



for lone parents

Gingerbread

Northern Ireland



Annual Report 2002

Board of Directors for 2001/2002

Chairperson	Helen Harvey (Group Representative)
Deputy Chairperson	Clare Broome (Individual Representative)
Honourary Treasurer	Mary Boyce (Group Representative)
Deputy Honourary Treasurer	Eimear Johnston (Group Representative)
Committee Member	Colette Loughran (Group Representative)
Committee Member	Josephine Harron (Group Representative) (resigned Feb 2002)
Committee Member	Tanya McIntyre (Group Representative)
Committee Member	Philip Hoey (Group Representative)
Committee Member	Patricia Vince (Individual Representative)
Committee Member	Linda Kerr (Co-optee) (resigned June 2002)
Committee Member	Andrea Heaney (Co-optee)

Staff List 2001/2002

Director	Marie Cavanagh
Assistant Director	Anne Sweeney
Assistant Director	Rachel McAree
Advice Section	
Advice Manager	Sean O'Neill
Advice Worker	Elaine Monaghan (Belfast)/Jacqueline McGuinness (Derry)
Advice Volunteers	Marie Brannigan* Lisa McNamee*
Training Section	
Training Manager	Karen McCann
CIPD Project Workers	Pat Kernaghan/Helen Torr
Choices Training Officer	Janice Montgomery
Steps to Work Tutors	Claire Seeley (Belfast) /Fiona Harkin (Derry)
Regional Development Section	
Western Regional Manager	Maria Fox
Northern Board Group Worker	Narsiss Haghighi
Northern Regional Centre Volunteer	Judith Getty*
Youth Section	
Teens Project Co-ordinator	Gabrielle Nellis
Teens Volunteers	Peter Holland*
Young Volunteers	Mary Frances Loughran* Arran O'Reilly* Linzi Blair* Julianne McCurdy*
Finance Section	
Finance Manager	Stephen Coogan
Finance Assistant	Siobhan Wolfe
Personnel Section	
Personnel Officer	Susan Lavery
Office Administrator	Claire Hendrix
Child Care Section	
Playcare Leaders	Angela Young (Belfast)/Mary Burke (Derry)
Playcare Assistants	Madeleine Thompson (Belfast)/Mary Doherty (Derry)
Communications Section	
Communication Officers	Darren O'Reilly (Belfast)/Denise McConnell (Derry)

The following staff, volunteers and placement students have left Gingerbread during the past year:

Karen Aulds... Michelle Austin... Ciara Donnelly... Ann Doris... Maureen Fleming... Fiona Greene... Lesley Hamilton... Maria Hoeritzer... Peter Holland... Emma Lavery... Danielle McCann... June McGroggan... Paul McNaught... Carol Skillen... Janet Tinsley... Alicia Toal... Suzanne Grobler# ... Clare Clifford*... Elaine Friel*... Aimée McAree*... Karalee McBride*... Maxine Nelson*... Sabrina Nichols*... Elke Schmidt*... Alistair Stewart...

* Volunteer # Placement

Contents

page

Chairperson's Foreword	1
Director's Report	2
Advice and Support	3
Training	5
Communication	7
Regional Development	9
Children and Young People	11
Treasurer's Report	13
Breakdown of Income and Expenditure	14



Chairperson's Foreword



We have come to the end of another year and a lot has been achieved. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone concerned for his and her dedication to Gingerbread.

Gingerbread works with lone parents for lone parents and I would like to highlight the need for, and encourage, members to take an active role in the organisation. Each year the Board of Directors work with the senior staff team to strategically develop the organisation and I would urge as many of you as possible to get involved in this, so sharing the task with the dedicated people we already have.

In the past year the freephone advice service has exceeded our expectations in meeting the continuous demand for advice. It is constantly busy and has had over 10,000 enquiries. Clients who would have otherwise lost out received over £1,000,000 in additional or previously under claimed benefits. To this end we are working hard to ensure that this very important service is maintained.

Throughout the year I travelled to Portugal, Bristol, Brussels and Madrid with the European Network of One-Parent Families. There are currently 11 European countries represented in the network and we have been working on developing 'Single Parent Inclusion Networks', a project supported by the European Commission. A report on the programme of activity has just been published.

During my time with ENOPF I made a lot of new friends, some of whom I still have contact with through the Internet. The benefit of examining family diversity at a European level has highlighted for me the types of service provision that exist for one parent families in the different member states and the variations that exist, within countries, of the definitions of lone parenthood. Personally, I welcome the fact that Gingerbread is examining our definition of lone parenthood.

Still on a personal note, not only am I standing down from Gingerbread's board this year, I am also leaving Gingerbread. After seven years as a group member and representative for the Southern Board it is with a mixture of feelings that I leave. Sadness at leaving all my friends who have given me a lot of support over the years, happiness that my life has turned around and I can now move on in a new relationship. I will always stay in touch with everyone.

I would like to thank all board members for their commitment and support; I wish them all luck for the future. I would also like to wish the incoming Board of Directors every success for the future.

Helen Harvey

Helen Harvey
Chairperson

Director's Report



Welcome to Gingerbread's Annual Report for 2002. As I write the year I find it hard to believe that we are almost through the third year of this new millennium. It also highlights the fact that this Annual General Meeting will see Gingerbread enter its 25th year of operation in Northern Ireland.

Throughout this year we have continued to meet the needs of lone parents and their children by developing and providing services identified by them as beneficial. The first task for the Board of Directors and Senior Management Team in the past year was to develop and implement Gingerbread's Strategic Development Plan 2002 – 2005. This was done with the undertaking that the provision of services such as advice and advocacy, training, childrens and young persons, membership and communication services would be maintained.

This year, partnership and collaboration have been key themes in the work that we have undertaken. We have worked closely with a number of statutory and voluntary organisations, agencies and departments to achieve our goals.

In the field of training we have worked with the Social Security Agency and the Department of Employment and Learning in developing our New Deal for Lone Parent Provision. Other training has been developed and maintained with the assistance of the both Intermediary Funding Bodies and the Department of Social Development. Our work with children and young people has involved close liaison with the Community Fund, the Youth Council (NI) and the University of Ulster and has had the support of the Department of Employment and Learning. In the development of the FreePhone help line we worked closely with the Community Fund and with the Telephone Help Line Association who provide training for our staff and volunteers on an ongoing basis.

As always, securing the resources to maintain this level of work has proved to be a demanding task and we must thank those funding agencies that have had the confidence to invest in the work that Gingerbread does with and for one-parent families.

As you read through the body of this report you will get some idea of the level of work undertaken by Gingerbread over the last year. This has been made possible only through the dedication and commitment of Gingerbread's members, staff and volunteers. We look forward to this commitment being maintained into our 25th year. I commend the report to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Marie Cavanagh'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Marie Cavanagh
Director

Advice and Support

Meeting demand, exceeding expectations.

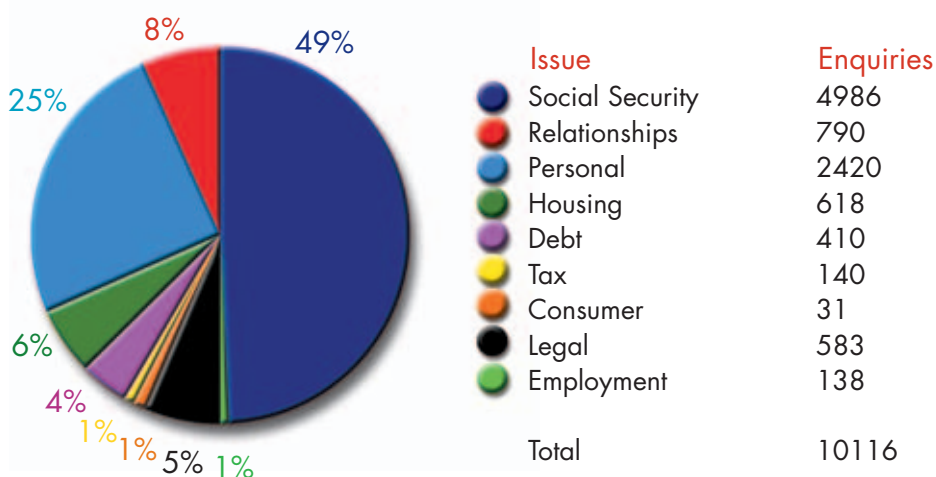
Gingerbread's Advice Service is a fundamental part of the organisation's range of services for lone parents. The Advice Service offers a full-time drop-in advice service in the Belfast and Derry offices and operates a Freephone Advice Line covering all of Northern Ireland. Paid staff and volunteers offer free, confidential and impartial advice to lone parents on a range of issues including relationship issues, benefits, housing, debt, going back to work or education and legal issues.



April 2001 saw the launch of the Freephone Advice Line for lone parents – this unique service allows lone parents access to a wide range of advice and information with confidentiality and quality of advice assured. Over the last year we have built on the success of the launch and consolidated the service, ensuring that we have been able to meet the increased demand for advice that was experienced over the year. We have continued to promote the Helpline not only to individual lone parents but also to the full range of appropriate voluntary and statutory bodies. To ensure that our service is available to as many lone parents as possible, some of whom may feel marginalised or excluded in society – we have worked with as many community and voluntary groups as possible.

More enquiries than ever before

The Advice Service has had its busiest year on record handling 10,116 enquiries, representing a 25% increase on last year. The high level of demand underlines the continuing need for a specialist advice service for lone parents.



It also demonstrates that the Freephone Advice Line operating alongside the drop-in service has been successful in reaching more parents than ever before.

Lone Parent income increased by almost £1,000,000

Almost £1,000,000 in previously unclaimed or under claimed benefits has been identified and claimed by lone parents this year. This extra income generated by the Advice Service brings real improvements to the lives of the families involved and would not have been made available without the dedicated work of the staff and volunteers within the service.

Dedicated Staff and Volunteers

The Community Fund supports the Advice Service; allowing us to employ three full time Advice staff. The high level of demand presented a challenge for the Advice Service. To meet this demand we rely on the time and services of volunteers and placements from the Law faculty at Queens University – the hard work, dedication and enthusiasm of all our volunteers is greatly appreciated and is vitally important to our service.

Achievements

- The Advice Service handled 10,116 enquiries in the last year – the highest ever number of enquiries.
- Lone parents are better off by almost £1,000,000 because of the Advice Service.
- The Freephone Advice Line completed it's first full year of operation.

Feedback

"I am so glad that I phoned you - I didn't know how I was going to get through to-day; I was so worried about this"

"Thank you for listening, it has made all the difference being able to talk to some one who doesn't sound as if they are judging me – it's just hard to manage sometimes and I'm only human"

"My life has changed so much in the last two years – I cannot believe where I am today and I put it all down to that first phone call to Gingerbread back then."

In Conclusion

This has been a busy and successful year for the Advice Service and for the Freephone Helpline. We expect that the high demand for advice will continue to increase and we look forward to the continued development of the service. We believe that this is a vital resource for all lone parents.

Training

Removing the barriers

This has been a very successful year for Gingerbread in terms of the range and quality of training offered to lone parents throughout Northern Ireland. This was confirmed in CENI's external evaluation of Gingerbread's training provision, which was published in January 2002. The report concluded:

'There was a high level of satisfaction with the quality of training provided ... and the support provided by course tutors ... The training provision has made a significant contribution to the quality of life of the participants. This ranged from helping them to get a job (or a better job), through encouraging them to further their education, to improving social skills.'

A total of one hundred and eleven lone parents took part in the various training programmes. Following their training with Gingerbread 71% went on to further education or training and a significant number, 14%, were successful in securing employment.

Choices

During the year, sixty-nine lone parents took part in the Choices programme. As a regionally available programme, Choices continues to provide financial support and encouragement to those who wish to gain qualifications and work experience to improve their employment prospects. The range of courses undertaken by trainees is varied. Examples of some of the courses completed this year include the HND in Behavioural Science, Advanced Diploma in Information Technology, Diploma in Higher Level Administration, Access/Foundation Certificate in Health and Welfare, BTEC in National Childhood Studies and HNC in Hotel and Catering Management. Of those who took part:



- 3 gained qualifications at NVQ level 1 or equivalent,
- 25 at level 2 or equivalent,
- 27 at level 3 or equivalent,
- 13 at level 4 or equivalent
- 1 at level 5 or equivalent.

The advantages of the Choices programme are summed up in the words of Adele, who studied for Double Award AVCE Business and Single Award Computers:

'Any queries I had were dealt with in a quick, professional manner. I can honestly say without Gingerbread's help and assistance I could not have completed my course and achieved the grades I have. The past two years have provided me with a challenge, which I have relished and thoroughly enjoyed. I feel that I have achieved a lot and my grades so far prove this. I hope to achieve my predicted final grade of ABB.'

Adele has been offered places at both the University of Ulster to complete a BA in Business Studies and Queen's University to complete a BA in Management.

On Course

In the past year, eleven lone parents participated in the On Course programme, each gaining the highly respected CIPD Certificate in training practice and becoming fully qualified, and professional trainers. During 2001, CIPD revised and raised the professional standards for the Certificate in Training Practice and we are delighted to announce that CIPD have confirmed On Course meets the new standards. This means that Gingerbread can continue to offer many more lone parents the opportunity to benefit from this excellent programme. In the words of the external moderator for the programme:

'This is a first class course for the Certificate in Training Practice. The students were given first class support. The team has learned from the feedback from candidates and constantly considers ways of improving content etc. A first class centre.'

Steps to Work

This year saw the introduction of Steps to Work, a 13-week IT training programme for those lone parents who wish to return to work but need to develop or update their computer skills. It was made available in both Belfast and Derry and, to date, 30 lone parents have gained a total of 46 qualifications between them in the following courses:

- CLAIT 1
- IBT1 1
- Word Processing 1
- Word Processing 2
- Text Processing
- Initial Text processing
- NIOCN Jobwise level 2

Steps to Work forms part of the New Deal for Lone Parents initiative and in the words of one of the lone parents who took part:

'I have gained a lot more confidence. I have made a lot of new friends. I am more prepared to go out and look for a job.'

Communication

Gingerbread On-line

From a communications point of view, this has been an exciting and productive year for Gingerbread. In the summer of 2001 the website was developed to include more up-to-date and relevant information for lone parents with the addition of features such as a 'News' section and a 'Gingerbread Message Board' facility. This coming year, the website will be worked on extensively to make it even more informative and interactive. Gingerbread is hoping to include sections such as volunteering, recruitment, schools, and membership.



Networking

Throughout the year Gingerbread has been taking part in awareness raising talks with many community groups, other organisations and schools regarding some of the facts and statistics about lone parents and the services that Gingerbread offers to one-parent families. The talks have proved to be very successful, with a marked increase in enquiries, and much positive feedback. The Information Talks have proved to be an excellent way of raising the organisations profile in the local communities of Northern Ireland.



Gingerbread's newsletter 'Network' has been developed for circulation to support group members, individual members, committee members and Gingerbread staff. It features useful information for one-parent families about the work of Gingerbread, other organisations, and up and coming events and dates to note in your diary.

Partnership

Gingerbread worked closely with the Social Security Agency to produce Choices 2 magazine, specifically aimed at lone parents. Choices 2 is packed with inspirational stories of success, essential information on the New Deal for Lone Parents and lone parenting facts. With a distribution of 50,000 copies to lone parents, schools and doctors' surgeries throughout Northern Ireland, Choices 2 proved to be a resounding success from a lone parent perspective. This was evident from the numbers of calls received by Gingerbread following its launch in May 2002. In launching Choices 2 the Minister for Social Development, Nigel Dodds MP, MLA applauded the partnership approach adopted in the production of the magazine and congratulated Gingerbread on its ongoing work with one-parent families.



Regional Development

Development in the West

Gingerbread's Western Regional Centre is now a well-established resource for lone parents in the Derry area and, thanks to funding secured from Londonderry Regeneration Initiative, it can continue to develop and respond to the needs of lone parents locally.

This year saw the launch of Steps to Work, a New Deal for Lone Parents initiative, which provides access to IT qualifications. In June 2002 the first group of seven trainees completed the programme, receiving certificates in CLAIT 1 and IBT 2. The programme proved popular with lone parents, particularly as crèche provision meant that children could be cared for on-site.



The advice service saw an increase in the number of lone parents using the service both in terms of those opting to drop in to see an advice worker as well as those who telephoned the help-line. In all, the advice service dealt with 2196 enquiries this year and generated approximately £250,000 for clients through income maximisation, by identifying unclaimed benefits and grants, securing backdated benefits and representing lone parents at appeal hearings.

Supporting the network of Gingerbread self-help groups has continued. This year committee skills training for groups took place over two residentials in An Creggan in Omagh. The training helps those who hold positions of responsibility within groups (Chairs, Treasurers, Secretaries and Contact Volunteers) to develop their skills in a supportive environment.

Our crèche continues to be very successful, providing over 3,250 childcare sessions for the children of lone parents in the past year.

One of the highlights of the year was a visit by the Minister for Employment and Learning, Carmel Hanna MLA, in July. The Minister had an opportunity to meet the staff and service users and to hear at first hand the challenges we face in maintaining funding for the services.



Development in the North East

This year saw the expansion of activities and events held in the Northern Regional Centre in Ballymena, including the introduction of a weekly 'drop-in' session. The Centre, which is in the centre of the town, has been used as a venue for information days as well as meetings with a wide range of local organisations, including Slemish Family Centre, Ballymena Women's Aid, Sure Start (Newtownabbey) and the Minorities Project, Ballymena.

We have been pleased to see the development of new self-help groups in Ballymena, Magherafelt and Coleraine. The Centre has provided a convenient and central location for all of the Gingerbread groups in the Northern Board area to come together for information exchange and support. Many groups from the area took part in the residential training for office bearers held this year.



Volunteers Week in June 2002 saw the Centre transformed, as practitioners demonstrated alternative therapies, makeovers, flower arranging, picture making and line dancing. The event

was a great success, thanks to those who gave their services, and proved a popular way of saying thank you to all the Gingerbread volunteers who have given so much over the past year.



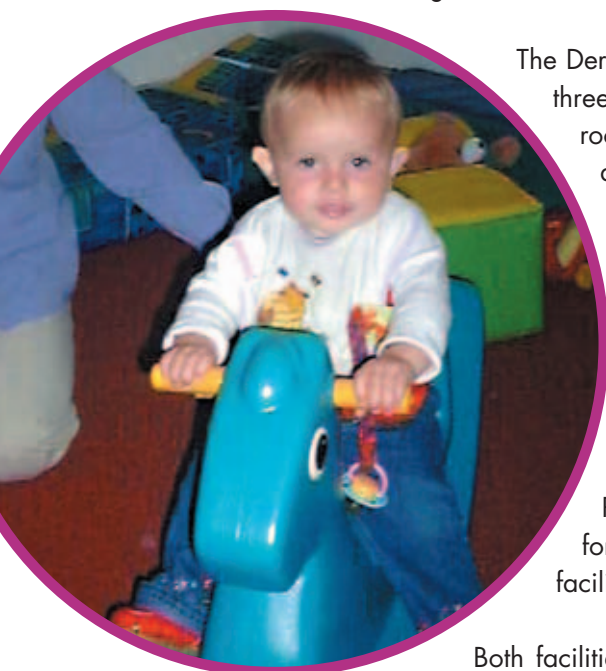
Gingerbread continued to raise the organisation's profile locally by being represented at events such as Coleraine Rural and Urban Network's parenting evening, the official launch of Sure Start Ballykeel and a Ballymoney New Deal open day.

We look forward to the developments of the coming year and are grateful for the continuing support of the Northern Health and Social Services Board.

Children and Young People

Gingerbread's playcare provision!

Gingerbread has been investing in childcare provision for one-parent families for several years in both its Belfast and Derry sites. These projects are designed to address the already identified local needs of lone parents and their children. The projects provide a safe and secure environment for children in a cross community, multi-cultural environment. Children with special needs are also catered for with able-bodied and disabled children getting the opportunity to integrate.



The Derry crèche, situated at Bayview Terrace, has been operating for three years and consists of a brightly decorated playroom, a quiet room and an outdoor play area. On average 65 children, from all sections of the community, benefit from the crèche every week.

The Belfast crèche, which was established twelve years ago, suffered the temporary loss of funding in 2001. This resulted in its closure for over a year. Fortunately this service is once again available with the assistance of the Childhood Fund's PEACE II programme, assistance from Atlantic Philanthropies and Children in Need. Unlike the facility in our Western Regional Centre we do not have an outdoor facility but are fortunate enough to be able to make use of the many parks and facilities located nearby.

Both facilities encourage children to develop skills and communicate more effectively through play activities and interaction with other children and with adults. The children's skills and confidence are developed through various role-play and other creative activities. Gingerbread's investment in childcare provision also enables lone parents to undertake training, which allows them to develop the skills necessary to secure long-term, sustainable employment. This allows families to become economically independent and promotes social inclusion.

July saw the Derry Crèche receive a special visit from Carmel Hanna MLA, Minister for Employment and Learning. This visit caused great excitement for the children as they enjoyed the attention and the photo sessions. We were extremely grateful at being given the opportunity to show the Minister the work we are doing in the North West.



Young people participating

Over the past year, thirty five young people from Omagh, Belfast, Dungannon, Antrim, Bangor, Glengormley, Portadown, Derry, Ballycastle and Limavady have participated in Gingerbread's Teens Project.



The Teens Together programme is a popular yearlong programme, open to teenagers from one-parent families. Taking place over four residential weekends, it offers young people the chance to take part in group activities, outdoor pursuits and personal development, culminating in the completion of the Youth Achievement Award. Thanks to funding from both the Community Fund and the Youth Council of Northern Ireland, it has been possible to increase the number of residential weekends held this year from three to four.

This year's participants took part in a wide range of outdoor pursuit activities, including canoeing, archery, ropes course and aerial zip line, banana boating, bouldering, and orienteering. They have also participated in a range of workshops on issues such as drug awareness, bullying, communication, homelessness, becoming independent, and gender issues.

The Teens Network, Gingerbread's young volunteers programme, has worked very hard over the past year to produce three editions of the Teens Scene newsletter. They have participated in public consultations on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland as well as the proposed Commissioner for Children and Young People and have responded to the consultation on physical punishment in the home. They are currently concentrating their efforts on the development of an interactive website for young people and hope to recruit more young people into the Network to help with this project.

This year's participants have been very positive about their experience of the Teens Project. In their own words:

"A lot of new friends were made"

"I felt like I fitted right in"

"I have learned how to do new things"

"I have done stuff I probably would never do"

"I made new friends and learned about the effects of drugs and had an excellent time"



Listening to young people. Asking the questions?

As well as continuing with the ever-popular programme for young people, the project has been successful this year in attracting support from the Youth Council for NI to carry out research into the needs and circumstances of young people from one-parent families in Northern Ireland. The research, which will be carried out by the University of Ulster, will also aim to suggest ways in which these needs might be met, and the findings will inform the future development of services and policy within Gingerbread. The results will also be shared with a wide variety of organisations aiming to develop good practice in respect of young people from one-parent families.

Treasurer's Report

This has been another very busy and successful year for Gingerbread. We have many existing and new projects, which will benefit lone parents.

These would not be possible without the support of our funders from both the statutory and voluntary sector. We would like to thank them for their continued support, which is vital in sustaining the support and services provided to lone parents and their children.

Statutory Funders

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety – Family and Social Policy Unit; Northern Health and Social Services Board; Department of Employment and Learning – European Unit; Foyle Health and Social Services Trust; Department of Social Development – Social Security Agency; Department of Environment – Londonderry Regeneration Initiative, Youth Council (NI)

European Union: Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation – Intermediary Funding Bodies

Community Foundation NI; Northern Ireland Pre-School Play Group Association – Childhood Fund; PROTEUS; The Training for Women Network

Charitable Trusts

The Community Fund; BBC Children In Need Appeal; Lloyds TSB; The Co-op Community Award; Atlantic Philanthropies

We also take this opportunity to thank the many individuals and groups who have supported and encouraged us throughout the year that are too numerous to mention. We would also like to thank the donating public who contributed to the fundraising events we undertook throughout the year and to those who made anonymous donations.

As with previous years we have maintained a high standard of financial accountability and we would like to thank Rachel McAree and her team for their work in maintaining our financial systems. We would also thank our auditors McKeague & Morgan for their handling of the annual audit.

A summary of income and expenditure is included in this report.



Mary Boyce.

Mary Boyce
Honourary Treasurer

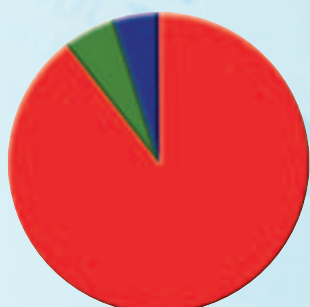
Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2002

	Total Funds 2002 £
Income & Expenditure	
Incoming Resources	
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	109,208
European Social Fund (net)	124,285
Training for Women Network – Project 2	(379)
Department Social Development - GAP Funding	30,512
Proteus (Belfast)	2,427
Proteus (Derry)	(2,182)
Department of Employment and Learning (T&EA)	30,021
Northern Health and Social Services Board	20,758
Londonderry Regeneration Initiative	31,800
Community Fund – Advice	67,847
Community Fund – Youth	39,143
Youth Council (NI)	8,000
NIPPA – Childhood Fund (Derry)	1,725
DHSSPS (Crèche) – GAP Funding	13,899
Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust – Project 1	(24)
Department of Social Development – SSA	17,000
Department of Social Development - Choice 2	10,059
ENOPF	10,942
Voluntary Income	15,734
Total Incoming Resources	530,775
Resources Expended	
Direct Charitable Expenditure	496,539
Fundraising and Publicity	24,859
Management and Administration of the Charity	29,885
Total Resources Expended	551,283
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for year end 31 March 2002	(20,508)



Statement of Financial Activity

	£	%
European Sources	213,005	40%
Trust/Charitable/Private Sources	122,724	23%
Government Sources	195,046	37%



Expenditure 2001 – 2002

	£	%
Fundraising and Publicity	24,859	4.5%
Direct Charitable	496,539	90%
Management and Administration	29,885	5.5%

Notes

Notes



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