

ANNUAL REVIEW

2025



Lisburn Enterprise Organisation Ltd.

Trustees

The Directors/Trustees of the charitable company who were in office during the year were:

Mr Andrew Robinson (Chairman)
Mr Brian Sofley (Company Secretary)
Mr Norman Elliott (Financial Director)
Mr Robert S Briggs
Mr Nicholas Fenton
Mr Graham Green
Mr Desmond T Magill
Mr I Stanley S McBrien
Mrs Jean E McQuitty

2025 ANNUAL REVIEW

Trustees' report for the year ended 31 December 2025

Lisburn Enterprise Organisation was formally registered with the Charity Commission NI on 13 February 2015 having been confirmed by the Commission to exist for charitable purposes and the public benefit.

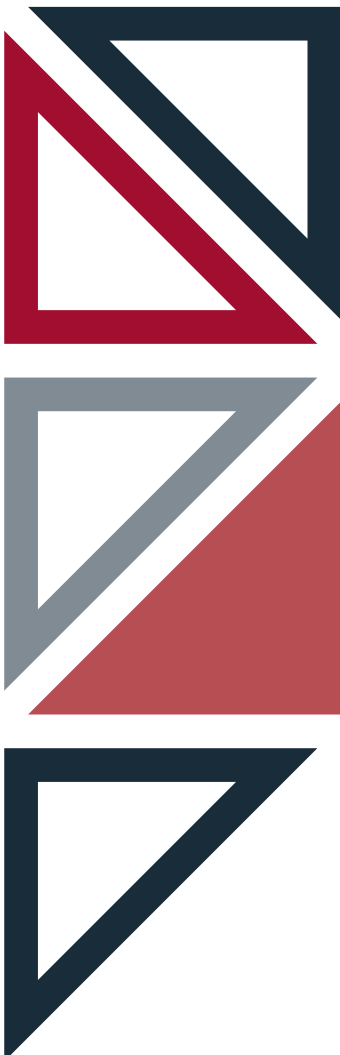
The charitable company is managed by the Board who meet regularly throughout the year. The day to day management of the charitable company is carried out by the Chief Executive Officer.

The Trustees of the company are elected by the members of the charitable company. Trustees are recruited and appointed in accordance with the Articles of Association. Upon election each Trustee is given a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the latest Annual Review.

Trustees are also introduced to the legal and operational aspects of the charity to ensure they understand the nature of charity trusteeship and the responsibilities and duties that go with this position.

Risk

The Trustees have reviewed the primary risks facing the charity and are satisfied that effective systems are in place to manage such risks.





Chairman's Foreword

It is my privilege, on behalf of the Board of Directors of Lisburn Enterprise Organisation (LEO), to present this comprehensive review of our activities and accomplishments throughout 2025.

The organisation was proud to mark a significant milestone during the year, celebrating 35 years of operations alongside another period of strong performance. For more than three decades, LEO has supported several thousand individuals to start and grow their businesses, playing a central role in shaping the local enterprise landscape.

Throughout the year, we continued to advance and promote programmes designed to boost employment and strengthen economic prosperity across the Lisburn area. Our dedication to supporting local enterprise and fostering sustainable growth remains central to our mission and activities.

LEO remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting a vibrant enterprise culture, championing the development of new ventures and empowering business growth through dedicated support and mentorship.

Our Business Advisory team play a key role in this work, providing expert guidance and tailored business support to entrepreneurs through the Go Succeed programme, our own fully funded My Adviser initiative and active engagement at local jobs and benefits events.

Underpinning many of LEO's charitable activities is the provision of workspace units and Grade A office accommodation. I am pleased to report that, by the end of December 2025, occupancy at our site had reached an

exceptional 99.76%. This achievement highlights the vital contribution our facilities make in supporting business development and strengthening the local community.

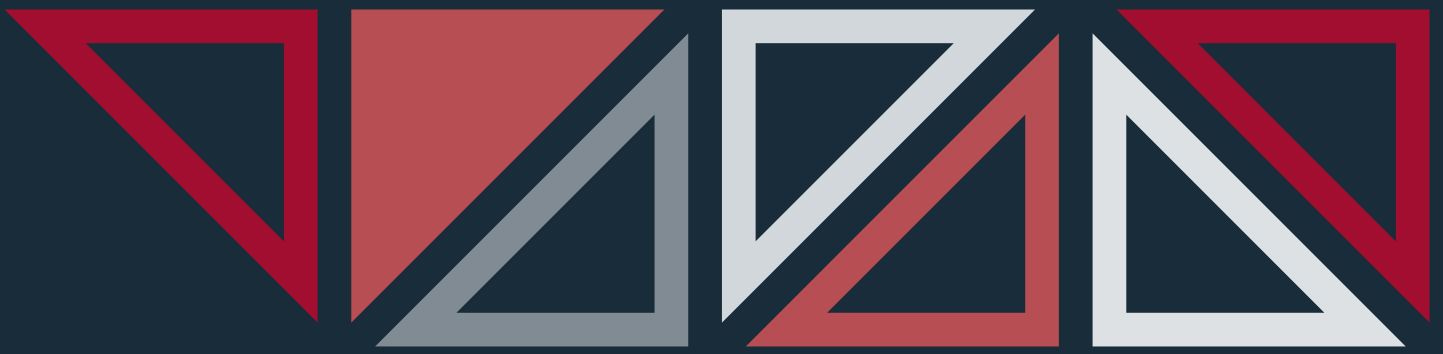
In the year ahead, the organisation will continue to provide vital business support to entrepreneurs and commit to continued investment at the centre with the roll out of significant roof repair and maintenance projects to ensure the long term integrity of our facilities.

The outstanding success and impressive performance of LEO are a direct result of the remarkable dedication of our Chief Executive, Martina Crawford, and her committed support team. On behalf of the Board, I wish to formally express our sincere appreciation for their hard work and leadership.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to our Board of Directors for their continued commitment and support. LEO's achievements reflect the strength of their individual and collective contributions. Their voluntary service is deeply valued and has played a significant role in advancing our mission.

Andrew Robison.

Andrew Robison
Chairman
12th May 2026



Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the charity include the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture, support for business start-ups and mechanisms to encourage existing business development.

This report highlights the organisation's main activities and beneficiaries. The organisation's charitable activities focus on the promotion of urban and economic regeneration in the Greater Lisburn area and are intended to further charitable purpose for the public benefit.

Every activity is assessed in respect of its impact on beneficiaries and its contribution to charitable activities so that Trustees may determine the best allocation of resources.

Through the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture and offering support services to new and existing businesses, the charity contributes to the following charitable purposes:

- a) The relief of poverty;
- b) The relief of unemployment, including assistance to the unemployed to find employment;
- c) The advancement of education, training or retraining, particularly among unemployed people, and providing unemployed people with work experience;
- d) The provision of financial assistance, technical assistance or business advice or consultancy to provide training and employment opportunities for unemployed people in cases of financial or other charitable need through help: (i) in setting up their own business, or (ii) to existing businesses; and
- e) The creation of training and employment opportunities by the provision of workspace, buildings and/or land for use on favourable terms.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission Guidance on public benefit in the Charities Act 2011.

The public benefit of our charitable purposes of advancing citizenship and community development through the promotion of urban regeneration in Lisburn are as follows:

- The relief of poverty through increased opportunities to learn, train and be successful in attaining paid employment locally;
- A reduction in unemployment because of enhanced opportunities to upskill, gain work experience and attain paid-for job positions;
- An increase in the number of indigenous businesses established;
- An increase in the survival rates of business start-ups because of the advice, training and mentoring received;
- An improvement in the skills and experience of the local resident population so that Lisburn becomes an attractive destination for businesses to locate, thus providing more opportunities for paid jobs, skills and experience;
- An enlargement of the local economy by providing support to businesses to become sustainable and prosper thus employing more people locally who's wages when spent locally, sustain many more businesses;
- The enhanced access to support structures making it easier for people to access advice, training and mentoring in entrepreneurship and business skills; and
- The advancement in awareness of enterprise as a viable career option.

These benefits are evidenced in several ways, both in the collection of primary data and the review of independently produced statistics.

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

Enterprise Awareness

Lisburn Enterprise Organisation (LEO) remains committed to cultivating a robust entrepreneurial culture within the Lisburn area. By raising awareness of the opportunities inherent in self-employment and business creation, LEO addresses a critical driver of economic health. Research consistently highlights the positive correlation between new venture formation and enhanced regional productivity and growth.

Throughout the year, LEO's Business Advisers have remained dedicated champions of entrepreneurship, providing expert guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs. Through active collaboration with community groups and local Jobs and Benefits offices, the team continues to showcase self-employment as both a practical and fulfilling career path.

The organisation also continued to work with The Science Shop, at Queen's University Belfast. Mentorship was provided to students undertaking research into potential opportunities for LEO to expand its services and support.

During the year, LEO once again took pride in sponsoring the Best New Business category at Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's Business Awards ceremony. The event highlights the wide variety of enterprises that contribute to the local economy, with categories spanning best new business, innovation, and business success.

This year's Best New Business award was presented to Langtry Lane, a garden centre and café located in Moira.



Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Business awards – Andrew Robinson, Chairman of LEO presenting Best New Business award to winner Langtry Lane.

BUSINESS START UP

Northern Ireland Explore Enterprise Support Services

From April 2023 to 31st March 2025 Lisburn Enterprise Organisation delivered the Northern Ireland Explore Enterprise Support Service in the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area in partnership with Enterprise Northern Ireland.

This initiative was available to economically inactive individuals and aimed to provide them with the opportunity to explore self-employment and develop their employability skills.

Supported by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, this programme provided personalised one-to-one mentoring with an experienced Business Adviser, training and access to a Level 2 qualification in Business Enterprise.

Throughout the duration of this programme, LEO Business Advisers supported 12 individuals to explore their business idea or take the first steps into employment.

Vision to Venture Self Employment Programme

During the year, Lisburn Enterprise Organisation collaborated with Tangible Consulting to mentor aspiring entrepreneurs through the Vision to Venture Self-Employment initiative.

Located in the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area, this programme was funded by the Department for Communities via the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership. It offered early-stage founders a comprehensive support package, including educational workshops, personalised one-to-one mentoring, and a small start-up bursary.

Go Succeed Start

Go Succeed is a comprehensive business support service delivered across Northern Ireland by local enterprise agencies and Enterprise Northern Ireland, on behalf of the eleven councils. Funded by the UK Government, the initiative provides bespoke assistance to entrepreneurs across three strategic pillars: Start, Grow, and Scale.

Within the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area, Lisburn Enterprise Organisation leads the delivery of the Go Succeed Start initiative. This is achieved through a strategic partnership with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Enterprise Northern Ireland, ensuring local entrepreneurs receive high-level, accessible tailored support.

Throughout the year, LEO's Business Advisory team provided critical interventions to over 200 individuals at various stages of the start-up lifecycle. These services included intensive one-to-one mentoring designed to help start up entrepreneurs refine their business idea and facilitate successful market entry. For established entrepreneurs, the team provided the strategic guidance necessary to achieve key operational milestones.

Two Moira-based entrepreneurs, supported by the Go Succeed programme, have officially opened their own premises with plans to expand their teams soon.

Katerina Brown launched her florist boutique, Peony and Thyme, in December 2025. Far from a tentative start-up, the shop arrived with a sophisticated identity shaped by years of research and inspiration gathered from Europe's finest independent florists. Through Go Succeed, Katerina worked closely with a mentor to refine her business plan, ensuring her signature aesthetic was matched by a solid operational foundation.

Sharon McAfee founded Thistle & Blade Barbers to bring high-quality, precision grooming to the Moira community. Her focus is on blending professional excellence with a welcoming, personal touch. By engaging with Go Succeed, Sharon gained the confidence and strategic planning skills necessary to transition from a vision to a thriving, permanent shopfront.

In addition to the provision of expert advice and business mentoring, LEO hosted a series of Go Succeed workshops and Enterprise Clinics.

To supplement in-person delivery, the team proactively facilitated engagement with a broader range of online masterclasses and workshops. This hybrid approach ensured that local entrepreneurs had continuous access to the resources required to foster business resilience and sustainable growth.

During the year, Lisburn Enterprise Organisation was thrilled to join the judging panel for the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's "Ultimate Pitch" heat, a key part of the Go Succeed initiative.

ProTech founder Katie Willoughby stood out among the nine competing entrepreneurs, winning the local heat with her innovative plan to develop soft skills for tech leaders. Her victory secured her a £1,000 investment and a spot in the regional final.

Additionally, Paula Clarke received the local Inclusive Entrepreneurship Award for her business, Teal Visual, which provides essential sign language and captioning services for the arts and media sectors.



Go Succeed Ultimate Pitch – local winners, Katie Willoughby, Paula Clarke, Judging panel and LCCC representatives.



Left: Sharon McAfee, Thistle & Blade Barbers.



Right: Katerina Brown, Peony and Thyme.

MY Adviser

Throughout the year, Lisburn Enterprise Organisation maintained its commitment to the local start-up ecosystem by providing full funding for the MY Adviser programme. Since its inception in 2018, this initiative has been instrumental in helping early-stage entrepreneurs (those trading for fewer than 18 months) navigate the critical transition from business concept to commercial launch.

The programme's core strength lies in its bespoke delivery model. Each participant is matched with a dedicated LEO Business Adviser for a 12-month period. This partnership provides personalised, one-to-one mentoring that builds founder confidence and ensures the development of robust actionable plans to help the business launch and grow.

A key component of the programme is the MY Network, which facilitates peer-to-peer support and professional development. Over the past year, LEO hosted nine specialised workshops in a focused environment designed to encourage transparent discussion and practical problem-solving. Key thematic areas included Digital skills, Financial literacy and Business growth.

The programme continues to demonstrate significant reach and longevity. By December 2025, ten additional participants had engaged with the programme's sessions. Since its launch, the MY Adviser initiative has successfully supported a cumulative total of over 100 entrepreneurs within the Lisburn area.



LEO Business Mentor Kellie Tannahill with MY Adviser participants



Business Consultant Tina O'Hagan with MY Adviser participants

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Go Succeed Grow

Go Succeed Grow offers tailored mentoring support to established business owners who want guidance on expanding, innovating, and progressing their business to the next stage.

During the year, Lisburn Enterprise Organisation continued its partnership with Full Circle Management Consultants to deliver growth-focused business mentoring for established companies across the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area.



Work Space

Lisburn Enterprise Organisation remains committed to cultivating a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem through its diverse portfolio of flexible workspaces. Our current infrastructure encompasses over 85,000 square feet of property which includes 116 light industrial units and 37 modern office spaces.

To further stimulate local enterprise, LEO offers highly competitive terms, including flexible agreements requiring only 30 days' notice for termination. LEO also offers a comprehensive service model with a single all-inclusive licence fee that simplifies overhead by covering site security, waste disposal, grounds maintenance, and direct access to on-site administrative and business support.

Throughout the fiscal year, occupancy levels demonstrated exceptional resilience and demand, culminating in a peak rate of 99.76% in December 2025.

The site currently serves as a vital economic hub, facilitating the operations of over 120 independent businesses. Collectively, these enterprises represent a significant workforce, providing employment for more than 500 individuals within the region.

LEO remains dedicated to environmental sustainability; this year, our integrated waste management and recycling programmes successfully diverted 86 tonnes of material from landfill.



LEO Phase 7 Office Building



LEO Workspace Units



Conference Facilities

This year, the synergy of premium facilities, superior service, and a strategic central location drove demand for our meeting and conference suites.

Consequently, the LEO team successfully facilitated 139 high-profile meetings and events.

Virtual Office Facilities

Lisburn Enterprise Organisation's virtual office facilities provide business owners with a professional presence while significantly reducing overhead costs.

In addition to a commercial mailing address, clients can opt for a personalised call-handling service delivered by the LEO administrative team—a cost-effective alternative to employing a full-time receptionist.

The value of this service is reflected in its strong adoption, with 45 businesses actively utilising virtual office facilities by the end of the year.

Accessing Finance

As an active Delivery Partner for both the Start Up Loans Company and the NI Small Business Loan Fund, LEO continues to promote these loan funds as essential capital funding options to start-up and growth business ventures.

In 2025, these two funds collectively committed £340,000 in financial support to 27 businesses and entrepreneurs based in Lisburn.



LEO Meeting Room



Conference facilities at LEO



LEO Main Building

Co-operation & Partnership

A central element of Lisburn Enterprise Organisation's charitable mission is the significant contribution made by its Trustees and staff to a wide range of initiatives both within Lisburn and further afield.

This year, we were delighted to announce our partnership with Young Enterprise Northern Ireland as a Business Backer, supporting 60 young people annually through their education programmes. By sponsoring Young Enterprise, LEO is actively helping to inspire and empower the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators.

The organisation's partnership with Fusion Theatre Company also continued throughout the year. Fusion—an award winning youth theatre based in Lisburn—provides young people aged 8 to 21, from all backgrounds, with opportunities to participate in high quality musical theatre. Their production of *The Sound of Music* at the Island Arts Centre once again demonstrated the exceptional talent of local young performers.

The Board of Directors places considerable value on the strong relationships maintained with key enterprise and economic development partners, including Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Enterprise Northern Ireland (ENI). Over the course of the year, LEO supported a range of business growth programmes and networking events on behalf of the Council. The Chief Executive also actively engaged with local entrepreneurs through participation in Council led networking activities.

LEO remains an active and committed member of Enterprise Northern Ireland, with representation on the ENI Board. The organisation continues to play a central role in delivering ENI initiatives designed to support local entrepreneurs. Each year, LEO encourages local business owners to participate in the ENI Barometer survey, which provides valuable insights into SME performance and highlights the key challenges facing the sector. In addition to monitoring trends, the survey identifies the types of support required to help businesses grow and succeed.

During the year, LEO sustained a strong and collaborative relationship with Lisburn Chamber of Commerce. In 2025, the organisation participated in several key Chamber events, including the Lisburn Chamber Dinner at Edenmore Country Club.

LEO also continues to engage constructively with the Bank of England and the British Business Bank, ensuring that the experiences and perspectives of Lisburn businesses are represented in the economic and financial intelligence gathered by Bank agents.



Directors and Staff at Lisburn Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner

The Staff

The Board of Directors wishes to formally recognise and thank Martina Crawford, Chief Executive, and the entire team for their dedication and hard work throughout the year.

Demand for our programmes remained consistently high and we achieved an outstanding occupancy rate of 99.76%.

The Charity continues to prioritise the development and training of both staff and Board members to ensure the delivery of high quality services to our clients. During the year, we welcomed three new colleagues across our reception and business advisory teams. Staff also undertook training in a range of areas, including new programme initiatives.

We are pleased to report that the organisation successfully retained its ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 accreditations during the year.

Trustees and staff remain actively involved in voluntary work within the local community and in prisons. In 2025, this included fundraising efforts by staff in support of Macmillan Cancer and Air Ambulance NI. All Trustees of the Charity give their time voluntarily and do not receive any payment for their contribution to LEO.

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Income from:		
Charitable activities	745,259	708,057
Investments	55,002	52,151
Total Income	<u>800,261</u>	<u>760,208</u>
Expenditure on:		
Charitable activities	<u>644,036</u>	583,575
Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds	156,225	176,633
Reconciliation of funds:		
Fund balances as at 1 January 2025	<u>4,100,900</u>	3,924,267
Fund balances as at 31 December 2025	<u>4,257,125</u>	<u>4,100,900</u>

Balance sheet as at 31 December 2025

	2025		2024	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		2,540,622		2,670,576
Current assets				
Debtors	54,942		27,996	
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>1,776,386</u>		<u>1,526,084</u>	
	1,831,328		1,554,080	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<u>(114,825)</u>		<u>(123,756)</u>	
Net current assets		<u>1,716,503</u>		1,430,324
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>4,257,125</u>		<u>4,100,900</u>
Income funds				
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds	1,000,000		-	
General unrestricted funds	<u>3,257,125</u>		<u>4,100,900</u>	
		<u>4,257,125</u>		4,100,900
		<u>4,257,125</u>		<u>4,100,900</u>



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