

**START STRONG LIMITED**

**Report and Financial Statements**

**for the year ended**

**31 December 2014**

**(A company limited by guarantee  
not having a share capital)**

---

# START STRONG LIMITED

---

## REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2014

CONTENTS	Page
DIRECTORS AND OTHER INFORMATION	2
REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS	3 - 13
DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT	14
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT	15 - 16
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	17
BALANCE SHEET	18
CASH FLOW STATEMENT	19
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	20 - 24

---

## **START STRONG LIMITED**

---

### **DIRECTORS AND OTHER INFORMATION**

---

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Mr. Tony Crooks (Chair)  
Ms. Karen McDonnell (Treasurer)  
Ms. Nóirín Coghlan  
Ms. Nóirín Hayes  
Ms. Teresa Heeney  
Mr. Noel Kelly  
Ms. Denise McCormilla  
Ms. Orla O'Connor  
Ms. June Tinsley  
Ms. Orla Tuohy

#### **SECRETARY AND REGISTERED OFFICE**

Ms. Ciairín de Buis  
Basement  
33 Upper Merrion Street  
Dublin 2

#### **AUDITORS**

Mazars  
Harcourt Centre  
Block 3  
Harcourt Road  
Dublin 2

#### **SOLICITORS**

Barry J. Rafferty Solicitors  
77 Sir John Rogersons Quay  
Dublin 2

#### **BANKERS**

Bank of Ireland  
College Green  
Dublin 2

KBC Bank Ireland plc  
Sandwith Street  
Dublin 2

---

# **START STRONG LIMITED**

---

## **REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS**

---

The directors present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2014.

### **Structure, Governance and Management**

Start Strong is a company limited by guarantee and does not have share capital. It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association. It was incorporated originally as an alliance of organisations and individuals, as the Irish Childcare Policy Network (ICPN) under the Companies Acts 1963 to 2006 on 21st April 2009.

On 17th November 2009 the name was changed to Start Strong Limited, by a Special Resolution of the company and with approval of the Registrar of Companies.

Start Strong Limited is a non-profit campaigning organisation, governed by members of the Board. Board members, who are non-executive, have a diverse range of relevant expertise including expertise in early care and education, family supports, advocacy, academic and governance. The Board meets at least 6 times a year and has responsibility for the business of the organisation. The Board is supported by a board committee structure. Board committees in place during 2014 were a Human Resources Committee, a Nominations Committee and a Finance Committee. Throughout 2014, Start Strong continued to update and review our Staff Handbook and Guidelines and other internal governance guidelines and procedures.

The Board delegates the day-to-day management of Start Strong to a staff team.

### **Start Strong Staff Team**

Ciairín de Buis (Director, and Company Secretary)

Toby Wolfe (Policy & Research Officer)

Lorraine Whitty (Administrator)

Tressan McCambridge (Communications and Campaigns Officer (part-time), joined April 2014)

### **Funders**

Start Strong is funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies, The Katharine Howard Foundation and The Community Foundation for Ireland. All three funding organisations have committed to fund Start Strong from 2012-2015, at current levels. Start Strong is very grateful to these organisations for their generosity and for the level of assurance this commitment provides us about our future as a fixed-term campaign organisation.

---

# START STRONG LIMITED

---

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

---

### **Vision and Mission**

Start Strong is committed to advancing high quality care and education as a right for all young children in Ireland. Our advocacy is built on clear evidence of the benefits this brings for children, for the economy and for society.

Our vision is that all children in Ireland are valued and supported through quality care and education.

Our mission is to promote informed policy development and increased investment in early care and education.

### **Start Strong's Achievements and Activities in 2014**

The achievements and activities of Start Strong for 2014 have been summarised in this overview of our work. The overview highlights our work, within the framework of our strategic objectives. This format, as well as showing our strategic approach in our day-to-day work, demonstrates the progress we made during the year and illustrates the challenges we face. Some areas of work span more than one of our strategic aims, where this is the case they have been included in the most relevant section.

#### **Strategic Aim 1: National Early Years Strategy**

##### **To achieve Government commitment to the development of a national plan for children's early years**

Over the course of 2014 three different Ministers for Children and Youth Affairs were in place: Frances Fitzgerald, TD was replaced by Charles Flanagan TD in May 2014, who in turn was replaced by Dr. James Reilly TD in July 2014. Start Strong had spent considerable time developing and building a relationship with Minister Fitzgerald and her advisers, and her cabinet move led to challenges for Start Strong. Before we had been in a position to develop such a relationship with Minister Flanagan he was replaced by Minister Reilly. Start Strong has since developed a positive working relationship with Minister Reilly and his advisers.

Similarly, the Department of Education and Skills saw a change in Minister with Ruairí Quinn TD being replaced by Jan O'Sullivan TD in July 2014.

Over a similar time period the Department of Children and Youth Affairs has had significant changes at a senior administrative level. Jim Breslin, who had been Secretary General, left the Department in September 2014 to be replaced by Acting Secretary General Liz Canavan, who in turn was replaced by Fergal Lynch as Secretary General in January 2015.

Inevitably this has had significant impact on Start Strong's working relationship with the Departments, at both a political and administrative level. However, we have continued to build strong positive working relationships with both Ministers and their advisers, as well as the senior management staff within the Departments.

---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

---

- **Better Outcomes Brighter Futures**

*'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020'* was launched by the government in April 2014. An Advisory Council, with 3 representative strands, was established as part of its implementation structures.

Start Strong was elected as one of the three representative organisations in the Early Years strand to the Advisory Council for *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures:- the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020* in July 2014. The first meeting of the Advisory Council was held in November 2014 with a further meeting in December. It is not yet clear what the role or impact of the Advisory Council will be, although Start Strong will play as active a role as possible.

- **National Early Years Strategy**

Throughout 2014 the Minister and Department of Children and Youth Affairs stated that a draft National Early Years Strategy was being prepared, and would be launched in the relatively near future. However, a (draft) National Early Years Strategy has not yet been published.

During the year Start Strong raised the necessity of consultation on a draft strategy, through public statements, requests for parliamentary questions and directly with Minister Reilly and Department officials. At our conference (December 2014) Minister Reilly confirmed that there will be a focused consultation on a draft strategy. We have also raised the fact that there has been no consultation to-date with young children as part of either the National Early Years Strategy or Policy Framework development.

- ***'Childcare' - Business or Profession? Research project & Conference:***

Our research report entitled *'Childcare' - Business or Profession?* was published at our conference in December 2014. The theme for this piece of work arose from Taoiseach Enda Kenny's contribution to the Dáil the day after the Prime Time programme *A Breach of Trust* was broadcast when he spoke about the need for childcare to be regarded as a profession rather than a business or sector. The report comprised an analysis of Ireland's mixed-market model of childcare by Professors Helen Penn and Eva Lloyd of the International Centre for the Study of the Mixed Economy of Childcare (ICMEC) in the University of East London; an overview of policy developments in Ireland past and present by Professor Nóirín Hayes; an analysis of Ireland's market model today and recommendations towards moving to a new model of public services.

The Conference was over-subscribed, reflecting the interest in the issue. Conference speakers included Professors Helen Penn and Nóirín Hayes, Brian Lee (Director of Quality Assurance, TUSLA, The Child & Family Agency), Gary O' Donnchadha, (Deputy Chief Inspector, Department of Education & Skills) and Margaret Rogers (National Manager, Better Start - the National Early Years Quality Support Service). Both the Ministers for Children and Youth Affairs and Education and Skills also attended and spoke at the conference.

---

# START STRONG LIMITED

---

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

---

### Strategic Aim 2: Retain current investment levels

#### The retention of the current level of investment in the area

Start Strong has consistently raised the fact that public investment in early years services amounts to less than 0.2% of GDP. The published OECD figures (0.5%) include expenditure on infant classes. Our analysis has been accepted politically, and has appeared in media coverage, parliamentary questions and Oireachtas debates. This has been useful in highlighting the low levels of public investment, and the need to significantly increase public expenditure to simply reach average OECD expenditure.

- **Budget 2015**

Our pre-budget submission (Budget 2015) focused on the importance and impact of high-quality within early years provision. Budget 2015 was an opportunity to commence an ambitious programme of investment in early care and education increasing public investment levels to OECD averages. Our advocacy work focused particularly on preventing the introduction of childcare tax credits (while promoting the subsidisation of places), and a quality audit. While childcare tax credits were not introduced, neither was a quality audit.

- **Direct investment**

Throughout 2014 Start Strong consistently advocated the advantage of direct investment, linked to and conditional on high-quality, as a mechanism to move towards high-quality, affordable early care and education. This was reflected in our submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children, our *The Double Dividend: Childcare that's affordable and high-quality* publications, our *Pre-Budget Submission and Budget Analysis*, our 'Childcare' - *Business or Profession?* conference and report as well as media engagements and political lobbying throughout the year.

---

# START STRONG LIMITED

---

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

---

### Strategic Aim 3: Raise public awareness

To raise much greater levels of public awareness of the benefits of high- quality early care and education and the need to invest in its development

- **Media Profile**

Throughout 2014 Start Strong worked to ensure media coverage of policy issues in early care and education in Ireland. This includes focusing on issues such as quality within early years services, the lack of regulation of childminders, the high-costs to parents of childcare as well as problems and issues with the infrastructure (such as the early years inspectorate) and the low levels of public investment.

Start Strong participated in a range of radio programmes including Newstalk Lunchtime, Newstalk Breakfast Programme, the Moncrieff Show, The Last Word on Today FM and various current affairs programmes on Radio na Gaeltachta as well as a significant number of local radio stations. We also participated in the Prime Time follow up programme to *A Breach of Trust* and appeared on the Midday programme on TV3. Start Strong was quoted/interviewed by national newspapers (Irish Times, Irish Examiner, Irish Independent and Daily Mail) a number of times during the year covering a range of issues such as affordability, quality, problems with the pre-school inspectorate and our pre-budget submission. We wrote an Op-Ed piece for the journal.ie and featured in articles in Nursery World and Woman's Way. Start Strong also provided background information to a number of journalists, including for Prime Time programmes and *Today* with Seán O'Rourke on RTÉ. We also significantly increased our social media profile with greater activity and interaction on our social media platforms as well as ensuring our own website was updated regularly.

Much of this increase in media profile reflects our growing reputation and recognition of our work over the previous 4 years – however, the appointment of a part-time Communications and Campaigns Officer was also extremely significant. Having an in-house dedicated resource, rather than relying an agency meant Start Strong could have a much greater media presence than previously.

- **E-newsletter**

Throughout 2014 Start Strong continued to analyse national and international research, reports and publications and highlight policy developments in Ireland and elsewhere. This work was reflected in our e-newsletter which had 8 editions in 2014 (including a special edition focused on quality and affordability in July 2014), and more than 1,300 subscribers at the end of 2014. We also started a new feature in our newsletter - a "Political update" section highlighting relevant political developments and debates. This reflects the increasingly political focus that Start Strong will take in the final stage of our campaign.

During the summer (July 2014) we included a survey within our newsletter, with the intention of establishing what readers wanted and improving our newsletter. A very small number (76) completed the survey. Of those, almost 90% thought the newsletter is great or good, 97% thought the length of the articles were just right, 94% found the content very useful or useful.

By the end of 2014 our e-newsletter has now grown to more than 1,300 subscribers; a reflection on how Start Strong is regarded as a credible source of information and advocacy in relation to children's early years.



---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

---

#### Strategic Aim 4: Develop a wider coalition

**To develop an active, vocal and wider coalition of organisations and individuals actively campaigning for the development of early care and education, in particular parents.**

Start Strong worked collaboratively with our supporters, other national organisations and networks seeking to improve children's early care and education in Ireland. We have consulted internally when developing policy positions on particular issues, seeking to ensure that the valuable knowledge and experience of our supporters was reflected in our advocacy work. During the year Start Strong continued in our membership of and/or participation in networks such as the Prevention and Early Intervention Network, the Transatlantic Forum on Inclusive Early Years, the Parenting Special Interest Group and others.

This section of the report highlights a number of key areas of our collaborative work –

- **Family Leave**

Start Strong joined with the National Women's Council of Ireland and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to influence the planned *Family Leave Bill* committed to by government. The three organisations met with the relevant Minister and departmental officials to discuss the government's plans for legislation in the area. We hosted a Family Leave Seminar in September which included contributions from Prof. Peter Moss and the Minister for Justice and Equality as well as the junior Minister responsible for the legislation the Minister for Equality and New Communities. An op-ed piece was published in the Irish Times on the day of the seminar, highlighting how poor Ireland's family leave policies are relative to other European countries. Start Strong continues to work with NWC and ICTU to try and advance policy in the area.

- **Childminding**

During 2014, Start Strong continued to work with Childminding Ireland to seek to include childminders within the regulatory framework. We wrote a joint letter with Childminding Ireland to all Oireachtas members highlighting the lack of progress in the regulation of childminders. We liaised with Childminding Ireland at key stages in legislation, to ensure shared messages in our lobbying. We also raised the issue during our presentations to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children in 2014 as well as ongoing lobbying of Oireachtas members during the year.

- **Parents Panel**

During the year, Start Strong hosted 'refresher training' with members of our parents panel, to ensure they had media skills necessary to respond to journalists inquiries as they arose. A member of the panel also spoke at our Family Leave Seminar (held jointly with NWC and ICTU) in September. However, despite much time and effort in identifying and training parents, it has often not been possible to fulfil media requests for parents due to their limited availability and short media deadlines.

- **Supporters**

The number of Supporters continues to grow – at the end of 2014 we had 61 organisational supporters, and 62 individual supporters – the range and scope of our Supporters lends to our advocacy and strengthens our voice when seeking to impact on policy change in the area.

---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

---

- **Eurochild**

Start Strong continued to be a co-chair of the Eurochild Thematic Working Group on Early Years. As part of this work, Start Strong contributed to the development of the Eurochild Statement on Early Childhood Education and Care. We also contributed to the 'Children's Rights Manifesto' Campaign during the European elections in 2014. Start Strong also featured as an advocacy case-study in the DRIVERS Project (2012-2014) - a three-year research project funded by the 7th Framework Programme.

#### Strategic Aim 5: Position Start Strong

**To establish a clear positioning for Start Strong as the lead advocacy organisation on children's early care and education.**

Start Strong has spent considerable time building relationships with key backbenchers and spokespersons – this has been reflected in the increase in parliamentary questions relevant to the early years, the raising of childminding in Dáil debates, proposed amendments to legislation and proposals on topical debates.

Start Strong has been cited in a number of publications, including internal information/policy documents published by the Labour Party and Fianna Fáil. We are also regularly consulted by other NGOs as to policy positions relating to children's early years.

- **Department of Education and Skills**

The Minister for Education and Skills announced that there would be education focused inspections in early years settings delivering the Free Pre-School Year completed by inspectors from the Department. Start Strong welcomes the fact that there will now be education focused inspections, albeit regrettable that these are separate to the existing inspectorate.

Start Strong was appointed to the Expert Group on Early Years (hosted by the Department of Education and Skills), the membership of which was announced at our conference in December.

- **Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children**

Start Strong appeared at two sessions of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children during 2014 – these sessions focused on quality, accessibility and affordability and the report of the Expert Advisory Group/National Early Years Strategy.

- **European Commission – Country Specific Recommendation**

Start Strong contacted the European Commission in Ireland to discuss the childcare country specific recommendation for Ireland. Subsequent to that discussion we were invited to make a submission and later (2015) to meet with the European Commission representatives preparing the Country Report for Ireland.

---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

---

#### Strategic Objective 6: Good governance

To ensure robust policies and procedures are in place to ensure Start Strong can work credibly and professionally as an advocacy body.

Throughout 2014 regular board meetings were held at which finance reports and reports from the director are regular agenda items.

The Finance Committee met in January 2014. The Finance Committee proposed a budget for 2014 (subsequently approved by the board) and discussed a draft budget for the remainder of Start Strong's term, a proposed redundancy plan (in the event of the wind-down of the organisation) and other potential close-down costs.

The HR Committee met February 2014, at which it agreed a redundancy model for Start Strong and general principles. This was subsequently adopted by the Board and shared with the staff team.

- **Sustainability and Funding**

Formal progress reports were submitted to funders, and progress meetings were held during the year. Informal updates/meetings are held regularly with funders. Start Strong has begun the planning process to ensure an orderly wind-down and to ensure we have sufficient provision made to pay redundancy and close-down costs.

All funders have agreed to Start Strong 'stretching' our funding beyond December 2015 to ensure we can have as much influence as possible on the next Programme for Government. However, it will not be possible (unless alternative funding becomes available) to continue our work beyond April 2016.

- **Formative Evaluation**

Subsequent to a tendering process, evaluators were appointed to conduct a formative evaluation of Start Strong. Work on the evaluation started during the summer, and progressed into 2015.

- **Board Membership**

There were a number of changes in Board membership during the year. Avril McMonagle and Catherine Joyce resigned during the year. June Tinsley joined the board later in the year.

- **Administrative Developments**

New photographs were taken, for the website for use in our publications. Staff photographs were taken for the website, publications and media articles.

During the year a clearer format for financial reporting to the Board was devised.

---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

---

### Publications in 2014

#### Reports

- *The Double Dividend: Childcare that's affordable and high quality, June 2014*  
A policy brief and shorter summary version were also published.
- *'Childcare' - Business or Profession? November 2014*  
A Policy Brief and shorter summary version will be published in 2015.

#### Submissions

- *Submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Health & Children, Quality and Affordability, February 2014*
- *Start Strong Pre-Budget Submission 2015, July 2014*
- *Start Strong Budget 2015 Analysis, October 2014*
- *Start Strong Submission on DCYA Strategy 2015-17, October 2014*

#### Leaflets

- *Local and European Elections 2014: Supporting Children locally and in Europe 3-key questions for candidates*

#### Reprints

Due to demand, we had two documents reprinted during 2014:

- *Childminding – Regulation and Recognition*, First published October 2012
- *If I had a Magic Wand*, First published July 2012

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

---

### Key Priorities for 2015

Our key priorities are outlined below, and will form the basis of our 2015 work plan. As we are now moving into the final phase of our campaign, Start Strong will be adopting a new reporting format – one more suited to this stage of our work.

#### **Winding up...**

**General election preparation** - Start Strong has been building towards the general election for some-time. Our policy positions have been established, and recommendations agreed. The challenge now is to ensure wide support for those recommendations and to galvanise support around them.

**Campaign partners** - Start Strong is one of the lead organisations in the early years area. However, we have limited capacity and resources – we will need to join with organisations as campaign partners to ensure we have the most impact possible

**Key messages** - will be refined and adapted right up to the general election.

#### **...To wind-down**

**Office Administration** - the ongoing administrative work involved in keeping a small, advocacy office-based organisation running smoothly.

We will also have the twin challenge of managing the closure of the organisation during our busiest time.

**Staff Team** - Coaching and other supports will be available to all staff during this period of our work.

**Exit Strategy** - Start Strong is working with potential funders to put in place an exit strategy consisting of funding for one post, focused on early years, based in the Children's Rights Alliance.

**Organisational Closure** - The administrative workload in closing an organisation, ensuring we meet our legal and other requirements will also place demands on the staff and board.

---

# **START STRONG LIMITED**

---

## **REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS**

---

### **Directors**

On 17 June 2014 Ms. Avril McMonagle resigned as director of the company. On 15 September 2014 Ms. Catherine Joyce resigned as director of the company.

On 9 December 2014 Ms. June Tinsley was appointed as director.

The current directors are as set out on page 2.

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the directors retire by rotation and, being eligible, may offer themselves for re-election.

### **Future developments**

The company plans to continue its present activities and current trading levels until after the agreement of the next programme for government. The organisation will likely close sometime between the end of December 2015 and before May 2016. The timing of this is dependent on the timing of the general election. Employees are kept as fully informed as practicable about developments within the organisation.

### **Accounting Records**

The directors are responsible for ensuring that proper accounting records, as outlined in Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014, are kept by the company. The directors have appointed appropriate accounting personnel in order to ensure compliance with those requirements. The accounting records of the company are maintained at the company's registered office.

### **Auditors**

Mazars, Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, have expressed their willingness to be re-appointed in accordance with the provisions of Section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014.

### **On behalf of the Board**

**Karen McDonnell**

**Tony Crooks**

**25 June 2015**

---

## **START STRONG LIMITED**

---

### **DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT**

---

The directors are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, including the accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.

Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at the financial year end date and of the profit or loss of the company for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing those financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements. The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the company, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the company to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and directors report comply with the Companies Acts 2014 as applicable to companies limited by guarantee and not having a share capital and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in the Republic of Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

**On behalf of the Board**

**Karen McDonnell**

**Tony Crooks**

**25 June 2015**

# **INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT**

## **TO THE MEMBERS OF**

### **START STRONG LIMITED**

We have audited the financial statements of Start Strong Limited for the year ended 31 December 2014 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is the Companies Act 2014 and accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and promulgated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland).

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

#### **Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

#### **Scope of the audit of the financial statements**

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the directors; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the director's report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

#### **Opinion on financial statements**

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities, and financial position of the company as at 31 December 2014 and of its results for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland and in particular with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.



## **INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT**

### **TO THE MEMBERS OF**

### **START STRONG LIMITED**

#### **Emphasis of matter – Going concern**

In forming our opinion we have considered the adequacy of the disclosures made in the financial statements in relation to the basis of preparation of the financial statements. Details of the circumstances relating to this matter are disclosed in Note 1 to the financial statements. In view of the significance of this matter, we consider that it should be drawn to your attention but our opinion is not qualified in this respect.

#### **Matters on which we are required to report by the Companies Act 2014**

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited.

The financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

In our opinion the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements.

#### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the provisions in the Companies Acts 2014 which require us to report to you, if in our opinion the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions specified by Section 305 to 312 of the Act are not made.

**Mairéad Divilly**  
**For and on behalf of Mazars**  
**Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors**  
**Harcourt Centre**  
**Block 3**  
**Harcourt Road**  
**Dublin 2**

**25 June 2015**

---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Notes	Year ended 31 December 2014 €	Year ended 31 December 2013 €
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	3	300,105	282,087
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>			
Overhead expenses		<300,105>	<282,087>
<b>NET INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	8	== -	== -

All incoming resources are in respect of continuing operations and relate to unrestricted funds.

A statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared as there were no other gains or losses for the year or the preceding year other than as stated above.

---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### BALANCE SHEET

	Notes	31 December 2014 €	31 December 2013 €
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets	6	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash at bank		<u>156,490</u>	<u>140,417</u>
		156,490	140,417
<b>CREDITORS</b>			
Amounts falling due within one year	7	<u>&lt;97,673&gt;</u>	<u>&lt;81,600&gt;</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>58,817</u>	<u>58,817</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>58,817</u>	<u>58,817</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>			
Unrestricted funds	8	<u>58,817</u>	<u>58,817</u>

On behalf of the Board

Karen McDonnell

Tony Crooks

25 June 2015

---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### CASHFLOW STATEMENT

	Notes	Year ended 31 December 2014 €	Year ended 31 December 2013 €
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>			
Net incoming resources		-	-
Depreciation	6	-	6,299
Impairment	6	-	10,677
Movement in debtors		-	10,294
Movement in creditors		<u>16,073</u>	<u>23,122</u>
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>		16,073	50,392
<b>Capital expenditure</b>	6	-	<6,299>
<b>Increase in cash during the year</b>	9	16,073	44,093
<b>Net funds at beginning of year</b>		<u>140,417</u>	<u>96,324</u>
<b>Net funds at end of year</b>	9	<u>156,490</u>	<u>140,417</u>

---

# START STRONG LIMITED

---

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

---

### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The significant accounting policies adopted by the company are as follows:

#### *a) Basis of Financial Statements*

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the financial reporting standards of the Financial Reporting Council, as promulgated in Ireland by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland. The financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in March 2005 in so far as it complies with the Companies Acts 2014 as applicable to companies limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

#### *b) Income*

Income comprises grants provided for core funding which is recognised on an accruals basis.

#### *c) Tangible Fixed Assets*

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation.

Depreciation is calculated in order to write off the cost less residual value of tangible fixed assets over their estimated useful lives which is currently regarded as one year. Hence, all assets are written off in the year of acquisition

#### *d) Foreign Currencies*

Foreign currencies which arise principally in connection with current assets and current liabilities are translated at the rate of exchange ruling at the balance sheet date.

Profits and losses from foreign currency transactions are dealt with in the profit and loss account.

#### *e) Pensions*

Pension costs arising under the defined contribution scheme are charged to the profit and loss account as incurred.

### 2. BASIS OF PREPARATION

At the balance sheet date, the company had unrestricted funds of €58,817 in addition to deferred income of €75,369. The directors consider a likely wind down of the company by April 2016. Based on projected expenditure for the period up to that date and taking into account the cost of wind down, the directors consider that assets will realise and all liabilities will be discharged by that date. On this basis, the financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that sufficient finance will be available to ensure the continued operation of the company for the foreseeable future which is defined as a period of 12 months from date of signing these financial statements.

---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

---

3.	INCOMING RESOURCES	2014 €	2013 €
	Atlantic Philanthropies	279,466	261,987
	Katharine Howard Foundation	10,000	10,000
	Community Foundation for Ireland	10,000	10,000
	Miscellaneous income	<u>639</u>	<u>100</u>
		<u>300,105</u>	<u>282,087</u>

4.	STAFF COSTS	2014 €	2013 €
	Wages and salaries	163,737	155,691
	Social security costs	17,085	16,380
	Other retirement benefit costs	<u>7,535</u>	<u>10,732</u>
		<u>188,357</u>	<u>182,803</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was 2014: 4. (2013: 4).

Employees receive a basic salary plus a maximum (matched) 5% payment towards their defined contribution pension. There are no benefits in kind or bonuses payments.

The staff positions and salary bands are as follows:

Administrator and Officers	€31,000 - €56,000*
Director	< €72,000

\*Pro-rata where the post is part-time

5.	NET INCOMING RESOURCES	2014 €	2013 €
	Net incoming resources are stated after charging:		
	Depreciation of tangible assets	-	6,299
	Impairment of tangible assets	-	10,677
	Auditors' remuneration (inclusive of VAT)	<u>3,075</u>	<u>3,075</u>

---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

---

6.	TANGIBLE ASSETS	Fixtures, fittings & equipment €	Computer equipment €	Total €
	<i>Current year</i>			
	<b>Cost</b>			
	At 31 December 2013	<u>13,396</u>	<u>11,021</u>	<u>24,417</u>
	At 31 December 2014	<u>13,396</u>	<u>11,021</u>	<u>24,417</u>
	<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>			
	At 31 December 2013	<u>13,396</u>	<u>11,021</u>	<u>24,417</u>
	At 31 December 2014	<u>13,396</u>	<u>11,021</u>	<u>24,417</u>
	<b>Net Book Amount</b>			
	At 31 December 2013	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	At 31 December 2014	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<i>Prior year</i>			
	<b>Cost</b>			
	At 31 December 2012	13,396	4,722	18,118
	Additions for the year	-	<u>6,299</u>	<u>6,299</u>
	At 31 December 2013	<u>13,396</u>	<u>11,021</u>	<u>24,417</u>
	<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>			
	At 31 December 2012	5,318	2,123	7,441
	Charge for the year	-	6,299	6,299
	Impairment during year	<u>8,078</u>	<u>2,599</u>	<u>10,677</u>
	At 31 December 2013	<u>13,396</u>	<u>11,021</u>	<u>24,417</u>
	<b>Net Book Amount</b>			
	At 31 December 2012	<u>8,078</u>	<u>2,599</u>	<u>10,677</u>
	At 31 December 2013	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

---

<b>7. CREDITORS</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Creditors	11,522	2,839
Accruals	5,598	8,647
Paye and social welfare costs	5,184	5,279
Deferred income	<u>75,369</u>	<u>64,835</u>
	<u>97,673</u>	<u>81,600</u>

<b>8. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
At the beginning of the year	58,817	58,817
Net incoming resources	—	—
At the end of the year	<u>58,817</u>	<u>58,817</u>

<b>9. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS</b>	<b>Opening balance</b>	<b>Cash flow</b>	<b>Closing balance</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Cash at bank	<u>140,417</u>	<u>16,073</u>	<u>156,490</u>

#### 10. COMMITMENTS

The company has an annual commitment of €12,000 in respect of a lease on its premises at The Basement, 33 Upper Merrion Street, Dublin 2.

#### 11. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no contracts or arrangements in relation to the company's business, in which the directors or secretary of the company had any interest, as defined in the Companies Act 2014, at any time during the year ended 31 December 2014.

#### 12. STATUS OF THE COMPANY

Start Strong Limited is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital. The liability of the members is limited. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability of each member is limited to €1.

#### 13. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements were approved by the board on 25 June 2015.



---

## START STRONG LIMITED

---

### RESOURCES EXPENDED

	Year ended 31 December 2014 €	Year ended 31 December 2013 €
<b>Overhead Expenses</b>		
Wages and salaries	188,357	182,803
Training & development	4,461	5,144
Rent, rates & service charges	14,392	15,030
Electricity	2,601	2,157
Cleaning	952	1,267
Stationery	1,685	2,480
Postage	448	969
Phones	3,208	2,640
Website	1,497	1,404
IT Support	3,938	4,806
Insurance	1,555	1,622
Reports and publications	13,393	14,330
Travelling & subsistence	3,258	1,597
Communications support	8,412	13,375
Seminar costs	9,333	8,320
External consultants/research	17,295	6,208
Evaluation	13,563	-
Audit/professional fees	3,075	3,690
Resources (reports, articles, journals)	454	122
Meeting expenses	1,938	1,777
Conference fees	931	625
Sundries	1,082	1,338
Membership fees	1,140	1,038
Bad debt provision (Irish Youth Foundation 2011 funding, received 2013)	-	<10,000>
Facilities	3,137	2,369
Impairment of fixed assets	-	10,677
Depreciation	-	<u>6,299</u>
	<u>300,105</u>	<u>282,087</u>