

A 6-week programme using CBT techniques. Participants learn practical skills to help them cope with life's challenges.



AGE
18+

AGE
18+

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness helps participants who experience stress find a healthy way to deal with it.



Development Pathway



EDUCATION AND TRAINING



AWARE NI's Education and Training department plays a vital role in raising awareness of common mental health issues and equipping people with tools to care for their emotional wellbeing. We have had a successful year expanding our programme offerings and reach. We developed our team, which now comprises six Education and Training Officers, one Corporate Outreach Worker and five administrative staff members.

During 2023/24, we achieved the following:

IN SCHOOLS

69	Delivered 69 'Paws b' mindfulness programmes to 1,541 pupils in primary schools.
49	Delivered 49 'My Mind & Me' programmes for primary schools, reaching 1,135 pupils.
30	Delivered 30 'breathe' mindfulness programmes for post-primary schools, reaching 464 pupils.
473	Delivered 473 'Mood Matters Young People' programmes to 9,379 young individuals in schools and other suitable settings.
29	Trained 29 teachers in an 8-week mindfulness programme .
5	Provided 'Paws b' training to 5 teachers and classroom assistants, enabling the integration of mindfulness practice into the school culture.
2	Organised 2 teacher focus groups to support teachers with 'Paws b' delivery in schools.

IN WORKPLACES

39	Delivered 39 'Mental Health First Aid' programmes to workplaces.
111	Conducted 111 'Mood Matters in the Workplace' programmes for more than 1,561 employees.
20	Provided 20 'Supporting Employee Wellbeing' programmes to 218 people.

IN THE COMMUNITY

63	Delivered 63 'Living Life to the Full' programmes for over 642 participants in community settings.
42	Delivered 42 'Mental Health First Aid' programmes to over 402 participants.
48	Offered 48 mindfulness programmes to over 405 adults.
51	Delivered 51 'Mood Matters Adult' programmes for over 589 people in local communities.
1	Delivered 1 'Mindfit' programme to 11 participants.
73	Ran 73 'Mood Matters Parent and Baby' programmes for 446 parents, carers, and expectant parents.
11	Delivered 11 educational talks to 538 people.

VIA E-LEARNING

500	We partnered with Strategic Thinking to support their healthcare staff of 500 via 'iAmAWARE' .
140	We offered 'iAmAWARE' mental health e-learning to our corporate partners, reaching 140 participants.
2	'iAmAWARE Supporting Employee Wellbeing' delivered to 2 participants.

'MOOD MATTERS YOUNG PEOPLE' BEING DELIVERED TO METHODIST COLLEGE



We took great pride in introducing new mindfulness programmes for adults, parents, and school pupils. The 'Mindful Parenting' programme for parents of 5-12-year-olds received fantastic feedback. We look forward to delivering more of these in the coming year. Additionally, we successfully provided the 4-week 'breathe' programme for 9-14-year-olds in 30 post-primary schools and secured funding to further expand and deliver this programme in 2024/25.

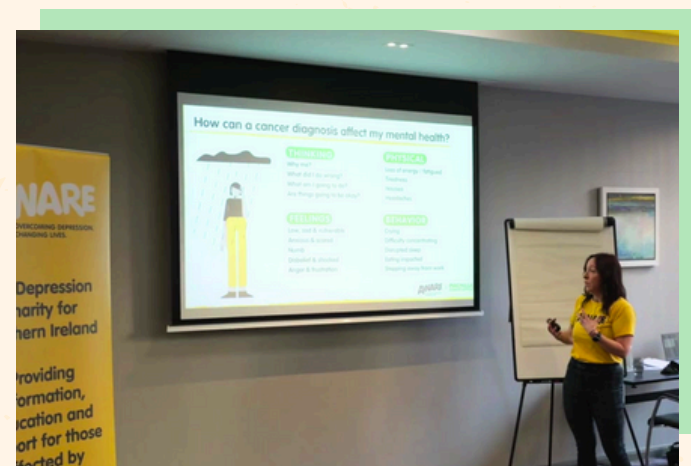
The team has been developing a new 'Feeling Good' programme, incorporating mindfulness practices and '5 Ways to Wellbeing' concepts. This single-session programme is for 11-14-year-olds. We look forward to finishing the programme in the new financial year.

After last year's pilot delivery, we re-developed 'My Mind & Me', a programme designed for P3-P7 pupils, enhanced with engaging activities to help this age group understand concepts around mental health and emotional wellbeing. We delivered this to 49 schools.

We successfully concluded the third year of The Community Foundation Mental Health Support project to provide our 'Back to Life, Back to Normality' programme, which consists of six weeks of 'Living Life to the Full' and six weeks of mindfulness. This project supports the five mental health leads in GP Federations across Northern Ireland. Referrals are made by GP practices in these federations to help provide a service for those people on the current waiting list for services. We have built strong relationships with the GP Federation mental health leads and their respective teams, regularly meeting and sharing findings with them.

In collaboration with the Public Health Agency, we led the development of Northern Ireland's Mental Health First Aid Refresher programme and will be completing the development in the new financial year. AWARE NI will be involved in training up to 60 new Mental Health First Aid Refresher trainers. This increased capacity positions us well for future 'Mental Health First Aid' delivery and improves our portfolio of programmes.





Throughout the year, partnership work remained a prominent feature of our work. We collaborated with organisations such as ParentingNI, Tynlife, Diabetes UK, Macmillan Cancer, WRDA (Women's Resource Development Agency), and MAS (Maternal Advocacy Support) to develop and adapt our programmes and cater to their client groups. We continued to advocate for expectant and new parents by participating in steering and implementation groups focused on infant and maternal mental health. We guided health professionals supporting new and expectant parents through the specialist perinatal section of our website. Our perinatal mental health resource is in high demand and distributed in antenatal units and Sure Starts.

We trained 18 Tynlife staff and AWARE NI staff in Chris Williams' Enjoy your Baby CBT based programme. Our 'Supporting Employee Wellbeing' train the trainer took place in quarter 3, and delivery is proving popular. We also trained staff and sessional workers in our primary school programme 'My Mind & Me'.

The team worked hard this year to develop our workplace mental health training programme portfolio. We finalised the new half-day manager's programme, 'Supporting Employee Wellbeing', to educate managers and team leaders on supporting their employees during challenging and stressful times. We piloted the programme and reviewed and adapted it based on feedback.

Our suite of workplace programmes has evolved to meet the needs of the new hybrid way of working, offering face-to-face, online, and e-learning options. We believe this adaptability will enable businesses across Northern Ireland to invest in their staff's mental health and wellbeing.

In addition to our fundraising activities, the sales of our programmes, primarily to the business community, contribute significantly to AWARE NI's income. The Education and Training team plays a vital role in establishing connections with workplaces, cultivating relationships, and delivering training programmes. They work closely with our Fundraising team to engage the business community and attract sponsorship, Charity of the Year initiatives, and general fundraising efforts. These endeavours raise awareness of mental health and the importance of mental wellbeing in the workplace. Notably, post-Covid-19, there has been a significant increase in interest and attention to mental health within workplaces, leading to higher programme sales and improved understanding of mental wellbeing.

In the 2023/24 period, AWARE NI generated £148,858.50 through programme sales, with the 'Mental Health First Aid' and 'Mood Matters Workplace' programmes contributing significantly to this income. These funds are used to expand and sustain our support groups and outreach services.

DRUMAHOE PRIMARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE PRESENTATION FOR COMPLETING 'PAWS B' MINDFULNESS PROGRAMME





The only thing more
exhausting than being
depressed is pretending
that you're not.

Let's Talk

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING LOW MOOD, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY OR BIPOLAR?

You are not alone. Things can get better.

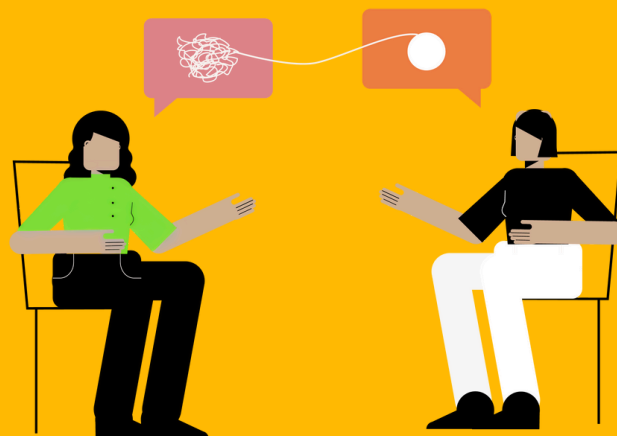
**Our free-to-attend mental health support groups can help
you manage your feelings and meet other people who
understand you.**

**We have 23 support groups across Northern Ireland,
including two online.**

To find the support group nearest to you please scan the QR code below



SUPPORT SERVICES AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH



AWARE NI's Support Services department remains committed to providing essential and unique support to individuals affected by low mood, depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder. We have continued to maintain and support our existing support groups throughout Northern Ireland, focusing on those in more rural areas that need more promotion and input.

This year, the Support Services team welcomed a new staff member, Sam Pirone, who joined as an administrative assistant for the team. This has been an enormous asset to the team, and Sam's wealth of knowledge and 'can do' attitude has made a substantial impact in a short period of time.

We are delighted with the growing numbers of people attending our AWARE NI mental health peer support groups and the feedback we receive on the difference this is making in people's lives. This year, we have noticed an increase in the complex needs of individuals attending our groups and the difference peer support has made in their mental health journey and recovery.

We have been developing a Youth Strategy for AWARE NI by linking with other youth organisations for guidance and advice, alongside holding focus groups with our younger service users to gather their feedback and views. We have merged our young adult support groups with our established support groups to provide peer support to all individuals 18 plus.

As a result of our active campaigns and following the recommendations from our younger members, we have noticed an increase in younger membership regionally. We have also been involved in a pilot project in Derry, providing our AWARE NI's 'Mood Matters Young People' programme to young people in their own communities, followed by a peer support session on how to support each other during difficult times. This has been hugely successful, with extremely positive feedback and a wealth of learning for us to take forward as part of our Youth Strategy over the next 5-year plan.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH PUBLIC TALK, DERRY

As part of AWARE NI's support to the Maternal Mental Health Alliance with Everyone's Business Campaign for Northern Ireland, we are delighted to advise that we have been continuing to campaign for a Mother and Baby Unit for Northern Ireland with positive feedback and movement towards funding being secured for the build and revenue for this much-needed unit. We have also continued to campaign for the best perinatal care for local mums, babies and families with priorities according to the voices of women with lived experience and feedback from our Everyone's Business Campaign members.

We commenced an additional service this year for our support group members, with two independent therapists being able to provide one-to-one support as appropriate. Whilst this is a limited service and for our known service users, it has been hugely valued and beneficial for our support group members who are struggling to access such one-to-one support locally.

This year has been the second year of our Ulster University Support Group Research Project, which has been progressing extremely well with very positive feedback from those attending. We are looking forward to the findings and recommendations, how we can best take these forward into practice, and publicise the results for our profile and future funding opportunities.

As the needs of our service users increase, we have introduced new supervision and support systems this year for our volunteer facilitators, with monthly online peer supervision sessions that also include an element of training. We have been delighted to welcome many new volunteers to our team this year, including an increase in the number of younger people keen to volunteer.

Our volunteers remain at the heart of all we do in Support Services. We have supported over 70 volunteer facilitators this year as they provide life-changing support in our peer-led mental health support groups throughout Northern Ireland.



Volunteer with

AWARE

OVERCOMING DEPRESSION.
CHANGING LIVES.

**VOLUNTEERS don't necessarily have
the time... they just have the**



The depression charity for Northern Ireland needs **YOU** and your heart to facilitate a local **mental health** support group.

Together, we can create a brighter future for our community.



info@aware-ni.org for more details.

Our Outreach team have been working closely with our volunteers to help us raise awareness, reduce stigma, and reach out to local people within their communities. We have delivered 197 information events and presentations, reaching a minimum of 21,424 participants and disseminating at least 40,000 information leaflets and factsheets.



Our Community Outreach team continued to be extremely busy with events and promoting our services. This year, we saw increased demand to attend events and speak at team meetings with various organisations, from statutory organisations to those within the voluntary and community sector.

The Support Services department's unwavering dedication and hard work have allowed us to continue providing crucial support, raising awareness, and fostering a supportive environment for those affected by mental health challenges. We remain committed to promoting wellbeing and improving the lives of individuals in Northern Ireland.

**SHEENA DOING OUTREACH
AT THE LIMAVADY
AGRICULTURAL SHOW**





DURING 2023/2024:

- We have **23** mental health peer support groups, including two online.
- We held **1,001** support group meetings during this year.
- We recorded **5,595** attendances at the support groups.
- We responded to **1,659** support emails.
- We answered **1,315** support calls this year.
- We delivered **197** information outreach events and presentations with an approximate reach of 21,424 participants, disseminating over 40,000 information leaflets and factsheets.
- Our Community Outreach team provided one-to-one support to **43** members of the public when hosting an information stand.
- We held **4** public talks in Derry, Belfast, Enniskillen and Lurgan in partnership with The Royal College of Psychiatry. These events had different topics such as 'Mental Health and Living with Cancer', 'Mental Health and Early Intervention', 'Mental Health and ADHD', and 'Let's Talk About Bipolar'. We were supported by partner agencies such as Macmillan Cancer, Action for Children, ADD NI, and Bipolar UK. These public talks were well-attended, with highly encouraging feedback.
- We held our annual Volunteer Celebration Event in the Omagh Folk Park with a tour followed by a lovely celebration lunch. This was attended by our volunteers from all over Northern Ireland and a lovely opportunity to get together to recognise and thank them for all they do for us throughout the year. We also enjoyed some Christmas fun and celebrations with our volunteers with events in both our Derry and Belfast offices.

I AM FOUND



I was here too.

YOU ARE SEEN

YOU ARE WANTED



Then I found understanding.

YOU ARE WELCOME

at an AWARE NI Support Group



Scan the QR code
to watch the video

COMMUNICATIONS



Throughout the year, the Communications team has been crucial in promoting AWARE NI's services and raising awareness about mental health, as our online platforms act as an extension of our support services and mental health education. As a result, AWARE NI has experienced significant growth in public profile and brand recognition.

This progress is reflected in the charity's increased website traffic, social media engagement, and press coverage. These accomplishments further solidify AWARE NI's status as an industry leader as we continue to be the most widely-followed mental health charity in Northern Ireland.

The Communications team's dedication and hard work have been pivotal in supporting AWARE NI's mission to promote mental health and wellbeing as well as reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

We have undertaken various successful campaigns throughout the year to generate awareness. During Blue Monday of this year, we launched our 'I Am Found' short film, which represented a new way to advertise our mental health support groups. As a mental health charity, it is challenging to portray the personal impact of our services whilst protecting the identity of those accessing them. Through this short film, we wanted to communicate creatively and symbolically real-life testimonials of how our support groups have changed lives. This video has now been watched almost 45,000 times, which is incredible. We are so thankful to our sea swim fundraisers who helped make this video a reality.



The Communications team also launched our Courage, Dear Heart merchandise line to reach more people about our services. The message behind the line is one of hope and recovery. At AWARE NI, we believe that it is not the absence of mental illness that makes someone 'strong'; instead, it takes incredible strength to live with mental illness, seek support and embark on a road to recovery. All profits from this line go directly to our support services.

During Maternal Mental Health Week, we launched a campaign highlighting our 'Mood Matters Parent and Baby' programme. We created a video highlighting the importance of looking after your mental health as a parent, with figures highlighting the prevalence of antenatal and postnatal depression for both mums and dads, alongside some educational tips on how to maintain positive mental health. This video was shared with all antenatal units, with positive feedback from Health Trusts, highlighting its helpful and informative nature.

Additionally, we redesigned our 'Mood Matters Parent and Baby' training programme to have fresh, updated visuals in line with our current branding with greater inclusion of content relating to dads. We also redesigned our 'Looking After the Mental Health of You and Baby' booklet and created and designed a booklet in collaboration with TinyLife titled 'Caring for the Mental Health of You and Your Premature Baby'. These efforts aimed to highlight the importance of perinatal mental health for parents and their children and create free and accessible educational resources.



Let's talk about dad...

The number of men who become **depressed** in the first year after becoming a dad is **double** that of the general population. (NCT, 2022)

MOOD MATTERS
PARENT & BABY

NEW VISUALS FROM OUR 'MOOD MATTERS PARENT AND BABY' PROGRAMME

Looking After our Mental Health:



MOOD MATTERS
PARENT & BABY

Pregnancy and Parenthood can bring a lot of feelings:



- excitement
- worry
- stress
- hope
- relief
- fear
- anticipation

Amongst many other feelings...

MOOD MATTERS
PARENT & BABY

What do we mean by Depression?





short-term stress

is something we all experience, and this can be helpful as it makes us focus or prepare, such as studying for exams.

long-term stress

is if we feel stressed for long periods of time, which can be harmful.

Let's talk about stress

MOOD MATTERS
PARENT & BABY



We worked with Vinny Hurrell, one of our brand ambassadors, as part of the BBC Charity Broadcast Appeal to highlight our services. We have also launched newly designed billboards which have been appearing across Northern Ireland. Both campaigns are ways for AWARE NI to reach new audiences, increase brand awareness, and advertise our services across Northern Ireland.

DURING 2023/2024:

 Our website had **258,101** page views and **69,080** users.

 Our network of Facebook followers has reached **27,491**.

 Our Instagram community has reached **6,995** followers.

 We now have **9,649** followers on X formerly known as Twitter.

 Our YouTube channel was viewed **9,483** times.

 AWARE NI appeared in **500** online and press articles.

 AWARE NI were featured in **5** radio and TV interviews.

 Our LinkedIn following has reached **3,168**, with **1,532** newsletter subscribers.

 AWARE NI is growing steadily on TikTok with **650** follows and **1,353** likes.



INCOME GENERATION

In 2023/24 AWARE NI's fundraising efforts reached new heights, raising £751,000. This impressive achievement marks an increase of £213,450 (40%) from the previous year, underscoring the success and impact of our dedicated fundraising strategies and the generous support of the local community.

We experienced substantial participation and enthusiasm for our AWARE NI challenge events. Our calendar was packed with a variety of activities, each contributing uniquely to our overall fundraising success. The Giant Steps coastal walk doubled in size, with over 400 walkers trekking routes of 26, 13, and 7 miles, and they collectively raised a phenomenal £65,000.

Our first Santa Abseil at the Europa Hotel was a festive and daring event that captured the Christmas spirit. Participants abseiled down the iconic hotel, attracting considerable attention and support from spectators and donors alike. This event added a fun and seasonal twist to our fundraising efforts which resulted in fundraising of £50,000. We held a number of other events, including a Viking Boat Race and Sea Splashes in Benone and Ballyholme. Events were attended by both employees from our corporate partners as well as individuals and groups of friends and families.



Corporate partnerships played a pivotal role in our fundraising success in 2023/24. We extend our deepest gratitude to all our partners for their unwavering dedication and commitment to promoting positive mental health in their workplaces. We continued our existing partnerships with Danske Bank, Maxol, FinTrU, MacBlair, Hastings Hotels and Rutledge Group, amongst others. Unfortunately, it was the final year of our partnerships with both Maxol and Danske Bank, who have been an asset to AWARE NI for the past 3 years. We were delighted to work with a number of new corporate partners including Todd's Insurance, KPMG, Wilson Nesbitt, Urban HQ, Fleet Financial and Lava Group. The total income generated through corporate fundraising was £236,213.

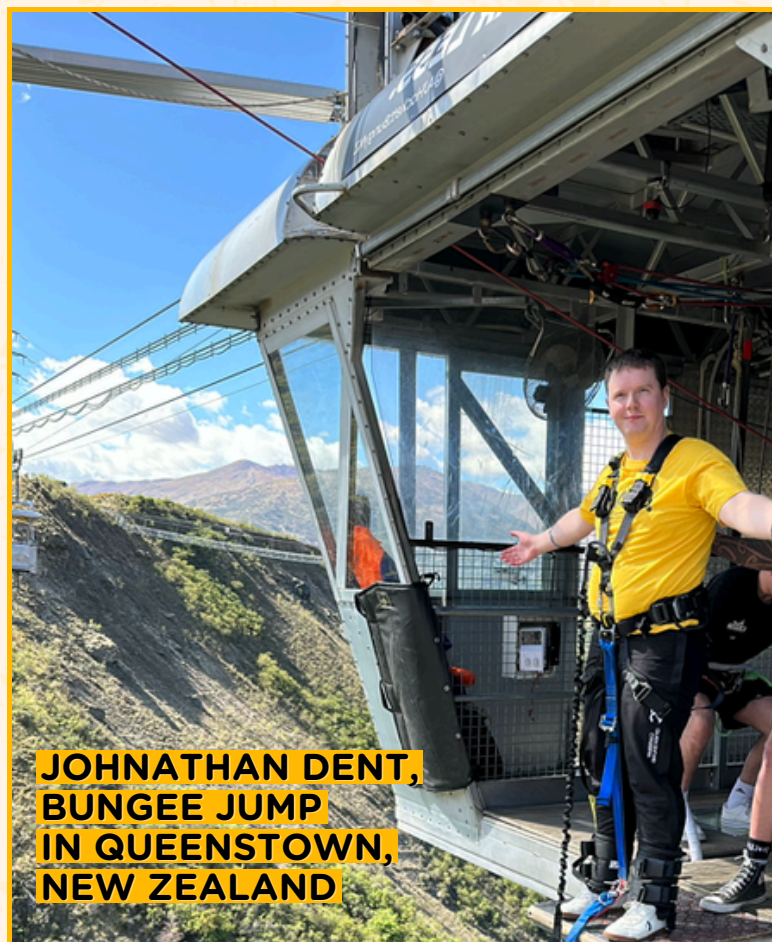


**TEAM DANSKE AT
GIANT STEPS**

We witnessed an extraordinary outpouring of passion and effort from individuals, groups, and schools across Northern Ireland, culminating in an impressive community fundraising total of £296,095.

We were delighted to roll out our new school fundraising campaign, 'Shine Bright, Glow Yellow', encouraging participation in fundraising activity to mark Mental Health Awareness Day in October. Students, teachers, and parents came together to host various fundraising activities, ranging from bake sales and fun runs to non-uniform days. Overall fundraising from schools totalled £21,000.

Fundraising from individual supporters was truly amazing. It was heartwarming to see so many people set themselves personal challenges in the name of mental health awareness and support. We saw many people participate in marathons, cold water dips, cycle challenges, skydives, mountain treks and more!



**JOHNATHAN DENT,
BUNGEE JUMP
IN QUEENSTOWN,
NEW ZEALAND**



We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support we receive from schools, universities, churches, various community organisations, and sports clubs across Northern Ireland. Their fundraising efforts and generous donations are invaluable to our cause. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to those who faithfully support us through monthly donations, those who donate in memory of a loved one, and those who graciously include AWARE NI in their Will, thus helping safeguard future generations' mental health.

Our income from Trusts and Foundations in 2023/24 totalling £404,894. This includes income from:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Enkalon Foundation | • Inner City Trust |
| • Ulster Garden Villages | • B&Q |
| • Community Foundation | • Clanmill Housing |
| • Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust | • Radius Housing |
| • St James Place | • D'Oyly Carte Foundation |
| • Garfield Weston | |

We are deeply grateful for our donors' unwavering support and incredible efforts. Their passion, creativity, and hard work are the lifeblood of our organisation, enabling us to continue providing essential local mental health support services.

Looking to the future, we aim to further enhance our fundraising initiatives and aim to encourage even more individual and group efforts. Together, we can build on this year's success and continue to make a significant impact.

Thank you to every supporter, participant, and volunteer who has contributed to our fundraising efforts in 2023/24. Your dedication makes a real difference in the lives of many. We look forward to achieving even greater heights together and continuing to positively impact mental wellbeing in Northern Ireland.





FINANCIAL REVIEW

TOTAL INCOME **£1,795,084**

Donations & Gifts **£762,124**

Grant Funding **£495,321**

Trusts & Foundations **£404,894**

Workshops & Courses **£130,665**

Investments **£2,080**

TOTAL EXPENDITURE **£1,709,425**

Charitable Activities **£1,361,059**

Raising Funds **£348,366**

The spend on charitable activities was

79.62% of the total spend.

RESERVES

At 31st March 2024 AWARE NI holds total reserves of £941,341. During 2023/24 we made use of reserves to the value of £270,182.

This was spent on the development of the following key areas as planned:

- £42,488 for additional programme delivery staffing costs and £27,354 on additional administration support.
- £10,185 for the additional delivery of community-based mental health awareness programmes, which include our 'Mood Matters' and 'Living Life to the Full' programmes for schools, communities and workplaces.
- £67,450 to provide support groups which had no statutory funding stream.
- £24,705 for the development of the Salesforce CRM system.
- £11,000 for communications activity to support promotion and access to services, campaigning, and positive mental health messaging.
- £30,000 on the installation of disability access and set-up costs associated with the move to a new facility in Derry/Londonderry.
- £57,000 to support our office running costs.

The use of reserves was replenished in year, and we ended the year with a surplus of £85,658.

This surplus has been designated within the 2024/25 budget to produce a balanced budget position for the year alongside challenging fundraising targets.

The Trustees consider it prudent to hold monies in reserve if unforeseen circumstances lead to financial difficulties that might jeopardise the future of its employment capacity, users' wellbeing and general charitable work.

The Trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation and established a formal policy which stipulates that free reserves be maintained at a level which ensures that the charity's core activity could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty. The Trustees define free reserves as unrestricted income funds freely available for use as the charity determines and excludes any funds committed, invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity and restricted or designated funds.

Based on 2024/25 budgeted expenditure (excluding depreciation) and the Board update to our reserves policy, the target level of unrestricted reserves is £469,453 to £938,907.

Of our current reserves of £941,341 this includes £129,841.57 of redundancy contingency and £304,339 other designated reserves. Designated reserves have been allocated to enable the following:

- £57,132 for unfunded support groups.
- £28,500 for additional programme delivery.
- £28,732 for communications activity, including campaigns and Investors in Mental Health.
- £9,000 for research and evaluation.
- £7,700 on further development of our e-learning products.
- £30,000 on infrastructure development (CRM).
- £98,700 for office running costs.
- £22,079 for corporate costs.
- £22,496 on capital investments.

We have designated reserves totalling £434,180.57 leaving free reserves of £507,160.43.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We have just developed and approved our new strategic plan for 2024-2029. We have identified key themes as follows:



CONNECTION

We have identified several priorities for this year:

- Further strengthening our mental health support group network and outreach services.

- Exploring opportunities for digital development.

- Embedding our workplace services and opportunities for practice sharing.

- Giving greater attention to diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work.

- Focusing on our engagement with volunteers.

We will maintain our focus structurally on:

- Investing in our staff and volunteers regularly reviewing our staffing structure, capacity and needs in order to deliver on our strategic and operational plans.

- Developing further our CRM to support with stakeholder engagement and communications, programme monitoring and review, and finance/fundraising management.

- Diversifying further our income generation to drive fundraising to meet the needs of our service users.



CHANGE



COMMUNITY



FINANCE & FUNDRAISING

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Aware Defeat Depression (trading as AWARE) is a company limited by guarantee and accepted as charitable by HMRC under reference XR 11534. The company was incorporated on 7th February 1996. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association, which established the objects and powers of the company and is governed by its Articles of Association. The liability of members is limited in that every member of the company undertakes to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 in the event of the company being wound up.

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements, were:

- Mr Bernard McAnaney (Chairperson)
- Ms Helen McDonnell (Vice Chair)
- Mrs Nicola Naughton (Treasurer)
(Resigned 17th October 2023)
- Mr Joe Mahon (Secretary)
- Dr Patrick McKeon
- Mr Malachai O'Hara
(Resigned 27th September 2023)
- Dr Josephine Deehan
- Dr Maria Kee
(Resigned 30th April 2024)
- Mr Owen Crilly
- Mr Alan Robinson
- Ms Alex Murdock
- Ms Marianne Downing

The Trustees meet every 2 months as a full Board. We have subcommittees for Clinical Governance and Finance. These subcommittees meet quarterly. The terms of reference and chair of these groups are reviewed periodically.

RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF THE TRUSTEES

The charity Trustees are also Directors of the company. A Trustee is initially elected for a term of three years in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Trustees may be re-elected if they are so willing and accepted by the Board, serving up to a maximum of 9 years.

CORPORATE AND CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

The Board ensures the organisation complies with the relevant legislation and good practice. The Board supports a clinical governance and finance support group to support this. The Board also engages service users directly through our Locality Planning structures. The Locality Planning groups meet regularly to review activities in local areas and with the staff team to suggest and explore development opportunities. The Board has a schedule for the regular review of all programmes of work, policies and procedures, including an ethical policy regarding our fundraising initiatives and partnerships. We have a schedule of all organisational policies reviewed on a 3-yearly cycle.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the administration of the charity and meets on a bi-monthly basis. The Board has appointed a Chief Executive to manage the charity's day-to-day operations. Within the terms of delegated approval, the Chief Executive has delegated authority for operational matters, including employment, project delivery and budgetary management.

DIRECTORS' INDUCTION AND TRAINING

All new Directors are given an induction by the Chairperson and Chief Executive and provided with an induction pack which includes the following documents:

- Strategic Plan
- Descriptions of the role of Directors and/or Office Bearers
- Profile of the charity
- Charity literature
- Staff profiles and biographies

In addition, Directors are offered additional training in, for example, committee skills, finance management, child protection, data protection, strategic planning and other relevant areas. During 2023/24 we delivered specific training for the Board on Keeping Children & Adults Safe, Understanding Charity Finances and Understanding our Governing document. The Board also led on the process for development of a new Strategic Plan 2024-2029.

RISK MANAGEMENT

In accordance with good practice, the charity has developed a Risk Management Policy and procedure and regularly completes risk assessments in relevant areas. A Corporate Risk Register has been drawn to prioritise the risks requiring action. The Risk Register is reviewed and updated bi-annually by the Board and quarterly within the senior management team or as soon as a potential threat is identified. Analysis for each risk is detailed in the Risk Register, with the controls currently in place to mitigate the risk and the further actions required to minimise the risk. We have a streamlined Risk Action Plan, which the SMT reviews monthly to ensure action on priority tasks. This year, we have specifically updated the policy and training on Lone Working.

AUDITOR

Harbinson Mulholland, a Belfast-based company, was appointed as auditor for AWARE NI. This appointment is for a 3-year period until March 2026.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO THE AUDITOR

Each of the Trustees has confirmed that there is no information they are aware of that is relevant to the audit but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and establish that the auditor is aware of it.

THANK YOU!

We want to thank our staff, volunteers, service users, supporters, fundraisers, donors, ambassadors, campaigners and partners for all you have done to support AWARE NI this year.

We appreciate your ongoing efforts to support people living with mental ill-health in Northern Ireland. We couldn't do what we do without you, and we're looking forward to another great year!



aware-ni.org  Registered with
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

BELFAST OFFICE : 40-44 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GG

DERRY/LONDONDERRY OFFICE : 2 Crawford Square, Londonderry/Derry, BT48 7HR

**AWARE Defeat Depression, known as AWARE. Company No: NI 30447. Registered with the
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