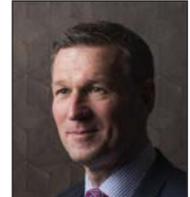


We're a social  
enterprise supporting  
people with learning  
difficulties and  
autism into jobs  
with a future



## Chairman's Introduction



This year it has been a pleasure to watch NOW Group develop strategically and support more people with learning difficulties and autism to reach their potential. The impact our service has on individual lives is inspirational - from people getting paid work when they thought that was an impossible dream, to parents having the confidence to take their child to the park for the first time, these stories are the result of our dedicated team's hard work.

2017-18 started on a high when NOW was named Social Enterprise of the Year at the Belfast Business Awards and went on to win a further two awards at the Social Enterprise NI Awards as well as Best Disability Initiative for the JAM Card at the Northern Ireland Equality and Diversity Awards. These prestigious accolades are deserved recognition for the high-quality work NOW's team continue to deliver for their participants.

Despite a challenging political climate both in Northern Ireland and with Brexit, NOW has continued to secure the funding it needs to deliver services.

My colleagues on NOW's board have generously donated their time and expertise throughout the year. I would like to thank them for their passion and dedication to improving outcomes for people with learning difficulties and autism. They are each experts in their own field and the unique blend of talent and experience they provide to the organisation is invaluable.

The year ahead promises to be another full of new initiatives and exciting opportunities as we begin the new employment and training programme Verve, watch Loaf Pottery and Coffee Shop add a new dimension to NOW's work and see how the JAM Card develops. I am looking forward to working with the staff, Board and participants to see what we can achieve.

**Gary Irvine**

**Chairman NOW Group**

## Chief Executive's Introduction

2017-2018 has been a landmark year for NOW Group. We secured more paid jobs for participants than ever before, increased our reach geographically allowing us to impact more lives and established a new head office in Belfast City Centre.



Our mission is to support people with learning difficulties and autism into jobs with a future. This year we have focused on increasing our impact by expanding our service and at the start of the new financial year I'm delighted to say that our employment service is operating in 6 council areas with plans to cover all Northern Ireland underway. In 2017-2018 we increased the number of participants we support by 50%, increased the number of participants supported into paid employment by 39% and increased our social return on investment to £12 for every £1 invested in our work.

It has been an exciting year of development for our JAM Card initiative. There are now over 10,000 people using the JAM Card and app which allows them to ask for Just A Minute of patience when they need it. In November 2017 we launched a training package to businesses that trains staff in how to provide an excellent service to JAM Card users. We have been delighted by the positive uptake from organisations and look forward to working with more businesses who want to ensure they are inclusive for people of all abilities.

In February 2018 our new head office in Belfast City Centre opened. Thanks to funding from the Alpha Programme and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust we were able to renovate a disused space at the back of The Hive to create a modern, open plan and fit for purpose work space for our team. The new office means we have a neutral, safe space for participants to come to meet with NOW Group staff and socialise with friends.

2017-2018 was a record year of success for Loaf Catering and Cafes. Our corporate catering business added a number of high profile private sector clients and regularly won the business to cater for large events. This resulted in an increase in turnover by 49% Loaf also prepared to add a new outlet to the family as the renovation work took place of an old pottery in Crawfordsburn ready for Loaf Pottery and Coffee Shop to open in May 2018. The Pottery, which offers arts classes and events as well as a cafe, has generated 5 new jobs including 2 ringfenced for people with learning difficulties.

NOW's success is dependent on having the right staff in place and we were delighted to welcome 15 new employees to the team. This included the appointment of a Director for Business Development, Diane Hill. This new role was created as part of our strategy to strengthen our offering to businesses and develop strategic partnerships with businesses committed to having a positive social impact.

### Our impact this year

Every year we commission an independent Social Return on Investment evaluation of our services. This process allows us to gather feedback from participants, their families, employers and our staff to find out what impact our service has. It is a chance to reflect on what has gone well and celebrate that success as well as understand what we could be doing better and make improvements.

This year we were delighted the evaluation found that for every £1 invested in NOW Group, £12 social value was generated. Our main stakeholders are of course our participants, everything we do has the aim of having a positive impact on their lives and the SROI found that our service is not only equipping people to achieve paid work but is also reducing social isolation, increasing confidence and self-esteem.

In April 2018 we began our new employment and training programme, Verve. Our team has ambitious targets around the impact they can have with Verve and have an excellent programme in place to deliver this which focuses on providing the skills and support participants need to secure paid employment. I am excited to see how the lives of people with learning difficulties and autism will be transformed through Verve.

**Maeve Monaghan**

**Chief Executive, NOW Group**

## Impact in 2017/18

- 557 people supported
- For every £1 invested in NOW Group, £12 social value was generated
- Our participants earned £252,142 in wages
- Participants reported a 26% improvement in self esteem
- £90,354 saved in benefits payments

## Jobs & Qualifications

- 60 people gained paid jobs
- 322 qualifications achieved
- 106 people availed of work experience
- 25 participants into voluntary positions

## Volunteers

- 64 volunteers took part in a range of roles throughout the last financial year, donating a total of 2142 hours
- 21 placement students donated 2592 hours

## Growth

- New head office space opened in Belfast City Centre
- 49% increase in Loaf corporate catering income
- 15 new employees at NOW Group

## Our Staff

- We invested in 1304 hours of training for our workforce
- 15% of our workforce has a disability

## Media & Awards

- 2649 new social media followers
- NOW Group featured in 7 broadcast interviews, 16 print articles and 23 online articles
- Belfast Business Awards – Social Enterprise of the Year
- Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards – Employee of the Year, Chris Campbell and Food/Drink Product of the Year, Loaf Sausage Rolls
- Northern Ireland Equality and Diversity Awards – Best Disability Initiative, JAM Card

## Special thanks for donated services

- |  |                          |                                       |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Black Box                            | • Newtownards Job Centre | • Ulster University, Jordanstown      |
| • Gerry-Can Design                     | • Libraries NI           | • American Express Leadership Academy |
| • Grosvenor Road Community Centre      | • Tesco, Bangor          | • Eximo Academy                       |
| • Divis Community Centre               | • Tesco, Newtownards     | • Common Purpose                      |
| • Duncairn Centre for Arts and Culture | • Deloitte NI            | • Sandy Row Community Centre          |
| • Bangor Job Centre                    | • Asda, Bangor           | • Ballysillan Elim Church             |
|  | • Sainsburys, Bangor     |                                       |

## 1 Objectives and Activities

NOW Group is a Limited Company with charitable status that has been operating since 2001. It provides quality training and employment services for local people with differing levels of learning abilities who often are furthest removed from the labour market.

The purpose of NOW is:

Supporting People with Learning Difficulties and Autism into Jobs with a Future

The Company's objects are:

- (a) to advance the education of the beneficiaries in the area of benefit and to relieve poverty and unemployment by the promotion, facilitation and organisation of adequate, accessible and quality programmes of vocational and educational training, information and support in an effort to acquire skills and retraining to assist the beneficiaries in obtaining new skills, qualifications, employment or practical work experience and thereby assisting in developing independent living skills;
- (b) to relieve unemployment through the maintenance, management and support of supported employment schemes for people with learning disabilities, difficulties and associated problems;
- (c) to promote or assist in the promotion, facilitation and organisation of capacity building programmes and projects for the beneficiaries within the area of benefit who have need of such assistance as a result of their youth, age, ill health, disability or infirmity, or social and economic circumstances, by the provision of information and training, advice, mentoring, classes, workshops, support and instruction in an effort to increase the abilities, skills and self-confidence of the beneficiaries;
- (d) to promote social inclusion and integration for the public benefit by associating together volunteers and organisations in a common effort to raise public awareness of the issues affecting those suffering from learning disabilities, difficulties and associated problems and their families and carers and to promote the participation of the beneficiaries in all aspects of society.

For the purposes of this clause the expression "learning difficulty" shall include any learning disability, difficulties and associated problem or those who appear on the autistic spectrum, a developmental disability of the mind, sensory impairment, acquired brain injury or mental health problem.

Over the years, NOW Group has developed a range of services to help people realise their full potential. These are defined in the following three main aims:

1. To ensure people have the support they need to make informed decisions about their post-school future
2. To ensure people have access to quality, accredited training which helps them prepare for independence and the world of work
3. To provide people with the support they need to access the job they want, and keep it.

### Public Benefit

In shaping our objectives and planning the activities to meet those objectives the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission NI's guidance on public benefit including the commission's 'Public Benefit Reporting' document CCNI PBR1.

The direct benefits which flow from our purposes are:

- a) Increase in the qualifications and skills gained by the beneficiaries
- b) Supporting the beneficiaries to move into employment with a sustainable future
- c) Enhancement of education for beneficiaries
- d) Social inclusion of beneficiaries

The direct benefits flowing from our purposes are set out in section 2.

## 2 Achievements and Performance

We provide a range of services to participants, including:

- Employment
- Training
- Family Service
- Transition II
- Gaining Independence NOW
- Mind, Body and Soil Project
- Volunteer Service
- Social Groups
- JAM Card
- Ambassadors

We also operate two social enterprise businesses:

- Loaf Catering and Cafes [www.loafcatering.com](http://www.loafcatering.com)

Loaf operates three cafes and an outside catering business. Loaf cafes are accredited assessment centres and provide training and employment opportunities for NOW Group trainees.

- Gauge NI [www.gaugeni.co.uk](http://www.gaugeni.co.uk)

Gauge is a Community Interest Company owned by NOW Group which provides evaluation and training services specialising in social impact and Social Return on Investment measurement to the private, public and third sectors.

### Employment Service

2017-18 was an extremely successful final year of our European Social Fund (ESF) programme, Workforce III which supports people with learning difficulties and autism into jobs with a future. The service operated in four council areas – Belfast City Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. Workforce III was part funded by the European Social Fund

Programme 2014-2020, Department for the Economy and the Department for Communities. Workable NI, funded through the Department for Communities, ran alongside it and supports participants already in work to sustain employment.

This year was an exciting year of growth for the team. They supported 60 participants into paid jobs; assisted 86 employees sustain employment, secured 25 voluntary positions and 106 work placement opportunities across a variety of sectors.

The team continued to build on the job clubs which were introduced last year. Job clubs operate in each of the four council areas and focus on developing soft skills such as communication, team work and interpersonal skills as well as assisting with job searching and interview preparation. They have proved to be very successful with 74% of jobs coming directly from job clubs. The team are now ready to build on this success with the new ESF programme, Verve, which began on 1st April 2018.

Achievements	
New Workforce III referrals	121
Total Workforce III participants supported	175
New Workable NI referrals	48
Total Workable NI participants supported	86
Full time paid jobs secured	35
Part time paid jobs secured	25
Work experience positions achieved	106
Voluntary positions achieved	25

*“With NOW they made it clearer for me to understand the job searching process, I definitely felt more prepared and had the confidence behind me. I recommend NOW Group because they get you the experience and they give you the support and confidence you need to move forward in life.”* **Employment participant**



Employment participant James Nelson with  
Job Coach Emily Downey

## Training Service

Our training service provides a range of accredited and non accredited courses that allow participants to gain the education and experience they need to go on and achieve paid employment. This year the training team added additional courses that are tailored to local labour market trends. These include:

- Catering training - provides basic training and nationally recognised qualifications to enable individuals to get jobs in the catering industry.
- Retail academy – delivered in partnership with NI Hospice this 12-week long training course included a 6 week work placement with the Hospice, developing employment skills and building confidence and motivation.
- Money management – ‘Managing a personal budget’ provides individuals with the experience and skills required to manage their bank account, understand personal finances and budgeting.
- Route training – this allows individuals to gain the skills required for travelling independently in a safe environment.
- Pre-employment skills - introduces the world of work and helps participants understand their rights in employment and what is expected of them as employees.
- Social Enterprise Programme – 12-week training course that involved creating an income generating enterprise.
- Essential Skills in literacy and ICT - qualification based study in subjects often sought as a basic requirement by employers.

## Achievements

- Catering students achieved 26 catering qualifications including NVQs at Level 1 in Food Preparation & Cooking and Food & Beverage Service and Essential Food Hygiene
- 14 people attained Essential Skills Literacy qualifications
- 322 qualifications were achieved by 175 participants

## Educational and Career Guidance

The educational and career guidance service offered tailored training and guidance to help participants achieve their individual goals. The service provided participants with courses that allowed them the opportunity to look at their own strengths and areas of interest, matching these to various careers using a state of the art careers software package and set a plan for how they will achieve their goals. This has allowed us to support participants as they progress in their journey and address any training needs.

## Family Service

2017-18 was the second year of NOW's Family Service. The service is a five year Big Lottery funded project supporting new and expectant parents who have a learning disability, difficulty or an Autism Spectrum Condition with a child under five years old who live in the Greater Belfast area and attend either the Royal Jubilee or Mater maternity units. It provides one to one and group based support to participants by building confidence, developing skills and helping them feel more connected to their communities. When they are ready we will provide opportunities for parents to move on to NOW's Training, Volunteering and Employment Services and plan their future.

### Achievements

In 2017-18 the Family Service delivered a wide range of support and activities to 45 participants. The service received referrals from a range of sources including social workers, health visitors and maternity services. We

have continued to provide one to one support to participants, completing 70 home visits per month. The service has supported participants to attend activities in their local Sure Start, receive support from Parenting NI and receive benefits advice for Employers for Childcare and other key organisations. Three families who receive support from the service had their children successfully de-registered from Child Protection this year. The service also provided opportunities for peer to peer support with participants, holding weekly group meet ups at The Hive and establishing a craft club for parents. Participants were involved in organising a family dinner event at Loaf Cafe Bakery, day trips to Portrush, the Ulster Museum and Christmas and Halloween parties.

*"I was at a loss for support for clients with learning disabilities before the Family Service came along."* **Social worker**



Bronagh O'Callaghan, NOW Group Family Service Project Officer is pictured with Shelley Ritchie and her son Darren

## Transition II Service

Transition II is a programme for 18-30 year olds who have a learning disability and are not yet work ready. 19 participants are on the service which operates five days a week with two dedicated support staff. The aim of the programme is to increase opportunities for participants to gain the skills, confidence and training to transition into employment or training services. In addition, we promote independent living and social skills which incorporate a variety of activities delivered by NOW staff and external agencies including route training, money and time management, healthy lifestyle, communication skills, music and drama workshops, volunteering and preparation for work.

## Achievements

This year participants raised £1,827.50 for local charities including Children in Need, NI Hospice and Macmillan Cancer Support. They did this through a range of fundraising activities including a Christmas Fair, a sponsored pyjama day, coffee mornings and carol singing. Four participants carried out a week of work experience in a local gym and five participants gained Essential Skills Entry Level 1 qualification. Transition II participants were awarded certificates for successfully completing "The Reading Challenge" campaign by Libraries N.I. to encourage book reading. There was 100% satisfaction rating from parents/carers of participants in Transition II.

*"NOW have helped my son in many different ways - he is more willing to accept change, sits and chats with me about everyday activities. NOW have given him more confidence."*

**Parent of Transition II participant.**

Transition II participant Amanda Jones



## Gaining Independence NOW (G.I.N.)

This year we were commissioned by Belfast Health & Social Care Trust to develop a short term project which would enhance and create additional capacity and independence for a group of adults with learning difficulties. The project, named Gaining Independence NOW (GIN), began in April 2017. It sought to deliver an intensive individualised programme to increase opportunities to gain independence and increase chance of positive outcomes. Support and training included practical life skills which supported participants with their confidence, motivation and ability to deal with everyday situations. GIN was delivered across a number of sites in Belfast, including The Hive and Loaf Cafe Bakery.

### Achievements

- 30 skills development sessions delivered
- 111 sessions delivered overall
- 224 hours of direct support provided
- 25 accredited qualifications achieved
- 4 people continue to volunteer with other NOW services
- 7 people have joined Kidnap Wednesday

During the project a new Cinema Club was formed to facilitate participants to attend the cinema on each Tuesday. This has been an important outcome of GIN project and keeps participants connected by providing an opportunity to tackle social isolation.

## Mind, Body and Soil Project with Groundwork NI

This year participants from Transition II and the employment service took part in Mind, Body and Soil, a project run by Groundwork NI and funded by Department for Communities from January to March 2018.

The eight-week project provided an opportunity for individuals to gain knowledge about where their food comes from, how it is grown and harvested and then cook it. The aim of the programme is to support participants to gain confidence, become more independent, develop their social skills and promote healthy eating.

*“For me it’s about getting grades as well as having fun. I am never able to learn through one way that they do in school. Here we have been able to learn in so many different ways.”* **GIN Participant**

This exciting and innovative project achieved all objectives set. The range of activities gave young people with learning disabilities and autism the opportunity to develop skills, build confidence, reduce social isolation and provided a greater understanding of their environment.

## Volunteer Service

Our Volunteer Service supports NOW Group in all areas of our work. We continually strive to develop and embed a culture of volunteering in the organisation and very much value the work and input of our volunteers. This year we provided placements for students undertaking qualifications in psychology, nursing, occupational therapy and marketing through Queens University, Ulster University and Belfast Metropolitan College. These roles have been mutually beneficial, and the relationships continue to grow. Continued success with our partnerships with European Voluntary Service (EVS), Intern Europe and Erasmus + saw NOW Group host volunteers from a range of European countries.

### Achievements

- 64 volunteers took part in a range of roles throughout the last financial year, donating a total of 2,142 hours
- 17 university and school placements, donating a total of 1243 hours
- 4 international placements, donating a total of 1349 hours

*Ciaran McFadden and Rachel Hunter attended the Mind, Body and Soil project*



## Fandom

Fandom is a volunteer led social forum for young adults who are socially isolated and have a high functioning form of autism or Asperger's. Membership has stayed at its 20-member capacity this year with a steady flow of new participants joining when there is a vacancy. The group has continued to carry activities based around their interests in comics, videogames and movies. These activities have helped to forge their friendships with each other and improve teamwork skills when doing group-based games, including use of a new range of Nintendo Switch consoles. They have organised a number of themed nights which allow members of the group to lead an evening at Fandom based on their own interests. Themes included a quiz night, movie night, arts night and 'Just Dance' game night. A member of Fandom also started a new creative writing group, Tales of Creativity which is held once a month in The Hive.

Fandom was established on a voluntary basis by NOW Group employee Chris Campbell. In October 2017 Chris' hard work was recognised when he won Employee of the Year at the Social Enterprise NI Awards.

## Kidnap Wednesday

Kidnap Wednesday meets weekly in the Black Box in Belfast and provides an opportunity for adults with learning difficulties to make new friends and engage in the community by taking part in events and volunteering. This year we welcomed seven new members and four new volunteers. We held a range of enjoyable events for our participants including cooking demonstrations, yoga sessions, darts competitions and picnics. We volunteered at events including the Belfast City Marathon and knitted hats for premature babies at Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital. We also had the opportunity to take part in a number of day trips throughout the year including attending the Balmoral Show and played a few rounds of crazy golf.

*Chris Campbell receives the award for Employee of the Year at the Social Enterprise Northern Ireland awards from Rita Harkin, Architectural Heritage Fund*



## JAM Card

The JAM Card initiative has continued to develop and grow this year. There are now over 10,000 people using both the card and app across Northern Ireland, with several users in Republic of Ireland, the UK and even further afield. Feedback from users demonstrates that it allows people to feel more confident in situations where they previously felt ignored or rushed.

The JAM Card is expanding its reach and being used by people with a wide range of conditions in addition to learning difficulty and autism including dementia, brain injury, autoimmune diseases and mental health conditions.

In November 2017 we introduced training for businesses to become JAM Card Friendly. Training is available as an online e-learning course or a face to face workshop and ensures that staff understand what the JAM Card is and how to provide excellent customer service to users. There has been a strong interest in the training among businesses with eight out of the eleven councils signed up as well as a range of organisations including SSE Arena, the Consumer Council and NIE.

## Ambassadors

2017-2018 was the second year of the Ambassadors scheme. The Ambassadors are a group of NOW Group participants who represent the organisation at events, in promotional campaigns and provide feedback about services.

This year we widened the pool of Ambassadors and recruited participants from across all NOW's services. 14 Ambassadors were appointed for one year, each with their own skills and knowledge to actively promote NOW and support our activities. Ambassadors took part in a range of activities including bi-monthly meetings, focus groups, speaking at employer engagement events, PR photo shoots and career fairs.



*JAM Card user Conor McCallan is pictured with Director of Business Development Diane Hill and John Walsh, City Solicitor, Belfast City Council at Belfast Zoo to launch the JAM Card training*

### Understanding our social value

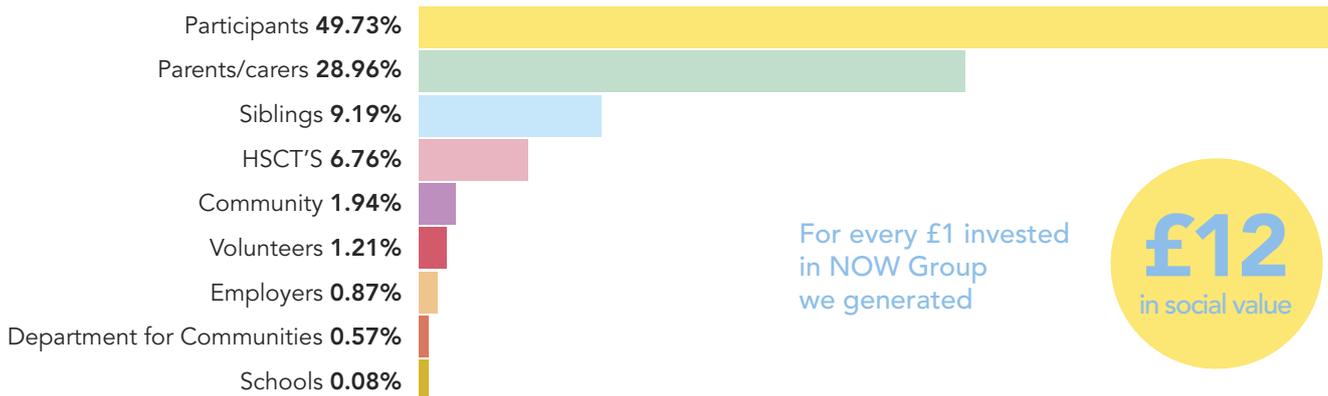
Each year NOW Group commissions an independent Social Return on Investment (SROI) of our work to understand, measure and communicate the full social value that the organisation generates for stakeholders. The SROI study generates a cost to benefits ratio.

For the 2017-18 financial year we carried out an evaluation of all our services to determine the changes experienced by all of our stakeholders as a result of our work.

We quantify the social value of the transformation by:

- Identifying the main groups (people or organisations) of stakeholders that experience the most significant changes as a result of our work.
- Asking stakeholders about the changes, known as outcomes.
- Establishing evidence of the changes, known as indicators; finding a means of placing monetary values, known as financial proxies on the changes which are acceptable to the stakeholders.

#### Overall impact %



For every £1 invested in NOW Group we generated

**£12**  
in social value



Participant Catherine Mathews is pictured with her Manager David Henderson in work at Lavery's. Catherine is supported by our Workable NI programme.

### 3 Financial Review

In 2017-2018, the organisation increased its charitable activity income to £1.9m an improvement of 17% on the previous year. The increase was entirely attributable to unrestricted services with a 60% increase achieved in Social Enterprises activities income (£369k in 16/17 compared to £594k in 17/18) resulting from increased focus in the year on the organisations sustainability strategy whilst we move towards the forthcoming Brexit. Restricted income remained static from the prior year.

NOW Group was also extremely successful in completing the European Social Fund (ESF) Workforce III programme, overdelivering on outcomes and achieving maximum income in the year. The organisation was also successful in applying for and being awarded the final round of funding from ESF (Project Verve) to sustain and maintain these services for a further four years 2018-2022.

Resources expended in the year totalled £1.9m a marginal increase of 6% on the previous year. Salaries and wages make up 80% of total expenditure an increase of 9% when compared to last year. The increase is represented by a standard pay increment of 2.5% and 12% increase in staffing numbers from last year.

Overall net income resources were £86k compared to £18k the previous year. The increase was attributable to the significant development in Loaf Catering transforming from a net deficit in 2016/17 of (£33k) to a net surplus this year of £41k representing a £75k overall improvement which we are delighted and extremely proud of.

Reserves at year end were £756k. £622k is unrestricted, an increase of £77k on the previous year. During the year the organisation commenced a protected cash reserves fund to strengthen its future cash flow sustainability as we enter the final round of European Social Funding. The cash reserves at the end of the financial year were £150k.

We continue to grow and diversify our social enterprise activities with Loaf Pottery opening in May 2018. Such additions will assist the organisation to continue to generate additional funds as we seek to expand the organisation further.

### Funding Sources

NOW Group's Board is extremely grateful to the following organisations, which provide the main sources of our funding activities:

- European Social Fund
- Department of the Economy
- Department for Communities
- Disability Employment Service
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Ards and North Down Council
- Antrim and Newtownabbey Council
- Big Lottery
- Alpha Programme

### Reserves Policy

NOW has a cash reserves fund of £150k representing one month's staffing costs and benefits in the event of disruption of cashflow. NOW needs to maintain its reserves for the following purposes:

- Cashflow
- Loss of funding
- Organisation Wind up or Redundancy

To strengthen its overall position, a reserves policy will be fully implemented in 2018/2019 to support four distinct areas:

1. Protected Funds	To sustain and support 2 months working capital requirements - £200k
2. Designated Funds	To prepare for potential redundancy costs at the end of the last round of ESF funding if replacement funding cannot be found
3. Infrastructure Funds	To build a fund to support the refurbishment and replenishment of the organisations assets
4. Opportunity Funds	To explore and invest in future opportunities

### Cashflow

Core funding activities are secured until March 2022. Focus continues expanding social enterprise activities including further diversification and expansion into other geographical areas

NOW must exercise considerable prudence to ensure that adequate reserves are available to bridge any potential shortfall in funds and to allow sufficient time for replacement or additional funds to be found. Legally, NOW must be able to meet its debts as they fall due.

Since restricted funds can only be used for the purpose for which they are given, NOW must always ensure that it can support at any given time (from its reserves cash or otherwise) viable and contracted programmes should it ever encounter difficulties. The cash reserves protected funds enables the organisation to meet its obligations for one month with no funding available.

In addition, NOW must ensure that it is able to respond to any cashflow problems as a result in delays from either funders or social enterprise debtors. NOW can avail of an overdraft facility should it require it.

## 4 Structure, Governance and Management

### Organisational Structure

NOW Group is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, incorporated on the 2nd day of August 2002, and registered as a charity in 2001. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association that established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up, members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

NOW Group has a Board of Directors of up to 12 members who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policies of the charity. At present the Committee has members from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the charity. The Secretary (currently NOW Group's Chief Executive) has no voting rights. A scheme of delegation is in place and day-to-day responsibility for the provision of the services rests with the Chief Executive Maeve Monaghan along with the Senior Management Team.

The Trustees are also responsible for the setting of senior staff pay.

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met. The Executive Team has responsibility for the day-to-day operational management of NOW Group, individual supervision of the Management team, skills development and good working practice.

### Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law, and under the company's Articles are known as members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Articles, the members of the Management Committee are elected to serve for a period of three years, after which they be eligible for re-nomination and election provided that no director shall serve more than two consecutive three year terms. Gary Irvine was appointed as the Chair of the NOW Group's in April 2016 and Simon Snoddy was appointed as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee in October 2016.

NOW Group has a robust Governance Manual detailing all processes in relation to its Board. Board members conduct a review of contribution and training needs analysis annually to ensure that all members are contributing and have the appropriate skills, expertise and training to ensure NOW Group's strategy is met.

All members of the Board give their time voluntarily and receive no financial or other material benefits from the charity. Any expenses claimed from the charity are set out in a note to the accountants.

### Trustee Induction and Training

Our Board member induction process aims to ensure that new members feel comfortable in their role and can make a useful and rapid contribution. The process lasts for several months and includes review meetings with the Chair to consider further induction and development needs. The Chair endeavours to ensure that the specific talents of each Board member are appropriately used to the benefit of the organisation. Induction includes the Chair meeting with new Board members six months after they join the Board to review the success of the process and to agree further actions. Board members are encouraged to network with staff at events and to attend meetings with key stakeholders, in order to continue to develop their understanding of the organisation and its environment.

### Risk Management

The Audit and Risk sub-group has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established and is reviewed and updated quarterly. Where appropriate systems or procedures are established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan that allows for the diversification of funding and activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation and annual renewal of ISO 9001 and 14001. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations by staff, volunteers, clients and visitors to NOW Group's bases. These are reviewed by external experts every two years. Procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.

### Responsibilities of Trustees

The Directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the Directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the trust and of the surplus or deficit of the trust for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Directors are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence to take reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

### Disclosures of Information to Auditors

To the knowledge and belief of the Directors there is no relevant information of which the company's auditors are not aware. The Directors have taken all the necessary steps of which they are aware, provided relevant information and established that the company's auditors are aware of the information.

### Tax Status

Under Section 505(i)(a) and (c) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988, The Now Project (NOW Group) is entitled to charity tax exemption.

### Auditors

Harbinson Mulholland has indicated its willingness to continue in this office and a resolution concerning their reappointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting. This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

### Related Parties

NOW Group values collaboration and has developed a partnership with Stepping Stones NI to deliver Project Workforce. We are also grateful for donated services. These included pro bono training from the American Express Leadership Academy, Eximo Academy and Common Purpose and design services from [www.gerry-can.com](http://www.gerry-can.com).

We are grateful to the following organisation who donated use of their facilities to support delivery of our services: Black Box, Grosvenor Community Centre, Duncairn Centre for Arts and Culture, Bangor Jobcentre, Newtownards Jobcentre, Libraries NI, Tesco Newtownards, Ulster University Jordanstown, Asda Bangor, Sainsburys Bangor, Sandy Row Community Centre and Ballysillan Elim Church.

We were particularly pleased to be chosen as the NI Social Enterprise winner in the Deloitte Society Partnership Programme in June 2016. The programme, which provides 3 years of consultancy, mentoring and volunteer support to the organisation is already proving an invaluable resource. Support in the financial year 2017-18 amounted to 309 volunteering hours at a value of £14,915.43.

## Reference and administrative details

**Charity number:** NIC100093

**Company number:** NI043774

**Principal Office:** NOW Group Head Office, 15-17 Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 4GN

**Auditors:** Harbinson and Mulholland, Centrepoint, 24 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS

**Bankers:** Bank of Ireland, 202 Andersonstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9EB

**Solicitors:** Agnew, Andress and Higgins, 92 High Street, Belfast, BT1 2DG

### Directors/Trustees

The Directors of the charitable company NOW Group are its trustees for the purpose of charity law. Throughout this report they are collectively referred to as the 'Directors'. The Directors serving from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 were as follows:

**Adam Alexander** *Vice Chair, Audit & Risk Sub Group (resigned October 17)*

**Andrea MacLean**

**Andrew Talbot** *Audit & Risk Sub Group*

**Anthony McNamee**

**Brenda Aaroy** *Audit & Risk Sub Group (resigned June 17)*

**Chris Brown**

**Chris Lillie** *HR & Continuous Improvement Sub Group*

**Edel Doherty**

**Gary Irvine** *Chair*

**Gary McQuoid** *(co-opted March 18)*

**Mark Regan** *(co-opted March 18)*

**Patricia Swann** *HR & Continuous Improvement Sub Group*

**Richard Moore**

**Rick McKee**

**Simon Snoddy** *Audit & Risk Sub Group*

By order of the Board on:



**Maeve Monaghan** Secretary

**Date: 07.11.2018**

**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**(incorporating the income and expenditure account)**  
**For the year ended 31 March 2018**

	Notes	2018		Total	2017		Total
		Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £		Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>							
Donations & Legacies	2	33,501	-	33,501	44,107	-	44,107
Charitable activities		901,394	1,058,130	1,959,524	574,348	1,105,050	1,679,398
Other trading activities		-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments		91	-	91	19	-	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>934,986</b>	<b>1,058,130</b>	<b>1,993,116</b>	<b>618,474</b>	<b>1,105,050</b>	<b>1,723,524</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Charitable activities		917,649	988,942	1,906,591	690,374	1,014,806	1,705,180
<b>Total</b>		<b>917,649</b>	<b>988,942</b>	<b>1,906,591</b>	<b>690,374</b>	<b>1,014,806</b>	<b>1,705,180</b>
<b>Net Income/(Outgoing)</b>		<b>17,337</b>	<b>69,188</b>	<b>86,525</b>	<b>(71,900)</b>	<b>90,244</b>	<b>18,344</b>
Transfers	8	59,850	(59,850)	-	101,729	(101,729)	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>77,187</b>	<b>9,338</b>	<b>86,525</b>	<b>29,829</b>	<b>(11,485)</b>	<b>18,344</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>							
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>545,001</b>	<b>124,346</b>	<b>669,347</b>	<b>515,172</b>	<b>135,831</b>	<b>651,003</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>622,188</b>	<b>133,684</b>	<b>755,872</b>	<b>545,001</b>	<b>124,346</b>	<b>669,347</b>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.  
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

## Balance sheet

	Notes	2018 £	2017 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	362,642	294,986
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock	12	7,775	7,449
Debtors	13	290,826	512,355
Cash at bank and in hand		525,056	271,005
		823,657	790,809
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	14	(391,543)	(369,904)
<b>Net current assets</b>		432,114	420,905
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		794,756	715,891
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	15	(40,554)	(54,286)
		754,202	661,605
<b>Funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds	17	620,518	537,259
Restricted funds	16	133,684	124,346
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>754,202</b>	<b>661,605</b>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies.

The financial statements were approved by the directors on

Gary Irvine 

Simon Snoddy 

Date: 07.11.2018

Company registration number NI043774