

IMPACT ^{23/24}

R E P R T



Northern
Ireland
Hospice



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Our Year in Numbers





We are Northern Ireland Hospice



Our Care Services

At Northern Ireland Hospice, we provide specialist palliative care that improves the lives of babies, children, and adults with life-limiting and life-threatening illnesses. Our focus is on enhancing the quality of life for patients and supporting their families throughout their journey, from diagnosis to the end of life. We offer holistic, patient-centered care that is life-affirming, compassionate, and supportive of all those affected by a palliative diagnosis, including patients, families, and healthcare professionals.

We deliver our care through:

Our Hospices

We operate two hospices: Somerton House, our Adult Hospice, and Horizon House, our Children's Hospice, the only facility of its kind in Northern Ireland. Our multi-disciplinary teams provide high-quality specialist palliative care, while offering emotional and spiritual support to patients and their families. Our approach wraps care around the entire family unit, ensuring that their needs are met in a compassionate and respectful manner.

Our Community Services

Our community care extends beyond our hospice walls, with seven teams of Specialist Community Nurses delivering care across Northern Ireland. These nurses work closely with GPs, District Nurses, social workers, and pharmacies to provide seamless, personalised care plans tailored to the needs of children and adults in their own homes. In response to increasing demand, our Hospice at Home service continues to provide one-to-one nursing care, allowing family members to take a break and look after their own well-being, while their loved one receives expert care during the day, evening, or night.

Hospice Outreach Services

As care needs have evolved post-pandemic, we have expanded our Hospice Outreach Services, which allow our multi-disciplinary teams to deliver care directly into the homes of patients. This includes support from occupational therapists, physiotherapists, holistic therapists, and spiritual care professionals. Patients receive tailored treatment programmes designed to empower them in managing their conditions more effectively. This holistic,

home-based care ensures that patients and their families receive the same comprehensive support they would expect within our hospice facilities.

Education and Training Programmes

We continue to be a leading provider of palliative care education in Northern Ireland. Our education programmes offer training for healthcare professionals on Advanced Communication Skills and the Essentials of Palliative Care Certificate. Through our educational initiatives, we are contributing to the development of high-quality palliative care skills and practices, ensuring that our commitment to excellence in care extends beyond our own organisation and benefits the wider healthcare system.



Our Vision

Is that infants, children and adults with life-limiting and life-threatening illnesses and their families, receive palliative care of the highest standards, thereby maximising their quality of life.

Our Mission

Is to inspire and deliver excellent and compassionate specialist palliative care via effective service models underpinned by exemplary education, innovation and research.

Our Values

We believe in:

- A culture of respect and acceptance without distinction or judgement, where everyone can belong.
- Acting with courage, compassion and integrity to add value to all that we do.
- Being pioneering, professional and accountable to deliver our very best.



Message from the Chairman and Chief Executive

It is our great privilege to present the 2023/24 Annual Report.

This year, we celebrated a significant milestone: 40 years of delivering exceptional palliative care to our community. This achievement reflects the passion, commitment, and dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters, both past and present. We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has played a crucial role in providing specialist and compassionate care, making a real difference to patients and their families year after year.

Every year, Northern Ireland Hospice cares for more than 4,000 babies, children and adults living with life-limiting conditions or facing the end of their lives. Our care not only wraps around our patients but also their families and loved ones with services such as bereavement counselling and other aspects of social care. The nature of the demands served by our charity are also changing with increasing medical and social complexity, along with an ageing population and later diagnoses. This presents ongoing challenges that we have risen to by innovating and adapting our services to meet the needs of patients, their families and loved ones.

Our services are provided free at the point of use, yet unlike the NHS, we do not receive

full state funding. While some government funding supports our work, most of our adult and children's services are funded by the generosity of our community, local businesses, trusts, foundations, and philanthropists locally and internationally. Reflecting on the past year and the previous four decades of remarkable progress, we must also acknowledge the challenges we have faced. The current cost-of-living crisis, an intricate economic and political landscape, and the reduction in statutory funding for our Children's Hospice services have made our work even more challenging.

In Northern Ireland, specialist palliative care can be difficult to access for both children and adults, resulting in considerable unmet need. Too many people are unable to receive the care they deserve. In Northern Ireland Hospice we are committed to advocating for change that ensures equity of access to specialist palliative care. We are engaging with local government and political parties to secure the recurring funding necessary to sustain our vital services.

To secure the sustainability of our Hospice services, we introduced a new five-year strategy in 2023/24, focusing on growing income and ensuring the long-term financial

stability of the charity in order that we can continue to serve those who need our services. The first phase of this strategy is dedicated to achieving financial stability while maintaining our existing services and building the capacity for future development. Our plan outlines a path to transition into a more sustainable financial model that allows us to invest in improved and new services for those in need of palliative care. This will be achieved through a series of strategic interventions, including a cost transformation programme, clearer service definitions, and enhanced cost management. We are pleased to report that, as of March 31, 2024, we achieved our planned financial targets a year ahead of schedule, thanks to improved income and effective cost-saving measures.

To support our strategic goals, we embraced digital technologies to enhance our service delivery and improve patient outcomes. Our expanded retail business reflects our commitment to sustainability and community support and is a key enabler in our new strategy.

Our educational initiatives, research contributions, and partnerships, such as those with the All-Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care, further our mission. We are dedicated to sharing our expertise and improving palliative care standards across the region.

As we review the financial outcomes of the past year, we want to address the de-recognition of a pension asset from our balance sheet, in compliance with updated accounting standards. This adjustment contributed to the operational deficit reported for 2023/24, but it was necessary to ensure our financial reporting remains accurate and transparent. By making this change, we are reinforcing the integrity of our financial position, allowing us to focus on our mission with renewed strength.

Looking ahead, we are filled with optimism. The strategic plan not only guides us toward financial stability and service growth but also reinforces our mission to provide exceptional care to more individuals in need. By leveraging our strengths, embracing innovation, and advocating for necessary change, we are confident in our ability to meet the growing needs of our community.

The success of Northern Ireland Hospice and Children's Hospice is a collective effort. It is made possible by our dedicated staff, volunteers, and the unwavering support of our donors and community partners. Your generosity and commitment enabled us to continue our vital work, and for this, we extend our heartfelt thanks.

As we move forward, we will remain steadfast in our dedication to enhancing the quality of life for our patients and their families. Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.

With sincere gratitude,

Dr. Gerry Millar MBE, Chairman

Trevor McCartney, Acting CEO.





Our Impact in 2023/24

The strategic plan for 2023/28 is aligned with four key pillars:

- 1, Patients: Delivering compassionate, specialist care.
- 2, People: Investing in our staff and volunteers.
- 3, Perpetuity: Ensuring long-term sustainability.
- 4, Performance: Strengthening insights and reporting.

These pillars guide everything we do as we continue to support babies, children, and adults with life-limiting and life-threatening illnesses across Northern Ireland.



Pillar 1: Patients – Delivering Compassionate, Specialist Care

At the heart of our work are the patients and families we support. In 2023/24, Northern Ireland Hospice provided care to over 4,000 babies, children, and adults living with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions. Our holistic approach focuses on the individual and the entire family, ensuring compassionate, high-quality care. With the expansion of our Hospice at Home service and Multi-Disciplinary Teams, we extended our reach, offering personalised care plans and specialist support to patients in the comfort of their own homes.

Pillar 2: People – Investing in Our Staff and Volunteers

Our people are the driving force behind everything we do. In 2023/24, we prioritised the wellbeing and professional development of our staff and volunteers. The introduction of Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) roles and expanded non-medical prescribing practices ensured we are equipped to manage the increasing complexity of patient care. Through our People Strategy, we fostered a culture of learning, inclusivity, and excellence, with training and development programmes that supported staff wellbeing and career growth across all levels of the organisation.



Pillar 3: Perpetuity – Ensuring Long-Term Sustainability

In 2023/24, we took significant steps toward ensuring the long-term sustainability of Northern Ireland Hospice. Through careful financial planning and the early implementation of our 2023-28 strategic plan, we achieved a break-even financial position ahead of schedule. Despite rising costs and external challenges, we successfully expanded our income streams through community support, fundraising efforts, retail growth, and strategic partnerships. These efforts have strengthened our financial resilience, ensuring we can continue to serve our communities for years to come.



Pillar 4: Performance – Strengthening Insights and Reporting

This year, Northern Ireland Hospice focused on improving how we track and measure performance. We enhanced our reporting systems in key areas such as income generation, governance, and compliance, allowing us to gain deeper insights into our return on investment and operational efficiency. By refining our reporting mechanisms, we improved our ability to monitor progress and plan flexibly for contingencies and future growth. Additionally, we began streamlining internal processes to automate reporting, reducing time spent on data production and enabling us to focus on actionable insights for better decision-making.

The focus of this report aligns with these four pillars, demonstrating how our strategic goals are being realised and driving our mission forward.

As we reflect on this year, we are proud of what we have achieved and remain committed to delivering the highest standards of care, now and in the future.



Patients: Adult Services

At Somerton House in Belfast, our 18-bed Adult In-Patient Unit is more than just a medical facility; it's a place where compassionate, holistic care is at the heart of everything we do. In 2023/24, our consultant-led multidisciplinary team welcomed 230 people living with life-limiting illnesses, offering expert support to help manage their symptoms and, in some cases, enable them to return home. For others, this was a place where they spent their final days, surrounded by care that extended beyond the physical to touch their emotional and spiritual needs. During the year, we provided end-of-life care to 151 patients and their families, making sure they had the support they needed at one of life's most difficult moments.

This year brought record numbers to our unit, with bed occupancy reaching its highest in four years. The complexity of our patients' needs also grew, and we saw an increase in younger patients, many of whom were under 65. This shift meant our team wasn't just caring for individuals—they were also supporting multigenerational families, guiding them through challenging and unexpected transitions. Despite these growing demands, we were reassured when both the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and the Department of Health Pharmacy Inspection team commended our work, highlighting the exceptional standards of care we provide.

But we didn't stop there. We made it our mission to keep improving. We introduced daily staff huddles to enhance communication and ensure patient safety, allowing us to respond more quickly to our patients' needs. Our nursing teams revised their record-keeping practices, making care plans more patient-centered, and we expanded the roles of Advanced

Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) to bring greater continuity to our care. These changes are helping us ensure that every patient receives the attention, dignity, and respect they deserve.

Meanwhile, for many patients, home remains the preferred place to spend their final days. That's where our community services come in. In 2023/24, our specialist nursing teams travelled across Northern Ireland, making 13,833 visits to 3,884 patients and their families, helping 1,922 people achieve their wish to pass away at home, surrounded by their loved ones. Our Hospice at Home service provided over 3,200 hours of direct care, offering respite and comfort during these difficult times.

The strength of our service lies in collaboration. Our teams worked hand-in-hand with GPs, District Nurses, and family members to create personalised care plans, ensuring that each patient's wishes were honored. We also strengthened our outreach services, with consultants, doctors, physiotherapists, and occupational



therapists preventing crises and avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions, continuing to deliver crucial care even as we transitioned out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thanks to additional funding from the Cancer Charities Support Fund, we expanded our holistic care at home, integrating complementary therapies and social work into our service, and offering more support to families and carers. These additional 5,635 interventions helped bring comfort and guidance to those navigating the overwhelming experiences of death, dying, and bereavement.

For those left behind, our support continued. Our Social Work team held 589 post-bereavement sessions, both one-on-one and in groups, providing emotional care to those grieving. We also launched our new Bereavement Café, offering a warm, open space for people to connect, share, and find strength together.

Continuous improvement is embedded in our work. Our staff are not only care providers but educators, sharing their expertise with the wider health community. This year, they delivered courses like the European Certificate in Essential Palliative Care and advanced communication skills training, while also mentoring students and

healthcare professionals to help build the next generation of palliative care specialists.

In 2023/24, we were reminded that in palliative care, even small moments can have a huge impact. That's why our Special Activities Team worked tirelessly to create memorable experiences for patients and their families, from weddings and anniversaries to family movie nights. These moments of joy offered families something to hold onto during the toughest of times, and we're working hard to ensure this service continues.

Finally, we made significant strides in building stronger partnerships. By engaging with commissioners and key health and social care stakeholders, we secured vital investments for our services. Our work on the "Single Point of Access for Palliative Care Project" in Belfast led to a more coordinated approach to service delivery, with our physiotherapy service at the forefront, piloting new ways to support palliative care patients in the community.

Through all of these efforts, our aim has always been the same: to provide exceptional care that makes a real difference in the lives of those we serve, and to continue evolving to meet the needs of our community.



Niall's story

Niall Parkhill's story is one of love, strength, and the compassionate care provided by the Hospice during a heartbreaking time. Niall was a fit, football-loving 45-year-old from Belfast, a devoted husband to Grainne, and a father to three boys: Riain (17), Killian (14), and Conor (10). His illness came on suddenly and took him from his family in a matter of weeks.

Grainne recalls how quickly everything changed: "Niall was admitted to hospital on 11th March and passed away at the Hospice on 7th April 2022. He only had one day at home so we could tell the boys he was dying. The rest of the time, he was either in the hospital or the Hospice."

Grainne and Niall met in 1998 and married soon after, building a life together. "Niall was amazing—an incredible character, everyone loved him. He was 6'3", a gentle giant who coached football at Aquinas Football Club and helped run our family business. His funeral was huge; he was just that kind of person."

What was especially difficult for the family was the suddenness of Niall's illness. He had a few weeks of back pain and bruising but was still playing football just days before he was admitted to the hospital. Grainne remembers the shock: "When the doctors looked at his case, they couldn't believe he was even functioning, but that's who Niall was—strong and determined."

Tragically, as Niall's health declined, his mother also passed away from a brain hemorrhage just one day after his hospital admission. Niall couldn't attend her funeral, making an already difficult time even harder for him and the family.

Although the doctors tried to determine the source of Niall's illness, they were never able to confirm a primary diagnosis. It was some form of cancer affecting his blood, which left him reliant on transfusions. After 14 days in the hospital, the medical team confirmed his condition was

terminal. That's when Niall made the decision to go to the Hospice.

Grainne remembers feeling apprehensive about the move to Hospice care but was relieved when she saw the room prepared for Niall. "I walked in and thought, 'This is lovely.' It wasn't what I had expected at all." The Hospice became a place where Niall could be surrounded by his family, and the boys could visit freely, something that wasn't possible due to hospital COVID restrictions. The Hospice staff made special efforts to set up a comfortable environment for the children, providing a room with a PlayStation, snacks, and a TV to make them feel welcome.

Niall found comfort in the simple things during his time at the Hospice. He loved sitting in a Lay-Z-Boy chair by the door, enjoying the fresh air. Grainne takes comfort in knowing that Niall's final days were peaceful: "When you're going through the worst things in life, it's those little things that make all the difference. I'm so grateful that Niall was comfortable during his last days."

Niall passed away on 7th April, wearing his beloved Manchester United shirt. The Hospice team went above and beyond by making teddy bears out of the shirt for Grainne and the boys, providing them with a keepsake to remember Niall by.

Even after Niall's passing, the Hospice continued to support the family. When Grainne's youngest son, Conor, struggled with grief, the Hospice's social worker, Aislinn, provided one-on-one bereavement support. "Within weeks, I saw my bubbly little boy coming back," Grainne shares.

Grainne will never forget the kindness and care her family received: "At Hospice, it's not just about caring for the patient, it's about caring for the whole family. The Hospice is now part of our lives and memories, and I'll always be grateful for everything they did for us."



Patients: Children's Services

At the Children's Hospice, our focus goes far beyond medical care. We offer comprehensive paediatric palliative care that supports not only the child but their entire family—physically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. Every child we care for is unique, and our goal is to enhance their quality of life by creating opportunities for meaningful moments, while ensuring they receive the right care at the right time. Whether it's in our 10-bed in-patient unit at Horizon House or through our Hospice at Home and Hub services, we are there when families need us most.

This past year, 2023/24, was marked by significant challenges for our Children's Hospice Services. One of the most difficult was the withdrawal of funding for our "one-hour plus" bed, which had allowed children living over an hour away from our in-patient unit to stay for extended periods. This loss of funding not only reduced the duration of stays for all the children in our care but also increased our operating costs. It forced us to re-evaluate and adjust both our service model and staffing arrangements.

In response, we restructured our in-house care model to maximise our resources, providing contracted nights only and adjusting bed occupancy. As a result, we now operate six beds from Monday to Friday and three over the weekends. This is far from ideal, as the Public Health Agency's 2023 "Needs Assessment of Children with Life-Limiting and Life-Threatening Conditions in Northern Ireland" clearly identified a high level of unmet need, the majority of which is addressed by the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice. Even more frustrating is the fact that we have four additional beds that remain unused simply due to lack of government funding.

If operational, these beds could help meet the identified needs while making our services more cost-effective by distributing our fixed costs.

In response to these operational changes, we also re-examined our staffing models. With reduced daytime staffing, we adjusted our team structures to ensure that children with higher needs still receive one-on-one care, while less dependent children receive shared care. Although this transformation was necessary, it was not without difficulty. We had to say goodbye to six part-time staff, a heartbreaking but unavoidable consequence of the funding challenges.

Despite the financial struggles, these changes provided an opportunity to showcase the vital role our Children's Hospice plays in the region, attracting media attention that highlighted both the essential services we provide and the urgent need for sustainable funding. Our community services continued to evolve throughout the year. In 2023, we transitioned fully to a Hub caseload system, where a dedicated Hub Nurse serves as a central point of contact for families. This



model has improved continuity and consistency in care, reducing stress on families and ensuring quicker response times when a child's condition changes.

Our Tiny Horizons Antenatal Service also saw increased demand. In 2023, we supported 21 antenatal mothers whose babies had been diagnosed with potentially life-limiting or life-threatening conditions. Our Hub Nurse ensured these families were well informed and supported from diagnosis, helping them navigate difficult decisions and plan for possible outcomes.

The Hospice at Home service continues to be a lifeline for many families. Last year, we provided 1,242 episodes of care and over 6,221 hours of support to 50 children. Parents tell us that this service is invaluable in helping them manage day-to-day life around their child's complex needs, providing the reassurance they need to cope with what can be overwhelming circumstances.

In the regional hospital for sick children, our Palliative and Life-Limited Service (PALLS) team continues to offer crucial support, with one dedicated nurse based at the hospital. This role, which has now advanced to an Advanced Clinical Practitioner level, helps ensure early referrals and supports families during the most challenging conversations—breaking bad news, advanced care planning, and making decisions about where to receive care.

We know that a child's illness affects the whole family, and our Family Support Team provides emotional, practical, and social support to the entire family circle, including siblings and grandparents. For those grieving the loss of a child, our specialised bereavement support is there to offer comfort and guidance during an unimaginable time.

The Horizon Bereavement Project, now in its third year, has provided bereavement support to families who have experienced the sudden, often traumatic, death of a child. This project, funded by the Helping Hands charity, will continue to run until October 2024, helping families find solace and strength as they process their grief.

Beyond direct care, we remain committed to influencing broader paediatric palliative care policy. We are active members of the paediatric palliative care network, reviewing critical issues such as advanced care planning and 24-hour on-call coverage for the region. In 2023/24, we also facilitated a research project on decision-making at the end of life, examining the factors that influence where families choose to have their child cared for in their final days.

While this year presented many challenges, we remain as dedicated as ever to providing exceptional care to children and their families, ensuring that they receive the support they need during life's most difficult journeys.



Sophia's story

Sophia, an eleven-month-old little girl from Donaghadee, has the most beautiful eyes, and her smile lights up every room. But Sophia has faced many challenges. She was born with Campomelic Dysplasia, a rare, life-threatening genetic condition affecting her bones and organs. This condition has left her dependent on 24/7 care, including a tracheostomy and tube feeding.

Her parents, Leah and Alex, along with her two big brothers, Kai and Carter, are her loving support team. Despite the difficulties, Leah describes Sophia's smile as infectious, saying she has everyone wrapped around her little finger. The family's journey has been far from easy. Leah shares how they first discovered Sophia's condition during a pregnancy scan when abnormalities were detected. After her birth, the full extent of Sophia's medical challenges became clear.

"We were told that Sophia might not live beyond her first week. It's something no parent ever expects to hear," Leah recalls. Sophia was born with an airway abnormality that made breathing difficult, and her early days were spent in and out of hospitals. At just 10 days old, after a brief time at home, she was rushed back to the hospital with suspected bronchiolitis and eventually spent over 200 days in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.

During this time, the Children's Hospice was mentioned, but at first, Leah and Alex resisted. "We thought hospice meant the doctors were giving up on Sophia, that it was the end," Leah says. However, after meeting Rosie, a hospice nurse, the couple learned that hospice wasn't just for end-of-life care; it could be a place of support and respite for their entire family.

Their first visit to the Children's Hospice, Horizon House, was life-changing. For the first time, Leah and Alex were able to bond with their daughter outside the confines of a hospital. They took her

into the garden, feeling fresh air on her skin for the first time. "We even had to buy her sunglasses because she had never seen natural light before," Leah recalls fondly. At the hospice, they were finally able to parent Sophia in ways they hadn't been able to in the hospital, lifting her for cuddles and spending time as a family.

Sophia's time at the hospice has been filled with special moments. She enjoys music therapy, where rhythmic music helps her relax deeply. "We can see her heart rate slowing down, and she goes into the most peaceful sleep," Leah explains. Sophia's brothers, Kai and Carter, have also found joy at the hospice. They love playing with their baby sister and take pride in helping care for her, making cherished memories along the way.

The hospice staff, who have come to know Sophia as well as her family, have been a constant source of support. Leah credits Grace, the Head of Children's Hospice, for advocating to bring Sophia home from the hospital. "We hadn't spent more than one night outside the hospital with Sophia, but the hospice taught us how to care for her and built up our confidence as parents."

The hospice has become a second home for the family, offering a sense of peace and a place where Sophia can thrive. Leah expresses deep gratitude for the role the hospice has played in their lives. "Hospice has been our lifeline. Without it, we wouldn't have been able to bring Sophia home."

As they look forward to the future, Leah and Alex are comforted knowing that the hospice will continue to support them. "Sophia has been through so much, but she's a fighter. We know that with the hospice by our side, we can face whatever comes next."

Leah and Alex hope that others will support the hospice, ensuring more families like theirs can benefit from the care they provide.



People

Our staff

At Northern Ireland Hospice, our people - both staff and volunteers - are the foundation of everything we do. Their professionalism, commitment, and dedication are essential to delivering the high standards of care we are known for, ensuring patients and families receive the compassionate support they need during life's most difficult moments.

In 2023/24, we launched our People Strategy, a five-year plan to ensure we have the right talent, skills, and experience to continue excelling. This strategy is designed to foster a positive, supportive, and inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and empowered. We want our people to be happy at work, knowing they are supported to do their best, even amid the many external challenges we face.

The People Strategy focuses on five key areas: People Planning and Development, Wellbeing Matters, Shaping Culture, Inspiring Leaders, and Engaging Volunteers. A key development this year has been the establishment of the People and Culture Committee, supported by Trustees and employee representatives, to help shape the culture of the organisation.

Our new Training Academy is another significant milestone. It has delivered face-to-face training on 15 different topics to support both career and personal development, with 324 employees attending courses this year. In total, 2,885 courses were completed, with an average compliance rate of 72.11% for mandatory training.

Recognising the need for more effective personal development conversations, we overhauled our Personal Development Review (PDR) process, making it more focused and aligned with the organisation's strategic goals. This new approach helps staff and managers have regular,

meaningful discussions about career growth and personal development.

We also introduced Staff Long Service Awards this year to celebrate employees who have dedicated many years to Northern Ireland Hospice. Their loyalty and hard work are central to our ability to provide high-quality care, and we are proud to honour their contributions.

As part of our continued commitment to staff wellbeing, we implemented a Menopause Policy and introduced a Menopause Café, providing a supportive space for employees to share experiences and seek advice. The conclusion of the first year of our Wellbeing Strategy saw the introduction of a Wellbeing Calendar for 2024, packed with activities and initiatives promoting physical, mental, and emotional health.



Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are integral to our work, helping us deliver specialist palliative care to local patients and families. In 2023/24, over **700 passionate volunteers** contributed more than **118,472 hours** across various areas, including the Children's Hospice, Adult Hospice, reception areas, retail, fundraising, corporate services, and our Hospice Café. The estimated value of their time amounts to over **£1.35 million**, an incredible contribution to our mission.

This year, we increased volunteer recruitment through a focused campaign, enhanced our online presence, and streamlined our application process. As a result, 185 volunteers joined us to support various services. Many of our volunteers now contribute across multiple areas, enhancing their experience and supporting different facets of the organisation. With the return of post-COVID roles like hairdressing and complementary therapies, as well as new roles like fundraising drivers, we were thrilled to see volunteers re-engage with our in-patient units, where their contributions have been invaluable.

In both the Adult and Children's Hospices, personal support roles like the Patient Sitter Service and the adapted Babysitting Role provide vital assistance to families. Our volunteers' commitment and passion are truly inspiring, and we aim to continue expanding our volunteer programme, offering a diverse range of roles to attract and retain individuals with a wide array of skills.

Celebrating Volunteers

We take pride in recognising the incredible contributions of our volunteers. During Volunteers Week (1-7 June), we celebrated their long service with certificates and badges, honouring some for up to 30 years of dedication. Additionally, this year's prestigious League of Mercy Award was presented to Yvonne Fitzsimmons, a long-serving reception volunteer at the Children's Hospice. Yvonne is the 9th volunteer from Northern Ireland Hospice to receive this honour, and we are proud to celebrate her dedication.

Our volunteers are the heartbeat of Northern Ireland Hospice, and by recognising their contributions, we ensure that they continue to be an essential part of our mission to provide exceptional care to those who need it most.



Liam's story

In one of the most unforgettable moments at Northern Ireland Hospice, Liam McBriarty had the privilege of witnessing his daughter Orlagh's wedding - a day filled with love, joy, and profound emotion. As a Hospice patient in the final stages of his illness, Liam's presence at his daughter's wedding was not only a cherished family moment, but also a testament to the dedication of the Hospice's Special Activities Committee, a group of care staff from adult services who work tirelessly to deliver extraordinary experiences like this for patients and their families.

Liam's health had been rapidly declining, and his greatest wish was to see his daughter marry the love of her life. With time no longer on their side, Orlagh and her partner moved their wedding date forward, ensuring Liam could be there to witness this important milestone. The ceremony took place at the Hospice, where the Special Activities Committee, through their "Go the Extra Mile" campaign, organized every detail to make this day unforgettable. From vibrant floral arrangements to soft lighting, they transformed the room into an intimate space filled with warmth and love.

As Liam sat watching Orlagh walk down the aisle, the joy on his face was unmistakable. It was a day he had longed for, and thanks to the efforts of the Special Activities Committee, Liam was able to be fully present, sharing in his daughter's special moment. The atmosphere was made even more magical by the gentle sounds of the Hospice ukulele band, adding a touch of serenity and celebration to the day.

Liam's family, including friends and loved ones, gathered to celebrate, but it was Liam's pride and happiness that took centre stage. Despite his frailty, the care staff ensured that he was comfortable and well-supported throughout the day, giving him the chance to witness this beautiful celebration of love. For Liam, it was more than just a wedding—it was a moment he had feared he might miss, and it brought him immense comfort in his final days.

The "Go the Extra Mile" campaign, led by the Special Activities Committee, reflects Northern Ireland Hospice's mission to go beyond medical care and create meaningful moments for patients. This dedicated team, made up of care staff from adult services, worked behind the scenes to ensure every detail of Liam's experience was perfect. From setting up the ceremony space to ensuring Liam's comfort throughout, they demonstrated the compassion and commitment that defines Northern Ireland Hospice.

Liam's family and friends were equally moved by the care and support shown by the Hospice staff. The love and compassion that surrounded Liam on this day was palpable, a testament to the strength of family bonds and the power of community in life's most difficult moments. It was not only a day of marriage, but a celebration of Liam's life, his love for his daughter, and the connections that had shaped his journey.

Reflecting on Liam's story, it's clear that Northern Ireland Hospice's role goes far beyond providing essential medical care. Through initiatives like the "Go the Extra Mile" campaign, we strive to enrich the lives of our patients and their families, creating lasting memories even in the most challenging times. For Liam, witnessing his daughter's wedding was a dream come true, and the Special Activities Committee made that dream a reality.

Liam's presence at Orlagh's wedding is a powerful reminder of the importance of love and togetherness, even in the face of adversity. At Northern Ireland Hospice, we are dedicated to helping families make the most of their time together, supporting them with compassion, dignity, and a commitment to creating moments of joy.

For Liam, his family, and all who loved him, Orlagh's wedding will remain a treasured memory - a day when love triumphed over hardship, and a father's wish to see his daughter marry was beautifully fulfilled, thanks to the caring hands of the Special Activities Committee.



Fundraising

Despite challenges like the cost-of-living crisis and economic instability, 2023/24 saw significant fundraising success. Income from donations and legacies grew by 7.4%, increasing from **£8 million** in 2022/23 to **£8.6 million** in 2023/24. Donations rose from **£5.06 million** to **£5.69 million**, including **£200,000** generated through increased media attention on our Children's Services.

Our focus on donor engagement through campaigns like personalised updates and Connect Magazine has helped foster deeper connections with supporters, encouraging higher donations. The return on investment for fundraising activities improved, with fundraising costs reduced by **£652K**.

We are incredibly proud of the diverse range of fundraising events and campaigns that contributed to this year's success. Each event, partnership, and individual effort showcases the generosity and creativity of our supporters. Here are just a few of the remarkable highlights from the past year:

Dragon Boat Race

After a hiatus due to COVID-19, the much-loved Dragon Boat Race returned, making a big splash! This adrenaline-fueled event brought together participants from corporate organisations, raising a phenomenal **£41,000**. It was a day of camaraderie, teamwork, and fierce competition, all in the name of raising vital funds for NI Hospice.



Ulster Bank's 'One Big Week' Campaign

Ulster Bank's continued commitment to our cause was on full display during their 'One Big Week' campaign. Their dedicated team, alongside employees and customers, raised an outstanding **£160,000**, making them one of our most significant corporate partners of the year.



Martin McErlaine's Fun Day at Bellaghy GAC

In memory of his late wife Siobhan, Martin organised a heart-warming and lively fun day at Bellaghy GAC. This special event raised **£58,000**, honouring Siobhan's legacy while making a meaningful difference for others in need of hospice care.



St Joseph's College

Our younger supporters also played a significant role in our fundraising efforts. Pupils from St Joseph's College raise **£550** as part of our Kindness Counts Campaign, showing that no matter your age, you can make a difference.



Community Support Groups

Our dedicated volunteer fundraising support groups have been nothing short of extraordinary, raising a collective **£175,000** through multiple events across Northern Ireland. From coffee mornings to sponsored walks, their efforts continue to inspire, demonstrating the power of community-driven support.



John Wilson and the Birches Vintage & Classic Club

The annual car show and country night organized by John Wilson and the Birches Vintage & Classic Club proved to be another roaring success, raising **£18,000** for NI Hospice. The passion and dedication of classic car enthusiasts helped to ensure that our patients receive the best care possible.



Abbey Autoline's Charity of the Year Partnership

Abbey Autoline once again chose NI Hospice as their Charity of the Year, and their team's incredible fundraising efforts resulted in a generous **£14,500** contribution this year. Their passion and dedication to our cause have been truly inspiring. In 2023, they also celebrated a remarkable milestone, having raised an impressive total of **£150,000** for NI Hospice to date.



Michele Gordon and Mary Rose Scott's 100KM Cycle

Michele Gordon and Mary Rose Scott took on a remarkable personal challenge, cycling 100KM from the NI Hospice to Ballyshannon. Their impressive journey raised **£11,505**, highlighting the incredible dedication of our individual fundraisers who go above and beyond.



McCartan Turkington & Breen Solicitors

McCartan Turkington and Breen Solicitors also supported NI Hospice as their Charity of the Year, contributing **£6,500**. Their partnership underscores the importance of corporate support in helping us meet our goals.





Retail Impact 2023/24



Retail Impact: Sustainability and Growth in 2023/24

Retail operations continue to be a cornerstone of Northern Ireland Hospice's income, providing essential funding for the compassionate palliative care we deliver across the region. In 2023/24, our retail activities generated £3.43 million, up from £3.27 million the previous year. This success is the result of the hard work and dedication of our retail team, volunteers, and the support of our community, ensuring that we can continue offering exceptional care to those who need it.

Expanding Our Retail Footprint

In 2023/24, we expanded our retail presence by opening larger shops in Shankill, Finaghy, and Enniskillen, and enhancing existing stores to improve the shopping experience. These new shops not only provide high-quality, affordable goods but also strengthen connections with local communities, raising awareness of the Hospice's mission to support families facing life-limiting illnesses.

Each of our 24 Hospice shops plays a crucial role in the community, serving as a hub for donations and a place where customers can engage with our work. The income generated from the sale of donated items directly supports our palliative care services, enabling us to extend our reach to even more families.

Triple Bottom Line Strategy: People, Planet, Profit

Our retail strategy for 2023-2027 is built on the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach, balancing the pillars of People, Planet, and Profit. This strategy ensures that our retail operations are not only financially sustainable but also socially and environmentally responsible.

People: Over 700 staff and volunteers drive our retail success. Their dedication is invaluable, contributing over 118,000 hours of their time, valued at more than £1.35 million. Their roles provide personal fulfillment while making a tangible difference to the work of Northern Ireland Hospice.

Planet: Sustainability remains central to our efforts. Initiatives like CARECYCLE allow us to reduce our environmental impact by reusing and recycling donated goods. These efforts align with public awareness of environmental issues and support our long-term mission to promote responsible consumption.

Profit: Our retail income grew to £3.43 million, reflecting increased donations and higher customer footfall. This financial stability enables us to continue providing free palliative care to patients and families, ensuring we meet growing demand despite economic challenges.

Volunteers: The Heart of Our Retail Operations

Volunteers are the backbone of our retail operations. In 2023/24, over 700 volunteers played an essential role in the success of our shops, offering their time and energy to ensure smooth operations. From sorting donations to assisting customers, their contributions are vital to keeping our retail network running efficiently.

This year, we also focused on recruiting more volunteers through targeted campaigns and improving our online application process. Additionally, the return of roles affected by the pandemic, such as complementary therapies and hairdressing, has enhanced the range of services we offer, both in our shops and within the broader Hospice community.

By focusing on sustainability, community engagement, and financial growth, our retail operations will continue to play a key role in supporting Northern Ireland Hospice's mission, ensuring we can provide compassionate care to those who need it most.

CARECYCLE Donation Stations: An Innovative Initiative

In 2023/24, we launched CARECYCLE, a new initiative aimed at boosting sustainability and financial resilience. Strategically placed across Northern Ireland, CARECYCLE donation stations encourage the public to donate unwanted textiles, which are either resold in our shops or responsibly recycled.

CARECYCLE has quickly become a vital part of our retail operations, helping reduce waste while generating essential income. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with many embracing the opportunity to declutter their homes in a sustainable way while supporting our cause. Early results show that CARECYCLE is making a meaningful contribution to both our environmental and financial goals.





Our finances

Income

This year, total income grew to **£19.1 million**, an increase from **£18.2 million** in 2022/23. Our ability to raise **£8.58 million** from donations and legacies—an increase of **£591,000** from the previous year—underscores the strength of our community support and the continued trust placed in Northern Ireland Hospice. This vital income stream accounts for **45%** of our total income, and much of this growth has been driven by increased public awareness, particularly around our children’s services.

Income from charitable activities, which includes statutory contracts and other funding sources, remained steady at **£6.9 million**, making up **36%** of our income. Our retail operations continue to be a cornerstone of our financial sustainability, contributing **£3.43 million**, a modest but significant increase from **£3.27 million** last year, reflecting the positive impact of our expanding retail network.

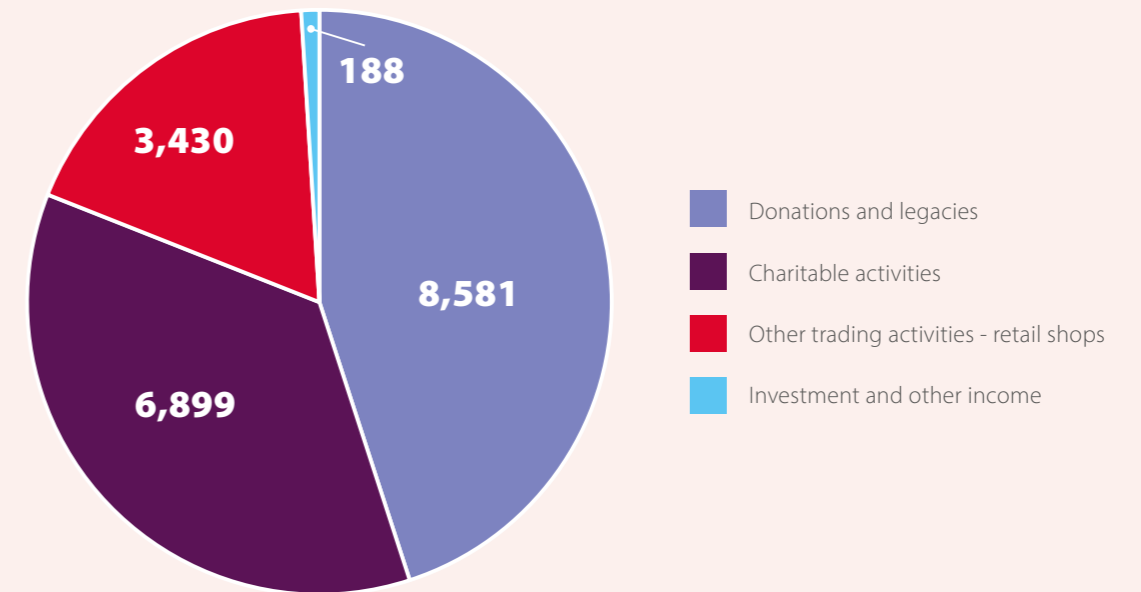
Expenditure

On the expenditure side, we saw a reduction from **£20.1 million** in 2022/23 to **£19.5 million** this year. This reflects our focus on managing costs while ensuring that we can continue delivering high-quality care. Most notably, we achieved a **£652,000** reduction in fundraising costs, largely due to the absence of the one-off Elmer campaign from the previous year. This careful cost management ensures that more of the funds raised go directly towards patient care.

Charitable activities continue to represent the bulk of our expenditure at **£14.53 million**, or **75%** of total costs, underscoring our commitment to delivering compassionate care to our patients. Our investment in retail operations has also increased slightly to **£2.82 million**, reflecting our strategic expansion and commitment to long-term sustainability.

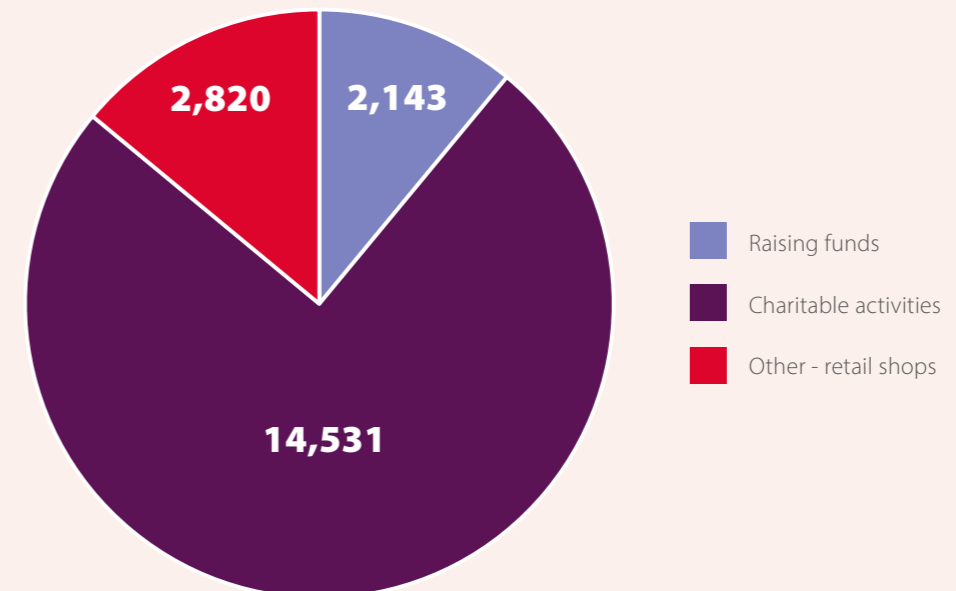


Income 23/24



Income	23/24	%	22/23	%
Donations and legacies	8,581	45%	7,990	44%
Charitable activities	6,899	36%	6,790	37%
Other trading activities - retail shops	3,430	18%	3,269	18%
Investment and other income	188	1%	166	1%
Total Group Income	19,098		18,215	


Expenditure 23/24



Expenditure	23/24	%	22/23	%
Raising funds	2,143	11%	2,795	14%
Charitable activities	14,531	75%	14,693	73%
Other - retail shops	2,820	14%	2,624	13%
Total Group Expenditure	19,494		20,112	



**Northern
Ireland
Hospice**

nihospice.org  **Head Office, 18 O'Neill Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 6WB**



Northern Ireland Hospice is a Company Limited by guarantee incorporated in Northern Ireland and is a charity recognised by the Inland Revenue. Company Registration No: NI 14817 Charity No: NIC102337