



praxis
caring about mental health



challenge
caring about brain injury
and learning disability



respond
caring about older people



The Northern
Ireland Agoraphobia
& Anxiety Society



a charity at the centre of caring
Praxis
care group

annual report 2004

Chair & Executive Director

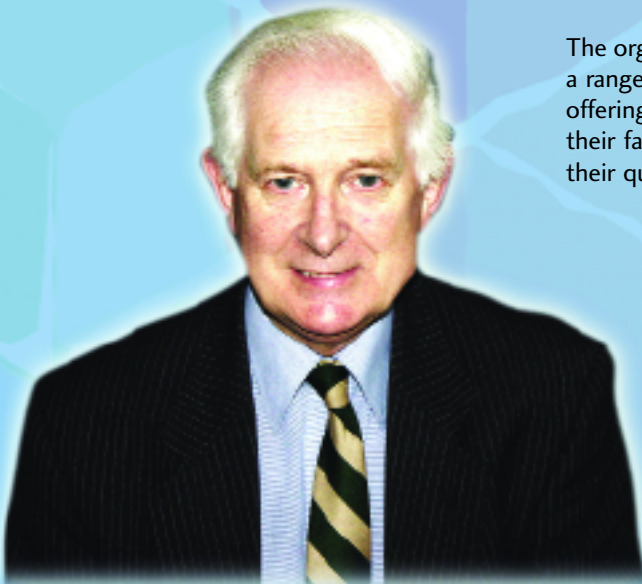


Nevin Ringland - Executive Director

This Annual Report covers a year, which we feel, will prove to be highly significant in shaping the long-term future of Praxis Care Group as well as the consolidation of the merger of Praxis Mental Health, Challenge and Respond into Praxis Care Group. It is therefore with great satisfaction that we review the past year's work of Praxis Care Group. Central to the successful developments and continued improvements in our services has been the dedication and commitment of our staff, board members and volunteers.

Supporting individuals with learning disabilities, brain injury, mental ill health and older people (including those with dementia) is an emotive experience, in particular, for families and carers. It is the organisation's aim to offer tailored care and support to each person that best meet specific needs. Our models of care, organisational culture and the attitude of our staff ensure that our aim is being achieved.

The organisation is now supporting over 1000 individuals with a range of diverse and complex personal health needs. We are offering better care opportunities to children and adults and their families, greater independence and also improvements in their quality of life.



Bill Canning - Chair

In the past year the organisation has taken steps to increase the impact of our input in a number of key areas. These include the development of services in England and the Republic of Ireland as well as expansion of services in Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man.

During the course of the year the Chief Executive has chaired the review of all hospital and community services for people with dementia and older people over 65 years old with mental ill health.

We continue to improve the quality of care we offer, by placing each individual service user at the centre of our care and support processes, and we have enabled this through building a robust support structure, and effective and efficient management systems. These systems are constantly under review to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of a growing and forward-looking organisation.

The Praxis Care Group strap-line – a charity at the centre of caring – provides the theme for this year's Annual Review – "caring about". It reflects the focus of the Programmes of Care on changing the lives of more individuals and groups by researching their needs and providing individual care services that best meets those needs.

"We continue to improve the quality of the care we offer, by placing each individual service user at the centre of our care and support processes." - Executive Director

Caring About Adults

There have been a number of key achievements in this area. Central to our strategy has been increasing the services we provide geographically to reach more adults requiring our support.

The organisation undertook a major exercise managing the process from transitional housing benefit funding to “supporting people” funding. This impacted on a sizeable number of our service users, enabling us to de-register four of our care homes in mental health and providing a more empowering environment that promotes independent living.

We encourage more service users to benefit from ownership of the services they use, to build self-esteem, confidence, and enable greater social engagement within their community.

New work has involved developing a project in Manchester, through funding from Supporting People and Manchester Joint Commission Team (Mental Health). The project will offer twenty independent dwellings to individuals with severe and enduring mental illness, who are presently accommodated outside Manchester and who wish to return to the city.

Connaught House is a new facility in Newry to accommodate and support people with alcohol related dementia. The unique features of the scheme are designed to enable people to live more independent lives and prevent inappropriate admissions to nursing homes.

At Conlig the organisation has established a three-bed home within the community for adults with learning disabilities and challenging behaviours. We responded to the lack of facilities for people coming out of a hospital environment, and two staff provide twenty-four hour support.

Challenge has served up a recipe for success in the partnership with the Award Winning Verbal Arts Centre’s “Le Bistro”. There was a need for catering for functions and tourists visiting Derry’s Historic Walled City, and a need for meaningful work experience for people with learning disabilities. The project started in 2002 with limited staff and trainee participation. In 2003 with successful EU, Community Fund and Executive Fund grants, more learning disabled trainees were introduced and additional trainee development plans produced. As a result there has been an increase in sales at Le Bistro. Our disabled service users have gained experience and social skills and have become contributing members of the local community.

Our supported accommodation projects in Coleraine, Ballyclare, Lisnaskea, Portadown and Lurgan celebrated their tenth anniversary. Some of the individuals benefiting from these projects have come out of hospital and others are from the local area who required more support and better accommodation. Support for residents is provided twenty-four hours a day.

Another significant development has been the securing of a “home response” contract in Coleraine, following a pilot scheme and a successful tendering process. This initiative offers support to people with mental ill health in their own homes, enabling them to live independently within the community. Services include engaging in social activities, monitoring medication, mental health and well being, and developing domestic skills.

Due to our experience in day skills and work skills projects, the organisation took over the management of The Secret Garden, a five-acre walled garden horticultural project that is part of Hillsborough Castle.

The vision for the Secret Garden is to develop a project that will create an environment for individuals to develop their skills in horticulture, bakery and catering within an environment conducive to their growth and development.

During the year we successfully negotiated the acquisition of four residential homes in Kesh & Enniskillen from a private provider. This has enabled Challenge to develop services in the West of Northern Ireland and ensure over 60 people with learning disabilities are given the best quality of care whilst remaining in their own community.

"I really enjoy working in the coffee shop and have gained my NVQ in cooking and Basic Hygiene Certificate while working here." - Service User



Caring About Young People

Funding from YESIP and the Northern Board enabled Praxis Mental Health to establish "Planet B" in Ballymena. The project is a Day Activity opportunity for young people with complex mental health needs, and it currently serves 18 young people with a range of needs including substance misuse, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse. The Centre is run on clubhouse principles and has a strong 'user led' focus.

September 2002 saw the commencement of a new residential service on the Isle of Man for 5 eighteen year olds, with a range of complex needs, who needed to move on to

independent living. This is provided in partnership with the Department of Health & Social Services, Isle of Man.

The past year has also seen the successful launch of a Young People Leaving Care befriending project in the Northern Health Board area. This is an innovative new project providing support to young people moving into adulthood. Through fun activities, laughter and friendship we hope to make this experience a positive one.

"The secret garden has allowed me to make new friends and learn new skills. I pot flowers in the summer and make wreaths in the winter." - Service User



Caring About older People

While this area has constituted a smaller proportion of the organisation's work over the last few years, our work with older people is now increasing.

We continue to provide a housing support service to residents in Clements Court, Derry - a housing scheme managed by Choice Housing Association, that consists of 30 supported living houses, 13 of which are occupied by Respond service users. Examples of support for clients include daily monitoring, domestic support and advocacy on the client's behalf.

The organisation successfully tendered with Choice Housing Association to develop a housing with care scheme in Lisburn which consists of 15 two-bedroomed bungalows. This service will commence in June 2004.

Caring About Partnerships

Partnerships create a learning environment, cross-fertilisation of ideas, and a shared way of doing things. Links have been created with The Irish Wheelchair Association, to form partnerships for joint tendering for brain injury services in the Republic of Ireland, and with St. John of God to develop best practice through individual person-centred planning and positive programming.

We are involved in Partnerships with:

- Health & Social Services Trusts
- Housing Association
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Service Users
- Carers & Families

These partnerships are all fundamental to how we deliver our services.

"Here the accommodation allows us to spend the rest of our days together as a married couple which means a lot to us."

- Service User



Caring About Children

The past year has witnessed some significant and exciting advances in the nature and range of the services that the Challenge programme of care has been able to offer to children and adults with brain injury and learning disability, including individuals with behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities.

Rainbow Lodge is a new 8 place Children's Respite Home in Ballymena. It is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland, where children with severe learning disabilities and also severe challenging behaviours now have access to respite facilities outside the hospital environment. Carers and children have welcomed this new "home from home".

Beechfield Respite home has increased its bed numbers from five to six. In reality this means that 15 more children and their families will have the opportunity to benefit from short-term respite care with overnight accommodation.

Melton and Glenfield Children's Respite Homes in Leicestershire, England, have been restructured in the past year and improvements have been made in systems and processes. This was a credit to the staff group who were involved in and embraced this significant change, to benefit the children and carers involved.

"Respite is a very important part of our family life. This year was the first time that we had a foreign holiday without Sean. The staff have been pleasant and friendly. Our son enjoys the close attention he receives and we can spend a short time with our other children" - Parent.



Caring About Volunteering

While a lot of our work is carried out by staff, Praxis Care Group relies heavily on volunteers for the befriending service that we provide. This is a vital support network to people who are isolated or live on the margin of society due to their experience of mental illness, learning disability or old age. Our volunteers provide a baseline of support to over 200 people throughout Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man.

In the past year Praxis Mental Health has secured funding and established a service for Volunteer Befriending through financial support from the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England. The Isle of Man Community Mental Health Team identified the need, and Praxis Mental Health established a Befriending Scheme for people with mental health problems.

In the past year we launched the "Out of Sight, Out of Mind" campaign, to raise awareness of the unseen aspects of mental illness and received substantial funding support from The Lloyds TSB Foundation for Northern Ireland, Ulster Bank Staff Charity Fund, Northern Bank and The Nationwide Foundation. This enabled us to improve our recruitment,

training and support to our volunteers, some of whom have been with us for over 15 years.

The Foyle Befriending service has established over 30 volunteer befriended matches with individuals with learning disabilities. In the past year Challenge appointed a Community Co-ordinator in partnership with Foyle Trust, to support people with learning disabilities in Derry. This involves, organising transport and volunteers to enable a person with a learning disability to meet with friends in a social setting. The service enables individuals to interact with their community and thereby improve their self-esteem and confidence.

In Northern Ireland the Praxis Care Group Annual Befriending Awards ceremony was hosted by BBC Personality Gerry Anderson and the good news story about the friendship that had been struck up over many years by a volunteer and her friend was aired on the BBC Radio 4 Programme "Home Truths", with John Peel.

"I feel very fortunate that I have been able to help. I have gained a friend for life." - Befriender



Caring About Quality & Training

The organisation is committed to striving for excellence in all aspects of its work. We have sought to improve our quality standards over the past year. We have improved services through ongoing evaluation and monitoring by the research department, to ensure evidence based best practice permeates our services.

We have also improved support services by investing in a range of Health & Safety initiatives and financial and care audits. The appointment of a dedicated Supporting People Officer ensures the organisation meets the standard of excellence required in the Performance Assessment framework. The appointment of a dedicated facilitator for administration will ensure robust estates

management and cost effective purchasing.

The number and range of training opportunities offered in the past year reflects the commitment that the organisation has made to continually improve and equip staff with the necessary skills and knowledge. Our aim is to provide better skills to our staff to impact positively on the quality of service provided to our clients. Training is also part of a career development programme that Praxis Care Group offers to staff within the organisation.

In the last year a considerable number of staff obtained new qualifications, including eight NVQ Level 2 Awards, seven NVQ Assessor Awards and three Diplomas in Social Work.

Caring About People with Phobias

The Northern Ireland Agoraphobia and Anxiety Society continues to receive management and support services from Praxis Care Group. A Community Fund three-year grant was awarded in the past year, to develop a telephone help-line service, a 12-week training programme and a network of self-help groups across Northern Ireland. Trusts and Boards continue to support the sustainability of the charity, and fundraising

will continue to assist with the development of services.

NIAAS continues to provide a much needed helpline, with over 200 calls received per month and 6 self-help groups supported throughout Northern Ireland. Our 'No Fear' campaign has helped to raise the profile of this organisation's work, with funding received from Shorts Bombardier and Lloyds TSB Foundation.

"Due to the patience and understanding of the group I am learning how to cope with my anxiety and I know anything I say at the group is confidential" - Service User



Caring About Communications & Fundraising

The organisation improved our external communications by launching our website, www.praxiscaregroup.org.uk and allowing visitors the opportunity to learn more about the range of activities we undertake. Over £75,000 in-kind measurable media coverage has been generated in print and broadcast media, highlighting our services and relevant issues. A number of projects benefited from a revamp of their marketing materials to promote volunteering or raise awareness and an understanding of their work.

Internal communications were improved with the launch of our service user newsletter "4U", which offers a snapshot of views and activities across the organisation.

The Corporate Club is a vehicle for companies to give in-kind or donate funds to support a

chosen area of our work. Members Business Eye magazine, Biz Net and City TV set an example for other businesses to follow by providing in-kind support totalling over £80,000.

Forestside Shopping Centre adopted Praxis Care Group as their nominated charity for the year and we benefited from a related fundraising and awareness campaign. A trek to Guatemala led by Belfast Telegraph Business Editor Nigel Tilson generated media coverage and funds.

Challenge Children's Homes benefited from a campaign supported by Knock Travel, which targeted 500 businesses with a branded mug and cookies made by our service users with brain injury and learning disabilities. The "Take the Biscuit" Cookie Company campaign generated front page media coverage and raised funds for the provision of services.

"Publicity is the lifeblood of fundraising. We greatly appreciate our donors' gifts - Individuals, Companies, Trusts and Foundations - and the real difference it makes to the service users."

- Assistant Director



Caring About Staff & The future

Praxis Care Group staff members are a dynamic and focused group of individuals that provide care and leadership, move with current ideas and thinking,

and through their own knowledge and experience, seek to influence thinking on the nature and types of care being offered to our clients.

Caring About carers

Carers want to be involved, want to be valued and want to secure the best care as quickly as possible for their loved one. Carers play an important role in all aspects of our service provision, particularly in domiciliary care services, and we are developing more structured approaches to providing effective support for carers.

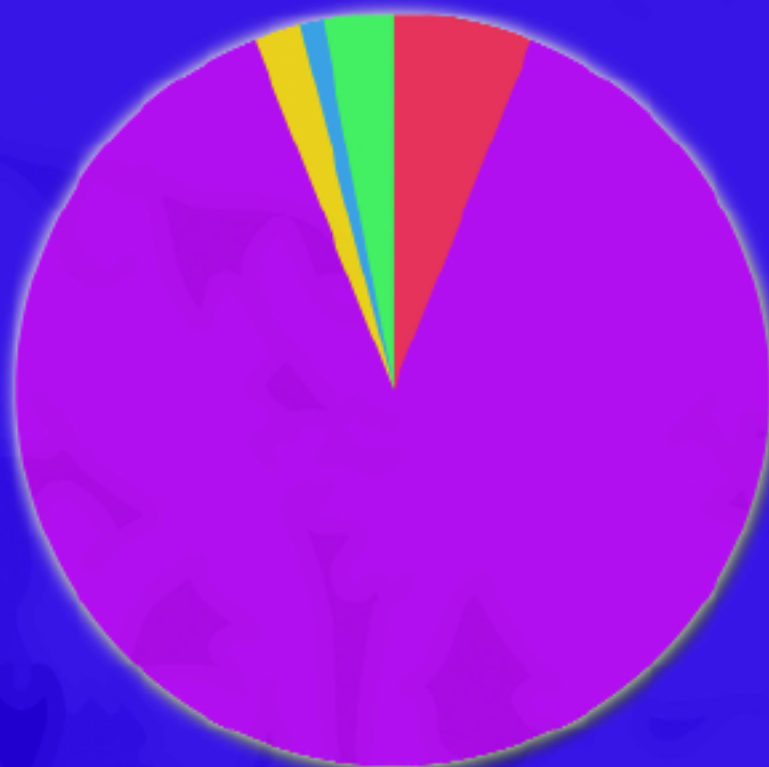
The Carers Advocacy Project in West Belfast is now in its third

year, with 23 people receiving advice and guidance from our Carer Advocacy Project Worker. We have started to develop a range of support services by addressing some of the following issues: access to mental health or social care professional on request; assessment of carer's own needs; ability to get a break from caring; explanation of the mental health problem facing the person they are caring for; information on treatments; alternative treatments and their effects; and information about what support will be forthcoming when the carer is no longer able to provide care.

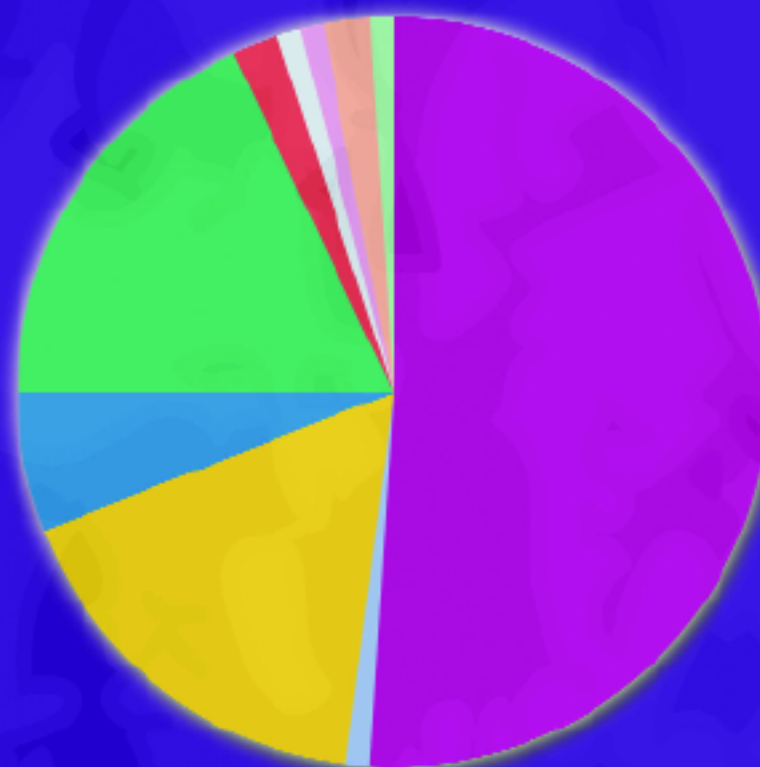
"As a carer I appreciate the professional backup offered - including information to help make informed choices and the offer of support when I am no longer able to provide care." - Carer



Expenditure Year Ended 31 March 2004



Income Year Ended 31 March 2004



- 88% Service Delivery
- 2% Fundraising & Marketing
- 1% Research & Service Quality Assessment
- 3% Training of Staff, Volunteers & Vocational training of Service users
- 6% Management & Administration

- 51% Health Trusts
- 1% Health Boards
- 17% Supporting People Funding
- 6% Housing Benefit
- 18% Regional Councils
- 2% Dept of Health & Social Services
- 1% Service Users Funding
- 1% Client Benefits
- 2% Fundraising & Charitable Activities
- 1% Asset Disposals

Summary accounts

The Directors approved the full statutory accounts on 21st October 2004. They, together with this annual report, will be sent to the Registrar of Companies. The accounts have been audited by BDO Stoy Hayward, Registered Auditors, and received an unqualified opinion. These summarized accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. They are extracted from the annual accounts and these, including the auditor's report and the Directors annual report, are available from Praxis Care Group central offices.

MARCH 2004

PRAXIS SCHEMES

PROJECT NAME	DESCRIPTION	NO OF PLACES
North Down & Ards	Home Response	180 hrs
	Supported Accommodation	15
West Belfast	Supported Accommodation	16
Lisnaskea	Supported Accommodation	13
Banbridge	Supported Accommodation	16
Portadown	Home Response	100 hrs
	Supported Accommodation	16
Lurgan	Supported Accommodation	21
Newry	Home Response	100 hrs
	Supported Accommodation	17
Antrim	Supported Accommodation	15
Ballyclare	Supported Accommodation	16
Magherafelt	Supported Accommodation	16
Larne	Supported Accommodation	6
	Home Response	30 hrs
Coleraine	Flat Cluster	14
	Home Response	100
Derry City	Supported Accommodation	12
No 12	Education/Social Drop-In Centre	Varies
Befriending Service	Provincewide	120 matches
Carers' Advocacy Project	Support service for carers	N/A
Isle of Man	Home Response	250 hrs
	Supported Accommodation	5
NHSSB Young People		
Befriending Service	Focusing on Young People Leaving Care	15
Manchester	Supported accommodation	

RESPOND SCHEMES

PROJECT NAME	DESCRIPTION	NO OF PLACES
Clements Court, Derry	Supported Living	13

CHALLENGE SCHEMES

PROJECT NAME	DESCRIPTION	NO OF PLACES
Kimberley House, Newtownards	Residential Care	13
80 Upper Movilla Road, Newtownards	Residential Care	3
15 Main Street, Conlig	Residential Care	3
42 Forest Hill, Conlig	Supported Living	3
Kimberley Mews, Newtownards	Supported Living	4
Kimberley House		
Workskills, Newtownards	Workskills Training Project	26
Newtownards Domiciliary	Home Response	60 hours/week
Forest Lodge, Portadown	Residential Care	6
Little Forest, Portadown	Residential Care	3
Forest Lodge Workskills, Portadown	Workskills Training Project	18
Beechfield Respite Unit	Respite Care	34
Beechfield Domiciliary	Home Response	145 hours/week
Derry Cookie Company	Workskills Training Project	10
Le Bistro Project, Derry	Workskills Training Project	10
Derry Age Appropriate Day Centre	Day Care	18
Foyle Befriending, Derry	Befriending Service	20 matches
Glenfield Project	Respite Care	25
Melton Project	Respite Care	25
Mantlin Court, Kesh	Residential Care	17
Mantlin Cottage, Kesh	Residential Care	9
Creamery House, Kesh	Residential Care	11
Galliagh/Stepaside	Residential/ Respite Care	24
Hugomont House, Ballymena	Respite Care	28
Glenroyd House, Isle of Man	Residential Care	5

PRAXIS CARE GROUP

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