

A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue plaid shirt and a colorful patterned scarf, carrying a young child with blonde hair on her shoulders. The child is wearing a red shirt and a colorful patterned scarf. They are both smiling and holding hands, standing in a grassy park area. The background is a soft-focus green field.

# Annual Report & Financial Statements 2023



*Meath Women's Refuge  
& Support Services*



## Contents

Administrative Information	4
Chairperson's Report 2023	6
Treasurer's Report 2023	8
CEO Report 2023	10
Acknowledgements	13
Our Work in Numbers - The Big Picture	15
About Us	16
About our Work	17
Our Strategic Plan 2022-2026	18
Strategic Priority: Development of people and services	22
Helpline and Refuge Programme	22
Children and Young People's Programme	28
Outreach and Community Programme	36
Strategic Priority: Advocacy and Profile	41
Strategic Priority - Technology, Infrastructure and Space	45
Key Developments in 2023	47
Strategic Priority: Sustainable Organisation	50
Governance and Management	50
Organisational Structure	53
Board of Directors 2023	54
Fundraising and Income Generation	62
Summary of Funding Received from Government and Other Grants in 2023	66
Audited Financial Statements 2023	68



# Administrative Information

## Registered Company Name

Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG

## Registered Address

39 Flowerhill, Navan, Co. Meath

**CHY Charity Number** 8565

**Company Registration Number (CRO)** 127494

**Registered Charity Number** 20021634

## Directors of the Board

The directors who served on the board during the period are as follows:

**Chairperson** Sinead Gogan

**Company Secretary** Meabh Smith

**Treasurer** Richelle Manning

**Other Trustees** Sinead Christian, Frank Long (*resigned December 2023*), Claire Sheeran, Michelle Sweeney, Liam Keane, Ruth Keegan (*appointed January 2023*)

## Directors of the Board

The directors who served on the board during the period are as follows:

**Chairperson** Sinead Gogan

**Company Secretary** Meabh Smith

**Treasurer** Richelle Manning

**Other Trustees** Sinead Christian, Frank Long (*resigned December 2023*), Claire Sheeran, Michelle Sweeney, Liam Keane, Ruth Keegan (*appointed January 2023*)

## Directors on the Finance and Risk Subgroup

Richelle Manning (Chairperson and Treasurer), Liam Keane, Frank Long (*until December 2023*)

## Directors on the Human Resource Subgroup

Sinead Gogan (Chairperson), Ruth Keegan

## Executive Team

**CEO** Sinead Smith

**Finance Manager** Selina Comaskey

**Development, Impact and Policy Manager** Frances Haworth

**Team Leader Outreach and Community Team** Amanda Alty

**Team Leader Children and Young People's Team** Katie Carry

**Team Leader Helpline and Refuge Team** Paula McNulty



## Company Auditors

Whelan Dowling & Associates Block 1, Unit 1 & 4, Northwood Court, Santry Dublin 9

## Company Solicitor

Tom Noonan & Sons, Unit 1 A, Old Cornmarket, Dillonsland, Navan, Co. Meath

## Company Bank

Bank of Ireland, 11 Market Square, Navan, Co. Meath

**Website** [www.dvsservicesmeath.ie](http://www.dvsservicesmeath.ie)

**General Number** 046 902 2393

**General Email** [admin@dvsservicesmeath.ie](mailto:admin@dvsservicesmeath.ie)

Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services win the National Lottery Good Cause of the Year 2023.





# Chairperson's Report 2023

**I am delighted to present this Annual Report for 2023 on the work of Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services ("MWRSS"). The report illustrates the breadth and depth of our work and the positive developments the organisation has made over the course of the year.**

I am delighted to present this Annual Report for 2023 on the work of Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services ("MWRSS"). The report illustrates the breadth and depth of our work and the positive developments the organisation has made over the course of the year.

In 2023, we met and exceeded all our targets for service delivery outlined in our annual work plan which is aligned to our organisational strategic plan, aided by additional funding and our own fundraising activities. In 2024, supported by an external facilitator we will take stock of our current strategic plan, review our work to date and identify where our focus and energies will be best placed for the next 2.5 years.

We were delighted to be approved for additional core funding in 2023, which is recognition of our work and the scale of services and supports needed for women and children living in Co. Meath. This new funding required substantial restructuring and change management in the organisation to ensure we had the capacity to manage the additional resources available to us. This

included, following a review process, the reframing of the role of manager to CEO and the establishment of senior and middle management teams to support and grow our frontline services in refuge, outreach, and the children's programme. We have now completed a recruitment drive and induction for both teams. We expect organisation's staff compliment to exceed 35 staff by the end of 2024, up from 16 in 2017.

As a growing organisation, we recognise an increased volume of service provision requires a highly functioning management and governance structure, supported by the board of directors. We will continue to ensure that our infrastructure is fit for purpose over the years ahead.

In 2023, we were positioned to meet an increased demand in services, across all programme areas. We maintained our overall levels of donations and grants received through engaging a wide range of community stakeholders. We recognise the importance of these resources in facilitating us to be agile in our responses to the needs of women and children living in Co. Meath. The organisation

continued the implementation of our business plan to support the growth and development of the organisation, which included continued work on our new refuge building project.

The organisation continues to enhance the supports it provides and has made real inroads in addressing the acute needs of women and children who experience domestic violence; however we recognise that we have more work to do to achieve this goal. Our ambition to do more will be realized through continued investment in the implementation of our strategic plan and we very much welcome and look forward to working in partnership with the new state agency for Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence - CUAN towards creating a safer country for women and children.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank my fellow board directors, the excellent CEO, management and staff team for the impact they make and their individual personal dedication every day in the service of women and children, experiencing domestic violence in our community.



**Sinead Gogan** | Chairperson



# Treasurer's Report 2023

**As Treasurer, I am taking this opportunity to report on the financial health of our organisation over the past twelve months. Throughout 2023, Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services continued to strive to ensure we managed our resources in a prudent manner. As an organisation, we are committed to good fiscal management principles, ensuring that funds allocated and donated to us are effectively and efficiently managed. The funds we received in 2023 were utilised in the advancement of our charitable objectives, supporting women and children who experience domestic violence.**

This report covers the financial reporting period from the 1st of January 2023 to the 31st of December 2023. Our financial statements have been reviewed and externally audited, ensuring compliance with SORP regulatory standards. The recruitment of a qualified accountant in quarter 4 as finance manager and the adoption of new and enhanced financial procedures and policies in March this year, evidencing our intention to adhere to the highest standards of financial probity and management and demonstrates our commitment to accountability and transparency to both those who fund and support our work and importantly the needs of women and children we serve.

The audited accounts were presented to the board by our Auditor, Whelan, Dowling & Associates on the 8th of April 2024 and approved at that meeting. A small surplus of €38,768 was recorded. The auditors noted the prudent management of funds in the organisation during 2023. We would like to acknowledge the work of the finance and administration team for their work in this regard.

In order to ensure our organisation and its work is sustainable, we strived in 2023 to grow and

diversify our fundraising base and capacity through a range of initiatives, including:

- Increasing our core funding;
- Increasing the number of public awareness events, we provided;
- Building our philanthropic base through growing our grants programme;
- Developing new corporate partnerships and;
- Importantly our ongoing partnership with the community in Co. Meath.

As can be seen later in this report, this growth has had a direct impact on our work throughout the year, strengthening both our advocacy work and frontline service provision.

The new senior management role of Finance Manager - a role we have been seeking since our 2020 business plan will improve our governance management functions and is aligned with the management and reporting on increased funding.

We allocated funds in a diligent manner in line with our strategic goals and in a planned way. These considered investments included: therapeutic services, resourcing staff development and finally investing in operational infrastructure such as cyber



*Richelle Manning*

**Richelle Manning | Treasurer**

security and enhancing our customised CRM system E-Safe to capture our fundraising work and maintain our relationships with donors and supporters.

2023 saw an increase of 62% in our overall income, mainly due to a significant increase in our core funding for our frontline services of 72%. In addition, unrestricted funding increased by 17% and we achieved a 66% success rate from grant applications, a total of 23 grants received. This increase reflects the successful work of our middle and senior management team supported by the work of our development, impact and policy manager who co-ordinates this work.

In 2023, for the first time we submitted our Annual Report to the Good Governance Awards, and from this experience, we took learnings on ways to enhance the reporting of our work and improvements in how we document and present our work. We reported to the Charities Regulator in October 2023 that we were fully compliant with the Charities Governance Code for the first time, and we continued to maintain those standards in 2023.

I would like to extend my thanks to the other members of the board of directors, in particular to Frank Long who retired in December 2023, having served the organisation as Treasurer over a number of years and who supported me in my role as Treasurer since 2022, my fellow board directors, the CEO, finance and administration team, our funders and donors, partners and the whole staff team who work together to achieve our mission. The wider community of Co. Meath are supportive of our work all year round as they have been since we began in 1987.



# CEO Report 2023

I am proud to report on the key achievements and developments made by the organisation in 2023. As a staff team, reflecting back on the year, we see real change and positive outcomes from our endeavours as a specialist domestic violence support service. As outlined by our Chairperson and Treasurer, these achievements were greatly enhanced through the allocation of additional core funding to our work.

More details about our programmes is contained in the body of this report but I would like to take this opportunity to outline some important highlights:

We worked directly with a total of 584 women and 129 children providing services across our refuge, outreach and children's programmes. In addition, our 24-hour helpline took 1122 calls and the outreach and community team took 124 direct calls-a total of 1,246 calls.

We continued to experience high demand for services. In 2023 we provided refuge to 185 women and children (92 women and 93 children). This was a 41% increase on our 2022 service provision and was assisted by reducing our stay times, to ensure we had refuge space available in emergency situations and through working with Meath County Council, who have supported us hugely to provide families with post refuge accommodation, which unfortunately remains in the main part to be emergency homeless accommodation.

In the community setting, we worked with 492 women and 36 children throughout 2023. Through fundraising and grant allocations we provided 540 counselling sessions and 66 sessions of play therapy to women and children.

In 2023, we moved our non-refuge services offsite to ensure our refuge team and children's

services have the physical space they require to provide the services families need. This means that our outreach and community team now have their own dedicated community space and our CEO, finance and administration team have a separate office.

We launched a new freephone helpline service in September 2023, which will be followed by a web text service in 2024, to make support as accessible as possible for women who need it.

We increased our presence in court, supporting women to apply for domestic violence court orders and supporting returns to court for barring and safety domestic violence court orders on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday mornings. The addition of a new case management worker will help support women with more complex needs and this is evident from an 81% increase in our court supports provision, in terms of accompaniments from 217 in 2022 to 392 in 2023.

We were very proud to win the National Good Cause of the Year award through the National Lottery towards the end of 2023 and the wonderful support and outpouring of best wishes from the community on our win was really heartening and energising too.

We launched a new sexual violence counselling service as a project partner with Rape Crisis Northeast (RCNE) the first of its kind

in Co. Meath. This will provide professional counselling to anyone over the age of 14 in Co. Meath who has experienced sexual violence and is the first service of its kind in the county. This new initiative is part of our commitment to ensuring survivors of both domestic and sexual violence have access to the supports they need in Co. Meath. We hope that in the near future there will be a dedicated Rape Crisis Centre for Co. Meath.

Developments on our new refuge building were slower than envisaged in 2023. While we submitted a Stage 2 application the Department of Housing in late June 2023, we were notified in late September 2023 that our application required significant changes in the budget allocation which in turn required significant design changes. An updated application for funding approval and planning permission will be submitted in 2024.

When we look back on 2023, it is clear that while we have achieved much, we remain concerned about a number of issues, namely:

- The numbers of families we could not accommodate this year (293 families) remains persistently high due to refuge being full even though we experienced a 41% increase in the number of families we supported through increasing our turn around stay times. The number we could not accommodate is only 7 families



less than 2022, when we were unable to accommodate 300 families.

- There is a heightened severity of physical violence being reported by women coming to refuge and we are concerned by the numbers of women seeking refuge who are also pregnant .
- The use of Technology Facilitated Abuse (TFA) that often allows abusers to continue to abuse women post separation is increasingly common and an area we aim to improve our knowledge and skills as an organisation to respond to TFA.
- The financial impact of leaving domestic violence situations is stark and financial abuse compounds and prevents a woman's capacity to leave. As a domestic violence support service, we are stepping in to provide emergency grants, grocery vouchers, food and clothing and we need to find a way to mainstream and sustain these supports.
- The continued high levels of domestic violence being reported to An Garda Síochana, with 54,000 calls in relation to domestic abuse in 2023 and to us directly reflect endemic levels of gender-based violence in Irish society.

We know domestic violence reporting remains high and more women are coming forward which is to be welcomed as a result of intensive awareness-raising activities. It is vital that when they do come forward local domestic violence support services are agile and able to



respond to their needs. We are calling on the government to invest in a national service development plan which will facilitate local organisations to scale up appropriately to deal with the levels of need presenting in our work.

Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services has responded to increased service needs but we recognise that our work must be responsive and reactive not only to immediate presenting needs but also proactive and focused on addressing the root causes of gender-based violence.

In 2024, we will undertake a new three-year pilot initiative which will focus on community-based responses to domestic violence, a new and positive prevention strategy. We look forward to this new and exciting phase in our work, which will expand the remit of our outreach team who will become the outreach and community team.

Finally, I would like to thank my amazing colleagues in Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services who work tirelessly, with huge commitment, working collectively to realise our shared ambition to eliminate gender-based violence.



Sinéad Smith | CEO



# Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who supported and partnered with our work in 2023



Edmund Rice Trust



Rotary Club of Navan



MERCY PROJECTS FUND





# Storm Breakers

I didn't know you changed me.  
I couldn't stop to think  
I kept on moving forward  
Too afraid to pause and blink.

I thought I had recovered  
I thought my thoughts were free  
But little did I know  
You had caused my brain to shrink.

My thoughts were less expansive  
Unable to dream of what ifs?  
Instead, I've been in survival mode  
Covering my back, it feels.

But knowledge has been my power.  
Space has set me free.  
I've been given these gifts by warriors,  
Who fought my fight for me.  
When I was at my lowest,  
When I couldn't stand my ground  
When my voice could not utter another word,  
They gave me strength to stand.

And they remain the nameless  
A collective group of strength  
Determined in their mission  
To provide a soft place to land.  
I will forever be indebted  
For the hands that reached my way.  
Who saw what others could not see  
And gave me lights to lead the way.

This poem was written by a current service user of MWRSS about their experience of support from us.



# Our Work in Numbers - The Big Picture



We worked with a total of **584**

women and **129** children providing direct services to across our refuge, outreach and children's programmes which can be broken down as:

**92** women and **93** children stayed in refuge - a **41%** increase on our 2022 figures.

**492** women were supported in community settings

We provided **392** accompaniments to court

**81% increase** in our court supports provision, in terms of accompaniments from **217** in 2022 to **392** in 2023.



The Children's Programme managed **93** referrals for children in refuge and **36** referrals for children in community settings.



**48 women** attended support groups. We participated in 29 talks in the community reaching **1,900 people**.

Our 24-hour helpline took **1,122** calls and our outreach and community team took

**124** direct phone calls for support



**46** Emergency Grants to women funded a wide range of needs

We resourced **€13,935** in vouchers, of which **€10,130** were grocery vouchers and **€3,805** were toys and activities vouchers.

Out of this total fund **€7,880** was allocated to families in advance of Christmas 2023.



We provided food packs for **77** women who had a total of **96** children between October and December 2023



Clothing and toys for children were provided on **152** occasions to families in refuge.



# About Us

Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services is a specialist domestic violence support service, founded 37 years ago in 1987 by a local voluntary women's group who were based in Navan. The organisation managed refuge accommodation over a two-year period with volunteers in a donated building space until core funding from what was then the North Eastern Health Board was provided. In 1992, we bought our refuge building and extended its size to incorporate living and work spaces through the provision of a capital acquisition scheme (CAS) grant from the Department of Housing. In 2003 we established the outreach programme to extend our work beyond a helpline and refuge to actively supporting

women experiencing domestic violence in the community to access domestic violence court orders. In the mid-2000s we were provided with funding for a childcare worker to provide care to children in refuge and free play spaces. The recession of 2008 had a serious impact on the developments above and we experienced deep funding cuts of 19.5% and no additional funding until 2018. The onset of Covid 19 and the attention of the State to the 'Shadow Pandemic' of domestic violence had a huge impact on our work with increased investment in services and supports based on a business plan developed by the organisation. This will culminate over the next two years with the completion of work on a new purpose-built refuge facility for Co. Meath.



Christmas Appeal event St Patrick's School Navan



# About Our Work

Over the years the organisation has grown to meet changing needs and service demands from very humble beginnings and our work now includes the provision of 8 units of emergency refuge accommodation, outreach and community services including court accompaniment and one to one support to women in the community, a 24 hour free helpline, referral supports, peer to peer educational and support groups, therapeutic supports for women and children, including counselling and play therapy and a children's programme working with children in refuge and in the community.

We believe domestic violence is a violation of women's and children's rights and that we have a pivotal role to play in supporting women and children to rebuild their lives and vindicate their rights. We recognise we are part of a larger movement for change working towards

the elimination of Gender Based Violence in the longer term.

We are part of a network of organisations that provide domestic violence services in Ireland and we are a member of Safe Ireland, the national membership body for local domestic violence support services and we are active members in the network. We have a county wide remit for the whole of Co. Meath which has a population of 220,826 and is geographically part of the greater Dublin area.

We work with a range of stakeholders including our funders Cuan (established in January 2024) and the Department of Justice, Tusla Child and Family Agency, the Department of Social Protection local office, Meath County Council and other statutory, community and voluntary organisations in the county and nationally.



# Our Strategic Plan 2022-2026

In mid-2022, we adopted a new Strategic Plan, to support and underpin the growth and development process the organisation was embarking on. The strategic plan will be reviewed in mid-2024. In 2023, our annual work plan for the organisation fell under our four strategic priorities which guided our focus and longer-term approach to our work to achieve a range of outcomes. A summary of the plan is outlined below. The strategy informs our annual work plans and our business plans to our funders up to the end of 2026, when the new refuge building will be completed.

## Our Purpose

MWRSS reason for being is twofold. We exist to fulfil a greater purpose to:

- Provide a space where women and children can take time to explore the options available to them to ensure their future safety.
- Support, advocate for and alongside women dealing with abuse of themselves and their children.

## Vision

To live in a society where all forms of abuse against women and children are not tolerated.

## Mission

To empower women and children who experience domestic violence and abuse on their journey towards safety, wellbeing and recovery. We do this by providing women and children centred specialist support services.

## Our four core values are set out in our strategic plan.

**Women and Child Centered**

*All our work is led by the needs of women and children, and we bring their voice to everything we do. We are committed and passionate about women and children's human rights.*

**Inclusive**

*We embrace diversity and strive to be a fully inclusive organisation in who we work with, who works for us and how we do our work.*

**Accountable**

*We strive to always achieve the highest standards across the organization.*

**Trustworthy**

*We act with empathy, compassion, and integrity.*



## Our four strategic priorities are described in detail below:

**1**

**Sustainability**

*This goal is focused on sustainable approaches to funding and governance to enable the achievement of our vision*

**2**

**Development of people and services**

*We will work to develop and grow our teams and enhance and expand the services we provide.*

**3**

**Technology, Infrastructure, and space**

*We will build our physical and digital infrastructure to support the development of our services.*

**4**

**Advocacy and profile**

*To amplify our profile as advocates for women and children.*



Our strategy house, as illustrated below, summarizes our vision, mission, purpose, goals, values, strategic goals, and enablers, and acts as a guide to our daily work. We have five strategic enablers which underpin our work: technology, people, and the organisation itself, our way of working, the physical building and space to do our work and finally the stakeholders and the wider external environment we are part of.

## 1 Technology

This will assist us to be more effective in case management, reaching those who find it challenging to access services and responding quickly to new needs.

## 2 People & Organisation

This is the core of who we are and what we do, and it encompasses our Board, staff team, volunteers, students and ultimately the women and children we work with and work for. A sustainable organization is vital to ensure we deliver on our goals.

## 3 Our way of working

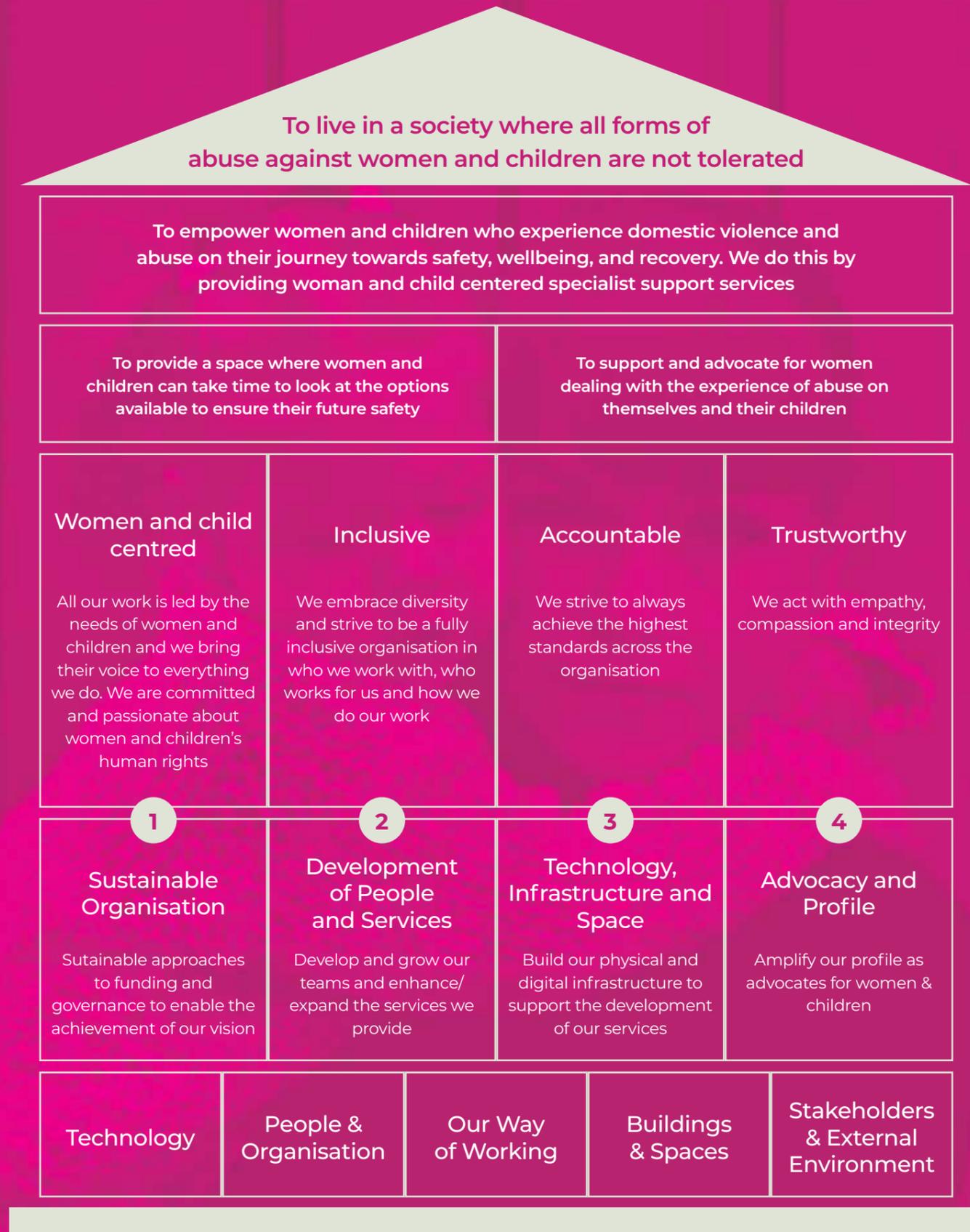
Working from an informed analysis of gender-based violence and trauma informed practice will be central to our work. This will be underpinned by the experience of survivors of Domestic Violence (women and children) across all our work from frontline services, policy development, and at decision making level in the organisation.

## 4 Buildings & Space

As an organisation that provides refuge accommodation and ancillary services, safe, secure and welcoming spaces that reflect our ethos and approach will create the conditions along with our people are core .

## 5 Stakeholders & External Environment

Our work is about relationships with women and children; those who fund us; those who make decisions about policy and legislation; those who support us and the community we are part of. Being able to interact and work proactively with stakeholders and respond to environmental changes will demonstrate our resilience and strength.





# Strategic Priority: Development of People and Services

## Helpline and Refuge Programme

1. In 2023, we received 1122 calls to our helpline. Of this number 283 professionals, 66 concerned family or friends, and 708 women who were experiencing domestic violence phoned our service.
2. 92 women and 93 children stayed in emergency refuge accommodation in 2023. We had two people re-enter the refuge, which means we worked overall with 91 women. This was a 41% increase in the numbers of families in refuge in 2023 compared to 2022.
3. 77% of women staying in refuge were under the age of 45 and 17% were under the age of 25, illustrating the young age profile of women coming into refuge - 94% of women were 45 years or younger.
4. 61% of women in refuge identified their nationality as Irish (within this group 10 women identified their ethnicity as Irish Traveller and 1 person as Black Irish); 23% of women identified as EU nationals and 8% identified their ethnicity as Black or Asian. 8% of women did not self-identify.



The Helpline and Refuge Team manage calls for services to the organisation and operate a 24-hour free helpline service, 365 days a year. It provides crisis refuge accommodation to women and children through the management and provision of 8 emergency refuge accommodation units.

We provide 4 units of refuge accommodation at our main refuge building and 4 units in the local community. Three community units are provided by Tuath Housing (2 houses and 1 apartment) and one by Meath County Council. This is an arrangement that began in May 2020 at the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The implementation of a new freephone helpline service is part of our strategic plan to reduce as many barriers as possible for women or their concerned friends or family members to allow them access to our support. We know from experience that having a lack of phone credit through financial control, phone monitoring, and not allowing access to the phone can limit the woman's ability to seek support and advice. We want women to call our service from any phone without being concerned about the cost.

This increase in the number of families in refuge (185 individuals) in 2023 compared to (131 individuals) in 2022 was due to a reduction in the stay times for families from 12 weeks to 8 weeks and through a streamlined work process with our local authority who provide temporary move on or in some cases permanent accommodation for families. Notwithstanding this, we were unable to accommodate 293 individuals in 2023. We remain concerned that many families are moving into homeless accommodation post refuge and while our provision has improved, the numbers seeking crisis accommodation as they are unsafe in their homes has not reduced.

Our support structure for families is underpinned by a support plan structure, with each woman allocated a key worker in the refuge team and the children are allocated a

key worker from the children's refuge support worker, both teams work collectively to support the needs of the family and advocate with external agencies on their behalf. Key working facilitated women to make support plans and identify goals in the areas of Mental Health & Wellbeing, Housing, Education/Employment, Legal/Court, Safety, Finance, Physical Health, Social Support and Parenting. The refuge team provided 276 interventions directly supporting women to work towards achieving these goals working with a range of agencies. The work with children is reported on later in this report. We stepped up and enhanced the provision of essential supports to women and children, many of whom experience financial difficulties caused by domestic violence. Much of this support is resourced through philanthropic funding, however the needs are not one-off and are repeated for many families we see again and again.

We provided clothing, toys, food and grocery vouchers throughout the year. We were successful in accessing the European Social Fund (ESF+) FEAD food programme. ESF+ Food and Basic Material Support is designed to support European Member States in addressing the basic needs to bring people in our community out of poverty. The FEAD programme is funded by ESF+ under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills, and Training Program. Families in domestic violence refuges are one of the key target groups in the programme. MWRSS were successful in obtaining access to this ongoing provision of food aid in September 2023.

The elimination of lone working at night was a major achievement in 2023 and helped us move towards our ambition of eliminating all lone working. The organisation will work towards the total elimination of lone working (currently in place at weekends) by the end of 2024. It enhances our capacity to manage risk for families and staff to ensure their safety is prioritised, and it enables us to provide increased support to overnight and weekend refuge admissions, helpline call management etc.



## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Provision of refuge accommodation over an 8-week period to women and children.
- Delivery of wrap around key working support services to women and children in refuge.
- Enhancement of our Helpline provision to improve accessibility.
- Resourcing and provision of essential basic supports to women staying in refuge.
- Provision of Emergency grants to support the financial needs of families in refuge.
- Elimination of lone working at night to reduce risk and ensure the safety of women, children and our staff team.

Actions	Outcomes
Providing Refuge Accommodation to Women and Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 92 women stayed in refuge and 93 children during 2023.</li> <li>• This was a 41% increase in the number of women and children in refuge in 2023 compared with 2022.</li> </ul>
Enhancing our 24-Hour Helpline Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We received 1122 helpline calls to the 24 helpline.</li> <li>• In September 2023 we launched our new freephone number through funding received from Bank of Ireland Begin Together Fund and DigitalWell</li> </ul>
Live Night Support Workers in Refuge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elimination of lone working at night in our refuge facility, increasing our capacity to respond to high-risk support needs, overnight admissions and helpline calls during the night. We now have a live night shift worker, in addition to the sleeping shift worker we had.</li> </ul>
Key Working and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of 1313 support sessions to women who were in our service.</li> <li>• The Refuge Team provided 276 interventions supporting women to work towards achieving these goals working with a range of agencies</li> </ul>



Essential Basic Supports-these are supports that families coming into refuge may need e.g., vouchers, food, toiletries, clothing and toys for children.

### A. European Social Fund+ Food and Basic Material Support

From Oct- to December 2023 the Refuge team coordinated food packs for 77 women who had in total of 96 children that were linked with MWRSS.

### B. Clothing packs and Toiletry packs

These are essential for families to give them comfort and warmth until they can work with Keyworkers to obtain access to social welfare or bank accounts.

### C. Hygiene Packs

As part of the Meath County Council and government initiative of tackling period poverty, we accessed feminine hygiene products through this resource.

The Refuge team coordinated the distribution of approx. 90 Feminine Hygiene packs (with six months' supply) from September - December 2023.

### D. Emergency Grants and Vouchers

Through philanthropic funding we were able to provide emergency grants and vouchers to women in refuge. Emergency Grants were allocated to women in refuge to support a range of needs including legal fees; travel costs, security system in home, car repairs, moving into a new rental accommodation post refuge, translation of legal documents, dental work etc

€3050 in vouchers to women were allocated through the refuge programme

### Counselling

- 20 women staying in refuge were referred to counselling and 23 women were referred via our helpline (43 women in total)



## CASE STUDY

# Sarah's\* journey through our service

### Part 1

Mary\* called our helpline looking for advice. She was with her daughter Sarah\* who was very upset, as she left her husband with her two children, with support from An Garda Síochána the previous night. Mary wanted to help her daughter but did not know what was available. She explained that she was living with her adult son who has special needs, and that she wanted to support her daughter Sarah and grandchildren, but they both knew it was not possible to continue to stay with her.

Sarah gave permission for Mary to tell us her story as she was very upset, and we provided support and information via speaker phone about her legal options and our court support service via our Outreach Service, information on making a safety plan, our children's service, our counselling service and let her know about our emergency crisis refuge service. Sarah and Mary agreed to call us back shortly after they discussed their options.



## Helpline Staff's Perspective

We received the phone call from Mary, and we could tell that both she and her daughter Sarah were very distressed. We could tell that Mary was feeling overwhelmed and upset also and wanted to support her daughter and two grandchildren as best as she could. We explained the court orders available to Sarah. Mary mentioned that the Gardai had talked about going to court also, but Sarah was afraid to see her ex-husband and she had no solicitor. She was reassured that for the protection/interim barring order, as they are interim orders, her husband would not have to be there and that down the line for the return date she could explore applying for Legal Aid. I

talked about our services. We had space in our Community-Based Refuge units where we had a three-bedroom house available for up to 8 weeks, where pending assessment, Sarah and her two children could stay and get support from our staff and have space to consider her next steps. We are always hopeful that women and children will avail of the support and services we have to offer. We know it is a huge decision to make and a very difficult time for the women and children, but we are lucky to have the perspective where we are witness to many women and children's journeys through our service and see how empowered they are with the decisions they make.

### Part 2

Sarah called back our Helpline after 30 minutes and completed an intake assessment with staff. She was offered a Community-Based Refuge unit for her and her children. Sarah received food, toiletry and hygiene packs, and a voucher to purchase essentials for her and her children. Sarah worked with her Keyworker on her goals and achieved an interim barring order with the support of our Outreach Service. She stayed in Refuge for two weeks until the

order was served, and she was able to change the locks in her home. She got control over her finances and was able to have her wages moved to a new account. Sarah continued to receive counselling services for 12 sessions during and post her stay in Refuge. Her children continued to link in with our specialist children's service post-refuge to assist them process their experience of domestic violence.

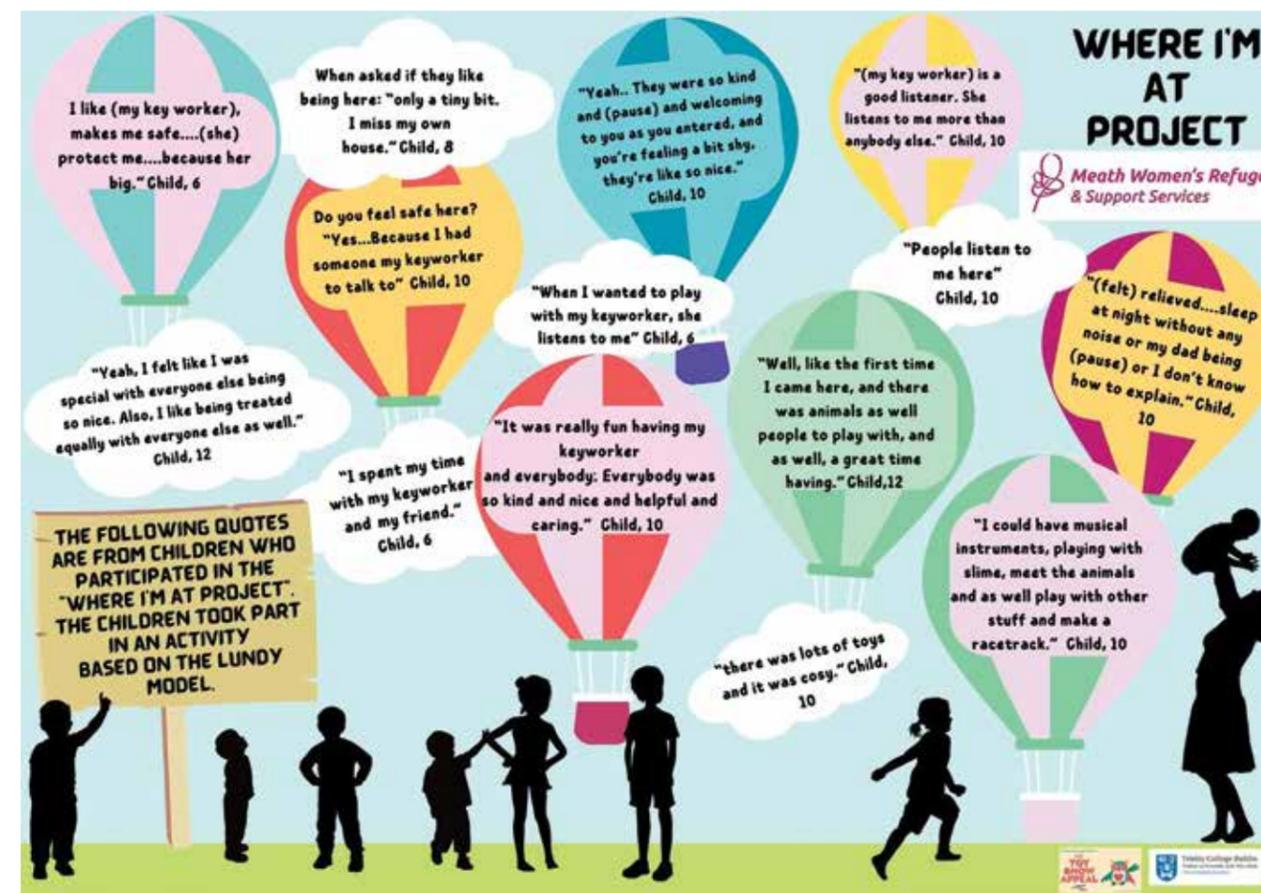


## Children and Young People's Programme

- 88 Children out of a total of 93 children were provided with supports in our Refuge Programme.
- Children in Refuge: 41% of children we worked with in refuge were aged between 5 and 9 years old with 32% aged 0-4 years old; 21% were aged 10-14 years and 6% aged 15-17 years.
- 36 Children living in the Community were supported through our community programme. The Children in community referred were 38% aged 10-14 years, 32% aged 5-9 years; 21% aged 0-4 years and 9% aged 15-17 years .
- 130 external agency contacts were received in relation to supporting children.

This year was a year of continued growth and development for the children and young person's programme in Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services. In March this year, we were able to grow the team through receipt of funding for a Children's Team Leader. This supported us with embedding the work of children and young people into our organisation as a core pillar of work. The successful launch of our evaluation report on the 'Where I'm At' Project-which was an evaluation of our pilot project working with Children in Refuge using a developmental one to one and group approach with children who have dedicated Children's key worker was funded by the Toy Show Appeal. The interest in its findings from other services and decision makers and finally mainstreaming the project into our core work was a major achievement.

There were also new areas of development in our work with children in the community such as the addition of a second play therapist to our therapeutic supports, which will be followed in 2024 by a new adolescent counselling service. The Children and Young Person's programme has continuously strived to ensure the voice of the child and young person is present in decisions that are made within our organisation. The national Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence-Zero Tolerance, named children and young people as victims of domestic violence for the first time and this is a huge step towards ensuring that services are properly resourced to provide the correct supports to children and young people who experience domestic violence.



(Top left) Launch of the Where I'm At Project with the Ombudsman for Children Dr. Niall Muldoon, project evaluator Dr. Eleanor Hollywood and Children's Team leader Katie Carry and Helena Moran Children's Worker on the Where I'm At Project.



## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Increase provision of supports to Children in refuge
- Completion of evaluation of Children in refuge Programme
- Increase in staffing compliment in the Children's Team for frontline work including a new Team Leader
- Provision of resources to families to engage in creative and play activities
- Expansion of therapeutic support services to children and young people

Actions	Outcomes
Provision of Supports to Children. This includes identifying needs, developing support plans and provides of support sessions with a child by our Childrens Team Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 289 developmental sessions were provided to children in both refuge and community settings</li> <li>• 100 support plans developed compared to 62 in 2022 across both programmes; an increase of 62%</li> </ul>
Supports for Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 149 parent support meetings took place with mothers in refuge and in the community</li> <li>• 888 contact calls and texts with parents (in and out) were made to parents</li> </ul>
Expanding and growing the Children's Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of children referred to the Children's Services from 131 in 2022 to 163 in 2023-an increase of 24% since 2022 with no additional frontline staff in place</li> <li>• Establishment of a Team leader role for the Children's Programme to expand the service provision in terms of staffing and resources</li> <li>• Mainstreaming a children's worker role in refuge for 2024</li> </ul>
Completion of an external evaluation on the Where I'm At project carried out by the School of Nursing and Midwifery in Trinity College Dublin of our work with children in refuge. The evaluation was funded by the Community Foundation of Ireland under the Toy Show Appeal Fund.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Evaluation completed and launched at a seminar event by Dr Niall Muldoon - Ombudsman for Children and workshop in Autumn 2023, along with funders, policy makers and other domestic violence services. Extensive coverage of the event and report in radio and print media</li> </ul>



Seeking funding to resource an Evaluation of our work with children in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant application with Katherine Howard Foundation successful. This work will be carried out in 2024, to support our commitment to best practice work with children.</li> </ul>
Advocating on the needs of Children who experience Domestic Violence and engaging in the wider children's rights movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation participated in the Barnardos Empower Kids initiative and is a member of national steering committee on Childhood Domestic Abuse Project.</li> <li>• We joined and have become an active member of the Children's Rights Alliance, bringing our perspectives on domestic violence and its impact on children onto the broader Children's Rights Agenda.</li> </ul>
Therapeutic recovery for Children and Young people Counselling for women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 66 sessions of play therapy were provided on site in our building and in two community settings by contracted play therapists funded through philanthropy and grants.</li> <li>• 2 referrals for two women to counselling</li> </ul>
Increasing our supports for families in refuge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new monthly newsletter for families in refuge on activities coming up</li> <li>• The team developed a welcome booklet to make families feel welcome.</li> <li>• Physical environment in the refuge building was improved to make it more child and family friendly</li> </ul>
Resourcing the cost of supports for children's needs Increasing service provision, including creative and play activities for children in refuge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 external activities were resourced for children and their families while in refuge through the RTE Toy Show Appeal Fund including swimming, cinema trips, recreation centres, zoo, library trips.</li> <li>• A number of workshops were provided on site including science and reptile workshops and a summer camp for children</li> </ul>
Provision of Essential Basic Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through a grant from the Children's Rights Alliance Christmas grant we provided food vouchers to 60 families which included 122 children in refuge and in the community.</li> <li>• Clothing and toys for children were provided on 152 occasions; this is on an ongoing basis</li> <li>• At Christmas time we provided families with €2800 of toy vouchers to assist with Christmas gifts for children funded through a grant.</li> <li>• An additional €1005 worth of Smyths vouchers and activities vouchers were allocated to children during 2023</li> </ul>



## CASE STUDY

# Children in Refuge

The following case study is about a family who resided in refuge for a number of weeks. The mum and three children were actively engaged in the *Where I'm At* project.

The family came into refuge from a different county, so the area was very new to them. Overnight, the children had to leave behind their schools, friends, community, home and their belongings. The first step was supporting the family to settle into refuge. This was supported by providing the children new clothes and toys to help them to feel comfortable and more at home. The children were included in this by asking them what kind of toys or activities they like to do. One child, for example, loved arts and crafts, so drawing and colouring materials were included in her pack.

Once the family had settled in and the mother's key worker had completed any assessments and paperwork needed, the

children's support worker met with the family. A meeting and support planning session took place in the house with the children and mother. The families' objectives focused on education, socialising with other children, creative play sessions and getting to know the community better.

The children's support worker worked closely with the local Education Welfare Officer and schools to try and find the children school places in the area. In the meantime, particularly for the younger two children, the children's support worker provided the children with worksheets suitable for their age in different school subjects. The children's support worker contacted the girls' previous schools and

arranged for their books, school supplies and some work to be sent to them.

We were successful in finding the oldest child a place in first year in a local secondary school. The children's support worker met regularly with the young person and consulted with her at each step to make sure her voice was heard in these decisions and that she was supported along the way. Through this, the young person, felt confident to accept the new school place. There had been past experiences of bullying in their last school and they were anxious about meeting new people so this was a big step for them. The young person met the principal and another student who would also be starting and was given a tour of the school.

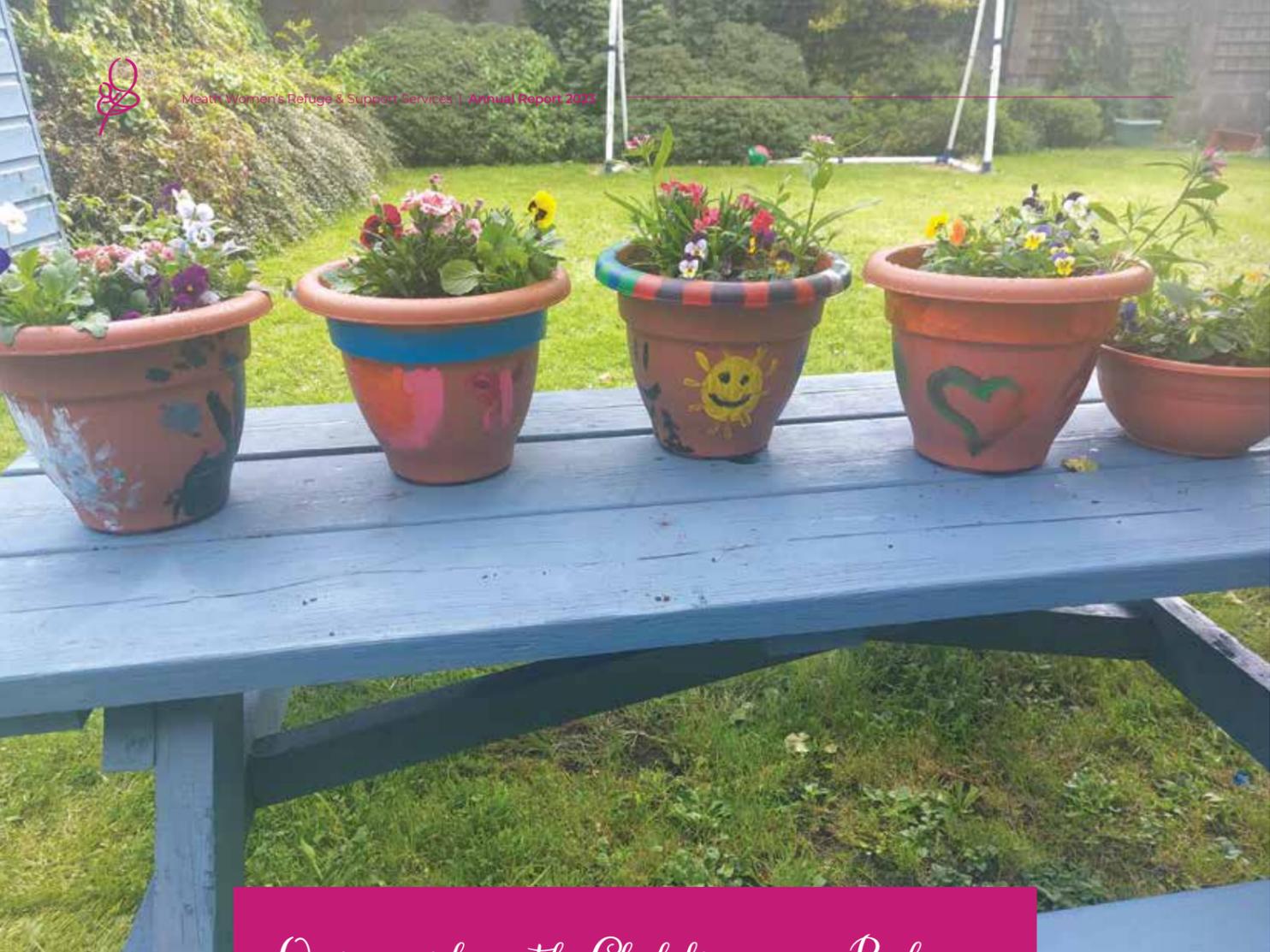
Creative play sessions were completed with the children during their time in refuge. Often the two younger children attended for up to two hours and the eldest child and their mother were able to spend time together down the town. The children enjoyed arts and crafts, playing in the garden, making bracelets, clay, and lots of messy play and slime making. The children would plan what they wanted to do ahead of each session and the children's support worker would prepare accordingly. These sessions also strengthen the mother's relationship with her oldest child

and provided them a quiet space to talk to their mother about what they had experienced without worrying about their younger siblings overhearing the conversation.

The younger children spoke about being lonely and wanting to socialise with other children. The children's support worker organised a group activity with the Children's team which involved a science experiment group coming into the refuge. The children learned how to make slime and other messy play and sensory activities and then had lunch after as a group.

During the family's time in refuge the children's support worker spent time showing the family different services in the community such as the library, parks, recreation centres, swimming pool etc. The family planned on using the library throughout their time in refuge. Activities were also planned for the family during their time in refuge. The children's support worker booked trips to the cinema and to Jump Zone for the family to attend. The purpose of play, developmental sessions and creative activities is to give a child and young person a way to express their emotions in a safe space while activities and trips provide an opportunity to do normal activities that their peers do.





## Our work with Children in Refuge



## CASE STUDY

# Children in the Community: John's journey through our services

In June 2023, Sonya\* and her son John\* aged 11 were referred to the community children's programme following a call with our helpline team. Sonya had been signposted to our service from a Play Therapist that was working in John's school.

The Community Children Support Worker (CCSW) met with Sonya for a parent meeting and carried out a risk assessment and support plan to identify the best possible support for John. During this initial assessment it was disclosed that there had been issues ongoing around access due to the continuation of abuse in the post-separation period and it seemed to be impacting both Sonya and John negatively in terms of their emotional wellbeing.

Prior to John beginning any supports, our priority was to engage with mam and ensure her and John's safety were taken into consideration. Sonya was referred to our outreach team for court support. A referral was also made to our case management outreach worker for longer term, on-going support regarding safety, practical and emotional support. Sonya was referred for individual counselling sessions focused on empowerment, building her self-esteem, and addressing her trauma. She also participated in 'The Freedom Programme', a support group which educates women on the dynamics of abuse and helps them regain control of their lives.

During the initial meeting, as John was still going on access visits with dad, the CCSW explained the consent policy to mam, detailing the need for consent from John's dad to engage John in any of our community programmes. Sonya indicated she would discuss this with John's dad, expressing concerns about obtaining his agreement. One

of the major challenges or barriers when working with the family was navigating the consent process. CCSW worked with Sonya over a 2-month period until consent had been sought.

From the first initial meeting at the start of June, it wasn't until mid-August that John began his first one to one session. John participated in a total of eight one-to-one psycho-educational sessions and the 'It's Good To Be Me' group programme, both of which are designed to help children understand and process their experiences. John responded well to both programmes, which helped him process his emotions and reduce feelings of overwhelm.

Upon completion of the group, CCSW and the case management outreach worker met with Sonya to discuss and review all the supports and work both Sonya and John had engaged with to date and what were the next priorities for the family. From this meeting it was decided that follow on supports were needed and John was referred to Play Therapy to ensure he continued to have a safe space to understand and process his experiences of domestic violence.

Sonya and John's journey highlights the critical importance of comprehensive, wraparound support services for families experiencing domestic abuse. Our Community Children's Programme along with our Outreach team played a pivotal role in helping Sonya and John transition from a state of crisis to a place of stability and empowerment. This case study underpins the ongoing need for resources and collaboration to support families in similar situations, ensuring their safety and fostering resilience.



## Outreach and Community Programme

- The outreach programme supported 492 individual women in 2023, a small increase on 2022 when we worked with 482 women
- The outreach team accompanied women to court 392 times, compared to 217 in 2022-an 81% increase on 2022 figures
- The outreach team facilitated 339 applications for domestic violence court orders, compared to 221 in 2022-a 53% increase

The Outreach and Community Programme supports women living within the community who have experienced or are currently experiencing domestic violence and abuse. Each woman who accesses our services has a unique set of service needs and barriers that she faces.

In terms of our case management programme, our staff assess each woman's needs and develop individualised support plans to support women to increase their safety and independence. As part of our service provision, a danger assessment is completed with each woman to identify specific areas of risk that the

abuse presents. A unique safety plan is then developed with each woman to enhance her safety in each identified area of risk.

The case management service supports women with a variety of needs, including domestic violence education, emotional support, access to counselling, advocacy around housing, social welfare, healthcare, and economic resilience, advocating with/alongside the woman with An Garda Síochána. Referrals to case management are sent from the helpline, refuge, court, and external services including TUSLA, An Garda Síochána, and Meath County Council.

In 2023, the team agreed on a new case management practice structure and approach which aligns with our overarching purpose and values. Because our work as an organisation is led by the needs of women, each support plan is developed as a collaboration between the woman and the case management worker, with the woman's individual needs guiding goals and objectives. During the initial meeting, the case management worker creates a safe space for the woman to identify the current challenges she is facing. We support the woman to assess risks within the relationship, whether the relationship has ended or is ongoing. We then support women to develop an individualized safety plan for herself and her children based on the specified risks. The case management worker also facilitates a needs assessment which informs the woman's support plan objectives, and once all support plan objectives have been achieved, the client and case management worker begin to look at the next steps and future plans for the woman. When the woman is ready, we close her file and complete the case management service referral.

In 2023, we observed an increase of women who accessed outreach services through both court support and case management. This was due in part to increased attendance by our court support workers in Trim and Navan courts on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday mornings. The court programme not only accompanies women to court, but the organisation also prepares court applications, manages direct phone calls for support from women for support and referrals from our 24-hour helpline, provides post court support e.g., Legal Aid applications and other related supports. We also link women who access this programme into a range of other supports provided by the team.

In May 2023, after 30 years in the refuge building, the Outreach and Community Team moved to their own dedicated office in Navan to support the expansion of the programme,- this included a new Team Leader role, a new case worker role and in 2024 a new community mobilisation programme. As the outreach and community programme works with the largest numbers of women, it is vitally important that it can meet the growing demands highlighted earlier. We know that the more women supported in our court programme will in turn impact on our case management work load and the wrap around supports that women may need.

The provision of funds to allocate emergency grants to women we work with has been hugely important as part of our wrap around support services and commonly funded areas including home security to increase their safety and legal fees. For many women who are just above thresholds for state supports, these grants are vital to supporting them to move on post an abusive relationship or in some incidences to be able to leave an abusive relationship.

The collaboration between MWRSS and Rape Crisis North East ( RCNE) has increased support options for survivors engaged with our services.

We welcomed new policy developments this year including a review of legal aid thresholds, which cause financial hardship for women who are just above the threshold for legal aid fees and acts as a barrier to protection and safety, as they have to find the funds. The introduction of statutory domestic violence leave entitlements for women who experience domestic abuse and a review of the family law infrastructure is very welcome and timely.

(Top left) MWRSS outreach and community team members attending the launch of the new sexual violence counselling service for Co. Meath.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Expansion of Programme's Work and Team to include a new Team Leader and a Case Management Worker
- Movement of team to new dedicated office for the Outreach Team
- Additional Attendance and supports at court twice a week to support women returning to court and on the only other day MWRSS not on site
- Provision of a Case Management Wrap Around Programme to support additional needs
- Provision of peer-to-peer group programmes

Actions	Outcomes
Expansion of Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023, an increase in core funding enabled MWRSS to appoint a team leader to the Outreach Programme. The Outreach Team Leader has supported the implementation of the strategic plan and overseeing of day-to-day service provision within the Outreach Programme</li> <li>• One new role of Case Worker was recruited in mid-2023</li> <li>• Additional one day a week supports for court accompaniment to support women returning for safety orders with limited social networks or legal supports and one additional morning a week in Trim court to support ex-parte (initial) protection order applications</li> </ul>
Case Management Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new case management system was developed in 2023, which means that women who require additional support needs can access wrap around supports</li> <li>• 49 women were supported through the case management programme over the 7 months that it was in place.</li> </ul>
Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The outreach programme supported 492 individual women in 2023</li> <li>• We managed 124 direct enquiries for supports</li> <li>• We advocated on behalf of clients to external services 269 times.</li> <li>• We provided 124 In person support sessions to women</li> </ul>

Court Accompaniment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased provision of accompaniment services on Wednesdays and Thursdays</li> <li>• 339 court applications were made on behalf of 294 women (an increase of 56% since 2022)</li> <li>• 392 court accompaniments where we supported women while at court</li> </ul>
Recovery and Therapeutic Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 women were referred for counselling services</li> </ul>
Group Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 48 women attended the support group programme</li> </ul>
Emergency Grants and Vouchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of emergency grants to meet a range of needs including medical needs, educational supports for children; security systems for homes; outstanding debts and legal fees costs for women who exceed the legal aid thresholds</li> <li>• Grocery Vouchers to the value of €1195 were allocated to women in community settings.</li> </ul>



Refuge and Outreach Team members participating in coaching with horses provided by Emma Jane Clarke.



## CASE STUDY

# Ana's journey through our services

Ana was first referred to the outreach service by the court clerk when she had presented to Trim Court seeking a Protection Order. The outreach and community court accompaniment worker met with Ana and completed the required application paperwork. Ana disclosed a history of high-risk physical abuse perpetrated by her husband against her and her two children.

The court accompaniment worker collated the background information for the application and an Interim Barring Order was granted. Staff discussed a thorough safety plan with Ana, particularly around the perpetrator's potential reactions to receiving the Interim Barring Order.

Staff completed a child protection referral to enhance the children's safety and supported Ana throughout this process. The perpetrator had accrued hundreds of euros in debt, and Ana's bills were in arrears due to years of financial abuse.

Our emergency survivor fund supported Ana to address the arrears to get power back over her finances. The fund also supported Ana to change the locks and install a security system in her home. Despite these arrears, Ana was initially denied Legal Aid because of her income.

Through the support and advocacy of the case management worker, the decision was changed, enabling Ana to receive Legal Aid to cover the cost of representation at the Barring Order hearing.

Staff accompanied Ana to the hearing and the courts granted Ana a three-year barring order. Ana's children began attending sessions with the Children's Programme, and Ana began counselling through our programme.

Since Ana became engaged with our services, she has been able to increase her hours at work and her safety has increased exponentially. She has become more financially independent and received the therapeutic support she and her children need to look forward to the future.

## Strategic Priority: Advocacy and Profile

- Staff attended and spoke at 29 in person events and reached an audience of 1,984 people
- Our #RelationshipQuestions Campaign was rolled out and the overall impressions was 414,872 over 4 weeks, with an estimate that 50,000 women in Meath saw the materials at least six times over the period.
- We reached 193,630 people on social media in 2023, with a following of 4,427 on social media platforms
- New website developed to launch in January 2024



*(Left) Superintendent Martina Noonan receiving her Go Purple Champion Award 2023 on Go Purple Day (Right) Minister for Public Expenditure Paschal Donohue TD meets Sinead Smith CEO who spoke at the launch of the Good Causes Awards 2024.*

Under this goal we aim to raise our profile to ensure women and children who need our services are aware we exist and to increase the accessibility of our support services. Secondly, we want to promote better understanding and responses to domestic violence locally and nationally. Specifically in 2023, we wanted to improve our external communications through better marketing materials, education information and a new website, as well as increased profile and relationship building across the community in Co. Meath.

In 2023, we began recording for the first time the number of events we attended and spoke at in the community, in order to better understand our engagement at local level. In person talks with schools, business and community events are a great opportunity to raise awareness of our services and share insight as to the dynamics of domestic violence. We plan to further develop our community outreach and education work in 2024. Some highlights from our community engagement during 2023 were:

## International Women's Day (IWD)



*(Left) Sinead Gogan Chairperson speaking about our work at the IWD 2023 event hosted by the Meath Chambers of Commerce. (Right) International Women's Day exchange with Women's Caucus of Meath County Council elected representatives.*

Staff presented to a number of local businesses to mark International Women's Day on March 8th in Meath, including Tara Mines, Utmost and Meath Chamber of Commerce IWD lunch. To mark International Women's Day, we hosted the Women's Caucus of female county councillors at the refuge and discussed the role of female leaders in advocating for greater gender equality in Co. Meath.

## Go Purple Day

The national domestic violence awareness raising day – Go Purple Day – was started by a local Garda Stacey Looby in Navan in 2020 and has grown from strength to strength. For the first time, we hosted a Coffee Morning at refuge to mark the day (28th April) and presented Superintendent Martina Noonan with the inaugural Community Champion 2023 award to mark her 31 years of service to An Garda Siochana and dedication to supporting families affected by domestic violence and training other officers.



*Sinead Smith CEO, Katharina Bentley CEO Men's Aid and Garda Stacey Looby Go Purple Day launch 2023.*

## Online Communications

We contracted Grayson Rose agency to develop a new website over the last six months of 2023 to launch in January 2024. The new website has greatly enhanced technical capacity, as well as an integrated webchat function and online donations feature. Funding from Meta enabled the development of the new website which will bring a fresh look and feel to our online presence. In addition, new organisation leaflets, posters and pop-up stands were printed to enable a better physical presence at community events and when advertising our services.

## #RelationshipQuestions - Digital Media Awareness Campaign

Thanks to funding from Meta our #RelationshipQuestions digital campaign, designed and managed by (14 pieces of creative media messaging about domestic violence and our support services in Meath) ran for a total of 3 weeks in January 2023 on Facebook and Instagram, initially targeted at 18–30-year-olds living in Co. Meath. The campaign was later translated into 4 languages (Lithuanian, Irish, Polish & Russian) and ran again for a week in October 2023 targeting 15–55-year-olds in the Meath area.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Develop and roll out a social media campaign in a number of languages most often used in Co. Meath as per the CSO statistics aimed at women aged between 18 and 25 targeting 50,000 women
- Increase community visibility of work presenting and speaking at different events
- Delivery of a radio awareness campaign during the 16 Days of Action Against Violence alongside our colleagues in Drogheda and Dundalk Women and Children's Refuges
- Redesign and relaunch website to increase accessibility of information about our work and services

Actions	Outcomes
Growing our Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Lottery Good Cause of the Year 2023:</b> In October 2023 we were awarded the national title of National Lottery Good Cause of the Year Award 2023. This was a huge achievement for our organisation and a testament to the women and children who journey through the difficult years of the pandemic and the commitment of our dedicated staff who supported them. We hope the award will shed a light on the quiet, often hidden work of local domestic violence services across the country.</li> </ul>
Local Community Engagement and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff attended and spoke at 29 in person events and reached an audience of 1,984 people</li> </ul>
Representing our work and Advocating for Women and Children we work with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We supported our staff team with training on public speaking/ radio interviews and social media.</li> <li>• Five staff took part in radio interviews during the year and deliver clear and powerful messages.</li> <li>• We had more than ten print, radio and online articles in local media (Meath Chronicle, LMFM, Meath Herald) and a two-week radio campaign with LMFM-our local radio station</li> <li>• We were prominent in several national media features including: RTE Radio 1 in December 2024 for an interview on how children we work with are impacted by food poverty; and in the Irish Independent and Examiner in relation to the launch of our evaluation of our children's service in November.</li> </ul>



Develop and roll out customised awareness raising initiatives on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) to ensure women living in Co. Meath know about our work and the supports we provide

- We successfully grew our social media presence from a relatively low base to reach 193,630 people in 2023, with a following of 4,427.
- **#RelationshipQuestions Digital Campaign:** The overall impressions was 414,872 over 4 weeks, with an estimate that 50,000 women in Meath saw the materials at least six times over the period. This is a huge reach for the organisation across our target audience in Meath, and we had a particularly busy year on our helpline as contact increase.
- **LMFM 16 Days Campaign:** Meath Womens' Refuge & Support Services developed an innovative awareness campaign with LMFM Radio, championed by Sinead Brassil, and partnering with Drogheda Women & Children's Refuge and Women's Aid Dundalk, which ran from 25th November to 10th December to mark the 16 Days of Action Against Gender Based Violence. LMFM ran a series of ads on air and on social media to raise awareness of domestic violence and coercive control and conducted a range of in-depth interviews with staff and community partners.
- New website and communications materials developed. New information cards, pull ups, letter heads, logo and flyers for services completed to ensure a uniform brand across the organisation.



## Strategic Priority: Technology, Infrastructure and Space

### New Refuge Building

The organisation worked alongside our Design Team and Meath County Council to submit a Stage 2 application for the new refuge building in June 2023. A stage 2 application is a detailed design of the new building, design team reports and other consultant reports and a full budget breakdown provided by the quantity surveyors. In September 2023 we received feedback from the Department of Housing that significant changes were required to the budget and therefore a redesign was needed to reduce the cost. The organisation sought additional feedback and a review process was undertaken of the project. An updated Stage 2 application will be submitted in 2024. We now expect that the project will not break ground until 2025, post approval of budget and planning, which takes approximately 20 weeks.

(L-R) Stephen Doyle, CU Plus, Peter Dolan, Navan SC, Sinead Smith MWRSS Sharan Carolan, CU Plus, Trish McDonnell Meath Chamber.

## Physical Space

This year we moved our outreach and community team off-site to their own office based in the local community and our CEO, finance and administration team off site also. The rationale behind the move was twofold; the growth in services by the refuge and children's team and the staff compliment meant the spaces for non-refuge staff was reducing while these teams were growing in size. The move was completed by June 2023 and funding for both offices was provided by our core funder Tusla. While originally, it was envisaged that all our services would be co-located in the new refuge building, this will now not be the case, due to the reduced budget available for the new build, and the organisation will be managing three work and service locations into the future. We continued our valuable and supportive working relationship with Tuath Housing who provide 3 accommodation units in the community which act as refuge- namely 2 houses and one apartment at a cost rental rate funded by Meath County Council. In addition, Meath County Council provide a house in the community at no cost to the organisation. This working partnership has

been in place since May 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic. It allowed the organisation to move from a communal refuge in one setting to increasing our capacity from 5 units to 8 units of refuge accommodation. It is our expectation that this partnership will continue until the new refuge building is in place.

Running a refuge building and maintaining repairs, safety and ensuring we have a warm, welcoming family environment is paramount to ensuring that when families come to stay in refuge, that they feel supported and that our building feels like a home space. In 2023, we made efforts to ensure our children's spaces and family spaces operated to a good standard, within the confines of the resources available to us and the fact that our current refuge building is an old building. Following a fire safety review, we put in a range of additional safety measures and a programme of works to ensure that our building is a safe space. It is an ongoing challenge to resource repairs, maintenance and equipment when no core funding exists and we rely heavily on grants both from the state and non-state actors.



## Key Developments in 2023

The organisation will move funding department after 2023 to the new dedicated Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence Agency-CUAN and our core funding from Tusla and Victims of Crime will come from this agency, under the auspices of the Department of Justice. This will mean new ways of engagement and infrastructure will come into place and this year the organisation attended a number of consultative events to prepare for these changes. We look forward to working with CUAN on the implementation of the Zero Tolerance Strategy.

## Domestic violence and homelessness

As cited earlier in this report, we continue to see huge demand for refuge being unmet. The organisation and our colleagues in the Domestic Violence Accommodation Forum met Minister for Housing Daragh O'Brien in 2023 to appraise him on the situation in our work. In terms of the seven organisations in the eastern region who make up the group, we experienced 2,931 unmet requests for refuge in the previous year. Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services could not meet 293 requests for refuge in 2023, compared with 300 in 2022. We submitted a policy briefing paper with a

range of recommendations to address issues of homelessness, including the disaggregation of statistics on family homelessness to ensure that homelessness as a result of domestic violence could be monitored against progress in the quarterly statistics issued by the department. Unfortunately, we have had limited follow up engagement on our proposals. The housing needs of survivors of domestic violence must be reflected in the Housing Strategy and updated guidelines for local authorities. New and flexible policy approaches and responses are required.



## Sexual Violence Counselling Services

We saw the launch of the new sexual violence counselling service for Co. Meath in December 2023. Minister for Justice Helen McEntee T.D. launched the new service. The project application was submitted to Tusla from Rape Crisis Centre North East and Meath Women's Refuge Services with the new service rolled out in early 2024. The counselling service will take referrals from our organisation and will also work across the community with males

## Essential Supports

Research consistently indicates that domestic violence increases financial vulnerability and can cause poverty. In our frontline work we have worked with a range of partners to bridge the gap and provide a safety net for families who experience increased financial pressures as a direct result of domestic violence. In 2023, we resourced €13,935 in vouchers, of which €10,130 were grocery vouchers and €3,805 were toys and activities vouchers. Out of this total fund €7,880 was allocated in advance of Christmas 2023.

We provided clothing and supports on 152 occasions as many families coming into refuge have little clothing and money available to them. All of these activities were resourced by grants and philanthropy. Since 2020, we have been provided Emergency Survivor Grants to women in refuge and in the community and in 2023, 46 Emergency Grants were provided to women at a total cost of €16,134.50. These direct grants are resourced through philanthropy. We note that the UK recently allocated £2 million to a state funded Flee Programme to support women and children who experience domestic violence and want to leave the situation with financial resources to do so. We would like to see a similar scheme adopted in Ireland and will advocate for this in 2024.

and females over the age of 14. In the longer term, the organisation would like to see a fully resourced dedicated Rape Crisis Centre for Co. Meath in line with the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention, a Council of Europe Treaty to which Ireland is a party. The convention recommends a dedicated centre for areas with a population of 200,000 or more. Meath has a population of 220,000.

As noted earlier in the report the European Social Fund (FEAD) resourced food for 77 families, taking huge pressure off the organisation where we would have had to rely on donations from the community. The costs of the supports outlined above are in place to meet the basic needs of women and children we work with, but they are not funded by the State in the main. The cost of delivery of a full suite of supports for local domestic violence services is underestimated and huge gaps have to be met year on year by frontline services. The new agency, CUAN, we believe, will have to examine the cost base of what running a local service actually entails and how this can be supported, particularly in the context of expanding and growing local services.



Attendees at the launch of the new sexual violence counselling service for Co. Meath



## Therapeutic Recovery

A core pillar of post domestic violence recovery is therapeutic interventions such as counselling. In 2023 we provided 540 sessions of counselling to 93 women, fully funded through grants and philanthropy at a cost of €32,400. This is in line with our investment in 2022, when we resourced 525 sessions, a slight increase on 2022 figures. However, in 2023, we provided more counselling sessions to less women with a cap of 20 sessions as a maximum number of sessions. To do this year on year is not sustainable and core funding for this work is required. We will be focused on documenting the impact of our work in this area in 2024, in order to share learning and explore the potential of mainstreaming the programme. We have alongside our colleagues in sexual violence services called for legislative

changes so that the use of counselling notes in criminal proceedings, such as coercive control cases is outlawed. We believe this practice is a breach of trust in the counselling and therapeutic environment and the relationship between counsellors and client and that it retraumatises survivors of abuse. We have received data subject access requests (SARS) from the Gardai when prosecuting cases for access to counselling notes, however, the organisation has a policy of not documenting counselling sessions. We are still required to provide information as to whether counselling took place and the number of sessions. Confidential services need to be able to ensure they are not censured and obliged legally to disclose counselling information.

## Children and Consent

Finally, we welcome the naming of children and their needs in the national Zero Tolerance strategy and changes that are underway. We continue to see lack of consent from a parent acting as a barrier to children accessing services, even when that parent has a domestic violence court order in place against them. This makes it extremely challenging to support a child's recovery and we would call on Judges

and legislators to dispense with consent when it is in the interests of a child, and to ensure as per the legislation that the voice of children is heard and listened to in family court decisions. We welcome the current review by the Department of Justice of the in-camera rule in family law hearings and more broadly the implementation of a fully resourced family law reform strategy and family justice strategy.

## Cyber Security

We worked with our IT providers Evad IT to extend IT services to our two new offices and installed additional security measures onto all laptops and mobile devices across the organisation.

## E-Safe Central Relationship Management System - CRM

Our Central Relationship Management System (CRM) is E-Safe, a customised Salesforce CRM system used by just over 20 other local domestic violence support services for the recording of all frontline service work and collecting statistical information. This year we added an additional function to manage

our fundraising and donor engagement and relationships, working with Enclude who manage the E-Safe System. This will allow us to document and capture information on our activities and will assist us in our contact with donors and will add transparency on funding received.



# Strategic Priority: Sustainable Organisation

## Governance and Management

Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG (known generally as Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services) is constituted as a company limited by guarantee as set out under parts 1-15 of the Companies Act 2014. Its purpose and objectives are set out in its Memorandum of Association and how it conducts its business is set out in its Articles of Association. Both documents (now the Constitution) are publicly available from the Companies Registration Office website ([www.cro.ie](http://www.cro.ie)).

## Our Constitution and Charitable Purpose

Our strategic plan was developed in line with our charitable purpose which is contained in our Governing Constitution. The objectives and subsidiary objects outlined below are the purpose of the organisation's existence and are core to who we are and what we do.



## Main Objective

To provide emergency crisis accommodation and supports to women and children who must leave home due to domestic abuse within the family. To also provide outreach support services (including information on their options), to women in the community that are experiencing domestic abuse. To provide these services and supports in a caring and non-judgemental environment.

## Subsidiary Objectives

As objects incidental and ancillary to the attainment of the main objective, the Company has the following subsidiary objects:

- A. To provide educational programmes that promote self-esteem, safety, and confidence to women and children who are or have experienced domestic abuse.
- B. To provide a range of supports, and individual counselling where appropriate to women who are or have experienced domestic abuse.
- C. To provide awareness of domestic violence within the community. To promote a zero tolerance of domestic violence and violence against women in our society.
- D. To engage with other agencies on behalf of women and children experiencing domestic abuse
- E. To advocate on behalf of women and children who have or who are experiencing domestic abuse.

## Governance Developments

Our annual report to the Charities Regulator was submitted in October 2023 as fully compliant for a second year in a row. We also made an annual report to the Approved Housing Body as we are a registered and approved housing body.

## Reporting

Our CEO reports directly to the board and has operational responsibility in line with their delegated schedule of duties which are documented in the board governance handbook. She is supported in this duty by the senior and middle management team. The CEO provides bi-monthly reports on behalf of the organisation, which includes a CEO and management team report, a financial report and management accounts prepared by the finance manager.

The strategic plan guides the development of annual work plans that are implemented on a year-to-year basis. All new policies and procedures are reviewed by the board before ratification. Decisions by the board are made using a consensus model, however if this is not possible then a voting system applies in line with the organisation's constitution.

The organisation made its annual return to the Charities Regulator in 2023 for the previous year and updated our compliance record. The organisation reported full compliance with the Charities Regulator's governance code.

## Management Team

We recruited the final staff for our full senior and middle management team in October 2023. The organisation employed 16 staff in 2017 and by December 2023, 35 staff were in situ, with this number set to rise in 2024 to between 40-42 staff. The purpose of the senior management team (SMT) is to hold the organisational focus or bigger picture in place, to ensure implementation of the strategic plan and to act as the link between the organisation and the board of directors. They drive innovation alongside the middle management team (MMT) and to oversee the development of new policies and procedures. It has a key role in representing the organisation and reporting to funders, legislators, and regulatory bodies and for the overall co-ordination of the work of the organisation. The CEO is the chief accountable officer to the board and is responsible to the board for the overall operation of the organisation. The role of manager was changed to CEO in January 2023, following an external review process carried out by a HR consultant to guide the board in the change of role which included a review of job specification and pay scale which was benchmarked against similar organisations in the sector.

The management team consists of two structures: namely the Senior Management Team which is made up of the CEO, Finance Manager and Development, Impact and Policy manager. This team meets every two weeks to oversee financial management, compliance, policy and management issues. The middle management team consists of the three programme Team Leaders in the refuge, children and outcome and community team. They are responsible for the management of frontline services and staff and they meet weekly. Both teams meet collectively on a monthly basis have a Team Charter and have a Structure document in place which outlines the separate role of each team and the joint roles respectively.



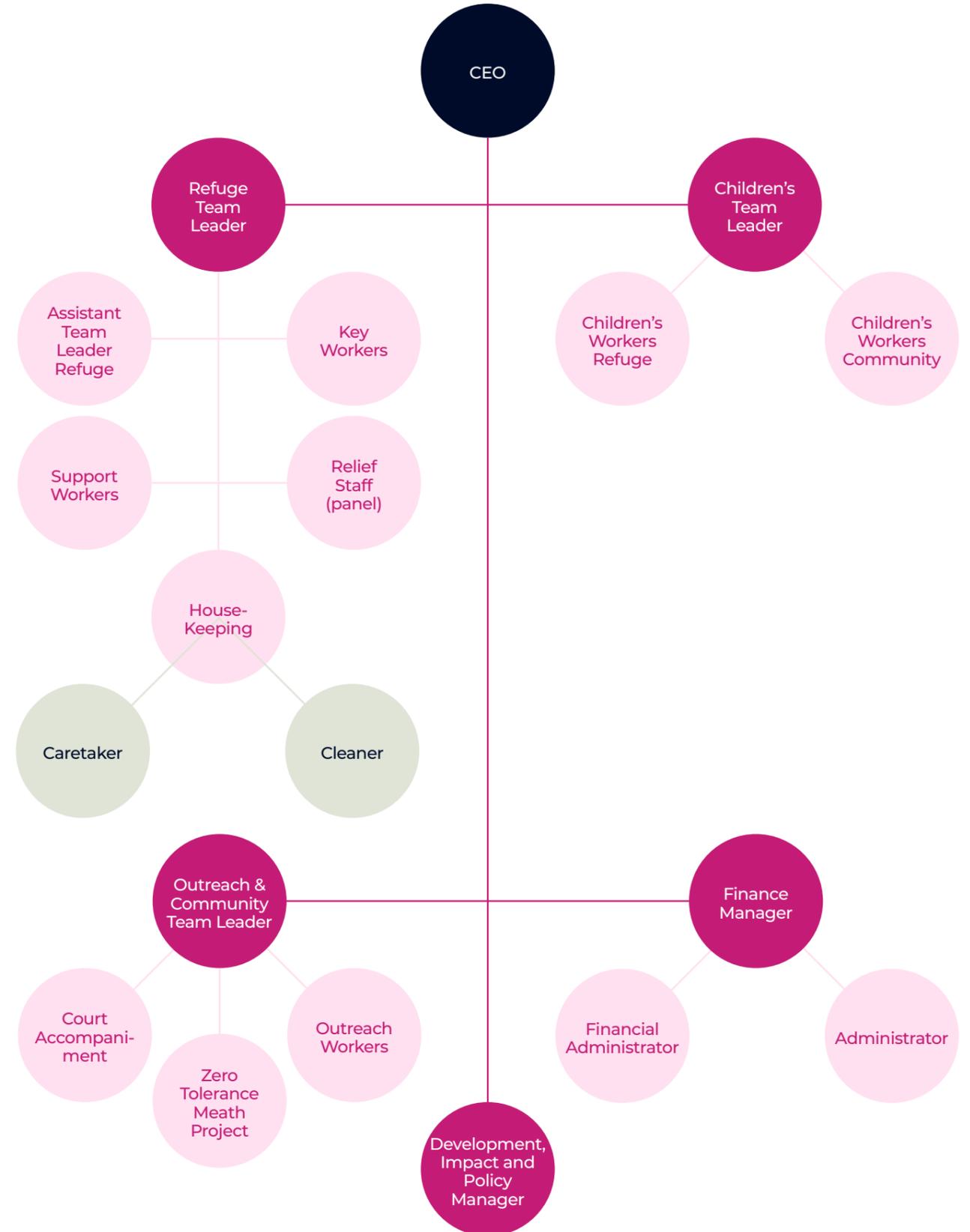
Some members of the middle and senior management team at our workshop with Deloitte Ireland.

### The management team provide leadership in key areas as outlined below:

1. Lead out on compliance and risk management areas relevant to their work focus which will include responsibility for compliance policy and risk management policy and risk register across the organisation
2. Undertake representational work externally e.g., on a policy committee relevant to their work.
3. Take an 'MMT or SMT team' approach to their work across common or shared areas externally.
4. Represent the organisation where the CEO is not available.

The organisation has invested in external coaching sessions for the team in 2023 and we were delighted to be provided with a pro-bono workshop by Deloitte Ireland on building leadership teams.

## Organisational Structure





## Board of Directors 2023



**Sinead Gogan**

**Chairperson and Chair of the HR sub group**

**Sinead is Chief Human Resources Officer with Deloitte Ireland.**

Working with Deloitte, Sinead has responsibility for the firm people and purpose strategy. Ms Gogan is a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development and holds post-graduate qualifications in employment law and alternate dispute resolution. In addition to her voluntary role with Meath Women's Refuge & Support Services Sinead was appointed as an ordinary member to the Board of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) in Ireland.



**Frank Long**

**Member of the Finance, Risk and Governance sub group**

**Frank is Chief Operations Officer for Oxfam .**

Frank Long is a finance professional who has worked across many industries including, accounting, media, research and the not-for-profit sector. As Chief Operations Officer for Oxfam Frank understands the balance between the development and delivery of organisational strategy and the smooth and efficient day-to-day running of operations. Frank has a keen interest in technology and how it can improve our working and social lives.



**Michelle Sweeney**

**Board lead on the development of the new refuge building working with the CEO**

**Michelle is Director with Opperman Associates, Architects.**

Michelle Sweeney has an extensive career in architecture and working in the architecture & planning industry. As Director with Oppermann Associates, Michelle has responsibility for design and in particular in relation to the company's leisure and schools work. She has in excess of twenty years experience in the design and implementation of large and complex projects both in Ireland and internationally.



**Claire Sheerin**

**Member of the Fundraising and Communications sub group**

**Claire is Communications Manager with Avist.**

Claire Sheeran is a communications professional with 10 years of experience in the not-for-profit sector. She is currently Communications Manager with Avista (Formerly Daughters of Charity Disability Support services) and has previously worked in the Jack and Jill Children's Foundation and Headline Ireland. Claire is a proud Meath woman and has served as a Board member with Meath Women's Refuge since March 2021.



**Richelle Manning**

**Treasurer and Chair of the Finance, Risk and Governance sub group**

**Richelle is Investor Relations and Credit Rating Manager for ESB.**

Richelle previously held a number of roles in the ESB Group including Finance Business Partner, Networks Governance Manager, and most recently Business Pricing Manager, Customer Solutions. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, and previously worked with KPMG in Dublin.



**Sinead Christian**

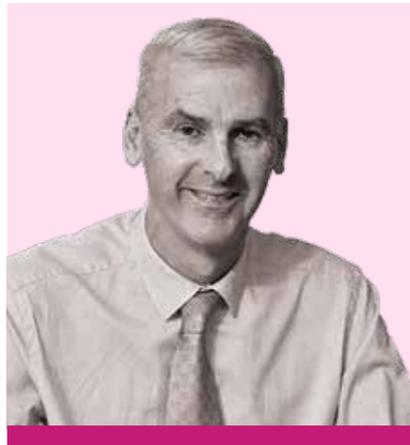
**Chair of Fundraising and Communications sub group**

**Sinead is Head of Development at Debra Ireland.**

Sinead has served on our board since 2018 and is undertaking her second term. She has an extensive background in marketing, management and fundraising in the private and charity sector. Sinead also serves on the fundraising and communications committee of the board. Sinead is a strong supporter of the impact and effectiveness of the services in the community and passionate ally on delivering ongoing development and engagement with supporters.



## Board of Directors 2023



**Liam Keane**

**Member of the Finance, Risk and Governance sub group**

**Liam is an established solicitor with a practice based in Meath for almost 30 years.**

Liam has been State Solicitor for County Meath since January 2019. He is an Accredited Mediator (Civil & Commercial and Family) and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

Liam has been involved in the GAA all his life as a player and as an administrator at club, county and national level. He is also a member of the panel of arbitrators of Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland – the Sports Arbitration body established by the Federation of Irish Sport.



**Meabh Smith**

**Company Secretary and member of the Fundraising and Communications sub group**

**Meabh is Communications Director with the Construction Industry Federation.**

Meabh has over twenty years of communications experience providing strategic oversight and management of communications including media relations, integrated campaign management, digital marketing, branding, website development, social media engagement, event management and publications. Meabh has worked across many sectors including financial reinsurance, the disability sector and overseas development sectors, where she managed public communications campaigns on domestic and international issues.



**Ruth Keegan**

**Member of the HR sub group**

**Ruth is HR Director with Novo Nordisk.**

Ruth has worked in HR for many years across the public and private sector. She is currently HR Director for Novo Nordisk Ireland having previously held senior HR roles in Mylan, Vodafone and Sanofi. Ruth has just completed a MSc in organisational psychology from DCU and is a chartered member of the CIPD. Ruth lives in Co. Meath



## The role of the Board of Directors

The Directors of our Board offer their services on a voluntary basis. All Board directors are independent and bring a range of expertise across core areas like finance, HR, non-profit management, communications, and fundraising. They oversee the direction of the work and the affairs of the organisation helping to ensure the organisation is meeting the needs of women and children and is working to its charitable objects and complying with all necessary legislation and regulation.

New directors undergo an induction process and are linked to another director e.g., where they are members of the same subgroup. Training and development for directors where required will be provided.

Board directors do not receive remuneration in respect to their services to the charity. In 2023, there have been no contracts or arrangements entered into during the financial year in which a director was materially interested or which were significant in relation to the charity's activities. The CEO of the organisation reports into the Board at Directors' meetings

### Board meetings

There were 9 board directors in 2023 up to year end. The board met 6 times including the AGM on the 29th of May 2023 after which an ordinary board meeting took place. All meetings record whether there is any conflict of interests. In 2023 no conflict of interests were recorded.

The organisation has a conflict-of-interest policy and this is documented in the Board of Directors Handbook. The policy will be reviewed as part of the overall Handbook, which is due to be reviewed in December 2024. The board is supported by a subgroup structure, which helps to deal with specific aspects of the organisation's business. Each subgroup is chaired by a member of the board. One director resigned and their replacement was advertised through Boardmatch.ie in early 2024.

and supports their activities. The CEO is not a member of the Board. An external review of the board took place in late 2022 and all recommendations outlined below by the external consultant were implemented in 2023.

These included:

- SharePoint for the board of directors with all documentation for the board located here
- Middle management team to attend and input at directors' meetings in 2023 as these are new roles in the organisation
- Increase the capacity of sub groups to manage workloads in key areas with board directors taking more ownership, including subgroups having a terms of reference each and a chairperson from the board to lead out on the work of each subgroup

No board review took place in 2023, however the board appraisal, renewal and recruitment policy was extensively reviewed in October 2023 and the new board appraisal review structure will be utilized in 2023 to undertake annual reviews going forward, beginning in 2024.

The board of directors elect a chairperson following each annual general meeting. In accordance with the Articles of Association of the company, at every AGM, one third of the elected members of the Board shall retire from office but shall be eligible for re-election. If the number on the board should be an uneven number, then the number of members which, with the addition of one would make up one third of the Board, shall retire. The board members to retire in every year shall be those who have been longest in office, and if some of these have become members on the same day, those to retire (unless they otherwise agree amongst themselves) will be determined by lot. In line with our constitution, directors can serve a maximum of 9 years. This is to ensure succession planning and retention is managed in a structured and organised way.



## Directors

The directors who served on the board during the period are as follows:

- Sinead Christian
- Sinead Gogan (chairperson)
- Frank Long (resigned December 2023)
- Meabh Smith (company secretary)
- Claire Sheeran
- Michelle Sweeney
- Richelle Manning (Treasurer)
- Liam Keane
- Ruth Keegan (appointed January 2023)

### Company Secretary

Meabh Smith

### Directors on the Finance and Risk Subgroup

Richelle Manning (Chairperson and Treasurer), Liam Keane and Frank Long until December 2023

### Directors on the Human Resource Subgroup

Sinead Gogan (Chairperson) and Ruth Keegan

### Directors on the Fundraising and Communications Subgroup

Sinead Christian (Chairperson), Meabh Smith (Company secretary), Claire Sheerin.

There were two changes to the directors with a new director Ruth Keegan was appointed in January 2023 and Frank Long who retired from the board in December 2023.

## Finance, Risk and Governance Subgroup

The Finance and Risk Sub-Group, which met three times in 2023 (in January, March, and November) consists of three directors including the Treasurer. The CEO and financial administrator attend these meetings, with the new finance manager taking over the role of the financial administrator on the group in November 2023. In 2023, it was agreed this group would extend its brief to include a focus on governance and it is now called the Finance, Risk and Governance Subgroup. The Treasurer acts as the chairperson of this group. The committee monitors and reviews the financial performance of the organisation. It also reviews business risk and health and safety risks as part of its risk function. In addition, this group supported the recruitment of a new finance manager for the organisation and is overseeing the capital spend on the new refuge building development. It provides independent and expert oversight and review of annual budgets, returns to funders, monthly management accounts and the annual financial statements and reports. Recommendations from the committee are brought to the main Board for decision making.



## Human Resources and Staffing Subgroup

This is a group that meets as and when required and is made up of Directors with Human Resources expertise and focuses on providing advice on the development, review and monitoring of HR policies and procedures. Recommendations from the committee are brought to the main Board for decision making. Three online subgroup meetings took place in 2023 in March, May and November. This group reviewed policies on Dignity in the Work Place, reviewed and agreed actions from a staff wellbeing survey, reviewed training and development for staff and undertook review and oversight of an updated Staff Handbook. The staff handbook was reviewed by an external consultant and the HR sub group reviewed and inputted into it with the final version presented to the board. Other policies reviewed included staff support and supervision and the organisation's performance management policy.

The main activities in the organisation's performance management cycle are:

- goal setting, including identifying training and development needs at the beginning of the year
- performance conversations through the happens on an ongoing basis and formal performance reviews take place three times a year including the annual appraisal
- annual year end appraisals take place at the end of year

In terms of remuneration, a pay increment was presented by the HR sub group to the board for approval following an external review of current pay scales in the organisation in late 2022 and this was allocated in 2023 as an element of the new agreed pay scale for the organisation. No staff member earned above €65,000 in 2023 and only two staff members earned over €50,000.

## Communications and Fundraising Subgroup

This group which is made up of directors with relevant expertise met four times online in 2023, in March, May, August and November to review work on the new communications and fundraising strategies and assisted in the review process for these strategies in advance of them being brought forward to the main board. The group formalised its work with the election of a chairperson; with agreed terms of reference developed in May. In addition, the group supported work on the development of a new donors Central Relationships Management (CRM) system and the selection process for a successful tender for the organisation's new website, work on the annual Christmas Appeal and in November a review of the achievements and work of the fundraising and communication annual work plan.



Board Director	Board meeting	Finance and Risk subgroup	HR subgroup	Comms and fundraising	Retired/Appointed as per CRO
Frank Long	4/6	3/4			Retired in December 2023
Michele Sweeney	6/6				
Sinead Christian	6/6			4/4	
Claire Sheeran	3/6			4/4	
Sinead Gogan	6/6		3/3		
Richelle Manning	4/6	3/4			
Meabh Smith	4/6			4/4	
Liam Keane	5/6	4/4			
Ruth Keegan	5/6		3/3		Joined the board in January 2023

## Risk Management

Quarterly reviews were undertaken by the finance, governance, and risk subgroups of the key identified risks and mitigants identified in the risk register. Key areas included:

- Recruitment and retention of frontline staff, which is an issue across the social care sector;
- Pay and conditions of staff as no state funding was allocated for pay increases since 2008 until December 2023, when a Work Place Relations (WRC) decision allocated an 8% increase for section 56 organisations, which applies to our organisation;
- Fire safety on our current refuge building given the fact that it is a listed building and the high cost of retrospective works. A programme of safety works were put in place and resourced through a range of state and philanthropic grants in 2023. As no core funding is available for this work, the organisation has to ensure adequate resources are available to undertake the relevant safety works required;
- Managing the inflationary impact on running costs e.g., energy costs for the organisation; including our community offices and refuge residential accommodation units on and offsite
- Cyber security-ensuring the organisation has the resources to implement additional cyber security measures including resourcing a compliance review. Funds for this work were not provided in core funding in 2023 and were resourced by the organisation through unrestricted funding.

A summary of the policy, regulatory and operational issues addressed by the board are outlined on the following page of this report.



<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRA report was submitted in early October 2023, and we reported as fully compliant</li> <li>• Annual Report &amp; Audited Accounts completed in September 2023</li> <li>• Recruitment of new directors continued &amp; Board review with external consultant</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing recruitment and retention is an ongoing issue in terms of the labour market and terms and conditions in the community and voluntary sector</li> </ul>
<b>Compliance Risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Annual report to the now statutory Approved Housing Regulatory Body submitted in October 2023</li> <li>• The Health and Safety subgroup (which is an internal staffing group made up of senior and middle management; the health and safety officers and fire officer) met on 6 occasions during the year. This group's work is directed by the health and safety statement and health and safety risk assessment which is reviewed at every meeting and updates on their progress is given.</li> <li>• The organisation carried out a full fire risk assessment on our building and initiated a programme of works based on a number of retro fitting and enhancements required.</li> <li>• The Risk Register for 2023 was reviewed quarterly by the finance, risk and governance subgroup and fed back to the board through the CEO reports.</li> </ul>
<b>Operational Risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Staff Handbook May 2023</li> <li>• Updated performance management policy</li> <li>• New staff support and supervision policy</li> <li>• New Dignity at Work Charter</li> <li>• Updated salary scale for all employees in the organisation</li> <li>• Updated Volunteer Policy developed following a volunteer needs survey across the organisation December 2023</li> <li>• Updated Child Protection Policy and Procedures plus FAQ document for staff and training session provided May 2023</li> <li>• Updated Refuge Admission Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New building: continued work on moving this project on and this was an agenda item at every board meeting with a board director attending meetings with the Department of Housing and the Design Team to ensure a direct link between the board and the project.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Reserves Policy March 2023</li> <li>• Updated Risk Register March 2023</li> <li>• New Financial Procedures policies approved by the board in May 2023</li> <li>• Updated Health and Safety Statement approved in May 2023</li> <li>• Annual Report 2022 completed in September</li> <li>• Annual Return CRO in October</li> </ul>

## Fundraising and Income Generation

We aim to build a sustainable, secure organisation funded appropriately to meet the needs of a growing population of women and children affected by domestic violence coming forward for support. Specifically, we aimed in 2023 to increase our core income to cover operational costs and recruit more staff, stabilise and maintain our public income and diversify our grant income with new partners, aiming for multi-year commitments.

Meath Women's Refuge & Support Services has a positive year from an income and fundraising perspective. In 2023, our overall organisation income grew from €1,052,939 to €1,710,083 – a 62% increase. This includes specific funding related to the project management and planning costs of our new refuge building. This work was supported by the Fundraising and Communications Sub Committee which is chaired by a member of the main board.

While successful in securing a significant increase in core and unrestricted funding in 2023, it will be challenging to replicate this level of growth going forward. The establishment of Cuan, the new agency for Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence in early 2024 and the transfer of core funding from Tusla to Cuan brings new and unknown elements to our funding. We hope the developments will be positive and eventually bring streamlined and multi-year funding at an appropriate level to cover staffing, operational and programme costs. Actions taken in 2023 to ensure sustainable funding going forward include:

- The ongoing resourcing of a part-time Fundraising & Communications Manager to drive engagement and income growth
- Implementation of Fundraising & Communications strategies with annual review
- Investment in donor communications and CRM system
- Relationship building with philanthropic and core funders
- Submission of detailed 3-year business plan to core funders Tusla

## Managing Reserves

The organisation recorded a cash reserve of €300,719 in 2023 which was a 3-month reserve based on three months' salary and running costs, plus a small sink fund for repairs and maintenance on our refuge building. The organisation has a desired reserve of 6 months' salary and running costs. However, the growth of staff and services since 2020 requires a higher reserve to be put in place, year on year and until 2023, all running costs, overheads, building repairs and maintenance were funded through unrestricted donations, which meant the organisation had limited capacity to build its reserve. We believe that securing additional running costs from our core funder in 2024 will facilitate us to begin work on increasing our current reserves, which must grow in line with staffing and overheads. The organisation owns the building that provides refuge accommodation and offices for our refuge and children's team.



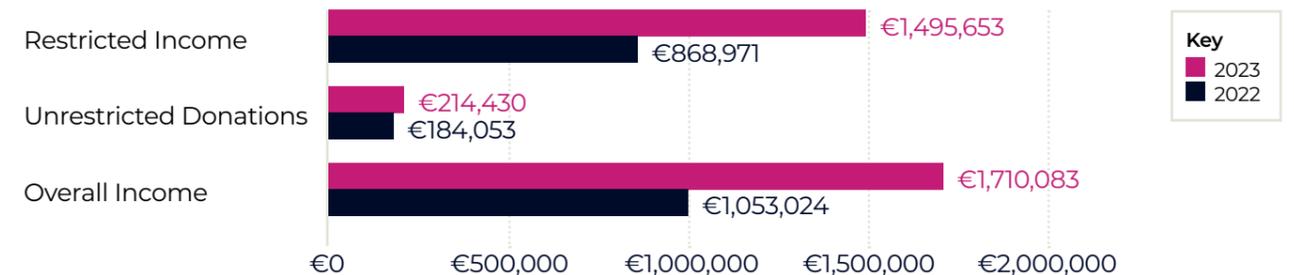
Community Fundraising initiatives with Navan Rotary, St Joseph's Mercy Convent Secondary School Navan and the Pillo Hotel Ashbourne.

### Fundraising and Income Generation

- 62% increase in overall funding
- 72% increase in core funding
- 17% increase in unrestricted donations
- 45 fundraising events supported by community, voluntary and local business organisations
- 23 grants received - 66% success rate of grants applied for in 2023

## Income Generation 2022 and 2023

	2022	2023	Difference	% Difference
Overall Income	€1,053,024	€1,710,083	€657,059	+62%
Unrestricted Donations	€184,053	€214,430	€30,377	+17%
Restricted Income	€868,971	€1,495,653	€626,682	+72%





## Fundraising and Income Generation

### 23 Grants successfully achieved a 66% success rate.

- **Women's Aid** – for the third consecutive year, we received a grant of €10,000 from Women's Aid to fund cash grants for women who use our services. These grants (average of €300-400) enable women to make choices to help them move forward including help with rent, personal and home safety and legal costs.
- **Meta Community Fund** – we were delighted to receive a grant of €20,600 towards enhanced digital services and translation of materials for women.
- **Bank of Ireland Begin Together Fund** – we received €10,000 which enabled us to launch a Freefone helpline, launched with Minister Helen McEntee T.D. in September 2023.
- **Katharine Howard Foundation** – we received €10,000 to fund an evaluation of our children's community programme which will enable the highest quality service into the future.
- **RTE Toy Show Appeal** – for the third year, we received a grant of €30,000 towards our Children's Support Worker for children in refuge and to fund an evaluation of this impactful programme.
- **Meath County Council** continued to support our work, through discretionary grants from County Councillors, other grant programmes and for the first time in 2023 including Meath Women's Refuge & Support Services in its Period Poverty initiative which supplies free sanitary products to refuge.
- **ESB Energy for Generations** – a grant of €12,997 will help us install new fire doors in our refuge building to ensure we are compliant with fire safety regulations.
- In 2023 we were accepted into the **EU FEAD programme** which supplied dry food items free of charge on a quarterly basis. This is a huge support for our organisation as previously food provision was reliant on donations and fundraising. This enables us to bring greater security and stability to this area of our work and support families who need assistance with food.

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Raise the same income in 2023 as in 2022 in terms of in grants and unrestricted income
- Develop a customised CRM system for recording fundraising and donations
- Increase our core funding to resource the key actions of our updated business plan
- Increase the level of community fundraising events led by supporters in the local community



Actions	Outcomes
Increase our overall Fundraising Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023, our overall organisation income grew from €1,052,939 to €1,710,083 – a 62% increase.</li> <li>• This includes specific funding related to the project management and planning costs of our new refuge building, but still represents a significant increase in funding.</li> </ul>
Increase our levels of Core Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We were awarded a 61% increase in our overall core funding which reflects a recognition at State level of the need to redress the under-investment for many years in domestic violence services. Meath Women's Refuge &amp; Support Services submitted a three-year funding plan to Tusla in Summer 2023, outlining plans to grow our services to the level needed for the 220,000 population of Co. Meath (the county has had a 12.9% population growth over 10 years) as well as to staff our planned new 12-unit refuge when it is completed.</li> </ul>
Increase of levels of general public facing fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, we raised €214,430 in unrestricted donations and achieved a 17% increase on the previous year.</li> </ul>
Developing a calendar of Key Fundraising and Awareness Raising Events in partnership with local community, voluntary and business led organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 community fundraising events held by volunteers from a range of community and volunteer led organisations in our community including: Ashbourne Lions Coast2Coast Cycle in May, Navan Rotary Golf Classic in July, Meath Rose Ball in August and Pillo Hotel Spinathon in December.</li> <li>• As part of our calendar of activities, improving donor communications and infrastructure, during 2023 we agreed to focus on fundraising and profile raising at three key moments during the year, specifically International Women's Day (March), Go Purple Day (April/May) and for our annual Christmas campaign (November/December).</li> </ul>
Diversifying Income Generation through Philanthropic Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023, we applied for 35 grants and were successful in about two thirds (23) of these applications which was a strong result.</li> <li>• We developed new partnerships with a range of funders including Katharine Howard Foundation, Edmund Rice Trust, and ESB Energy for Generations Fund.</li> <li>• We were delighted to secure a three-year grant through Mason Hayes Curran for our children's programme as well as a two-year commitment to fund our counselling work with women who engage with our services.</li> </ul>
Development of a CRM system to support Donor Care and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023, we invested in a customised donor care and commissioned Enclude to develop a new donor database on our existing Salesforce system. This has enabled us to better track donor details and preferences, and we will utilise the donor database for more streamlined communications in the future.</li> </ul>

## Summary of Funding Received from Government and Other Grants in 2023

Funder	Amount	Purpose
Tusla Child and Family Agency	€968,354	Salaries and Overheads of €968,354 plus an underspend from 2022 was carried forward totalling €970,250
Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime	€69,000	Salaries and Overheads
Meath County Council	€291,905	Design Team Fees-New Refuge Building
Meath County Council	€28,323	€11,625 in funds in discretionary fund donations from local public representatives' fund for counselling, transport for families in refuge and equipment in refuge  €6,988 Community Support Fund Grant  €350 Social Inclusion and Equality Grant  €9,360 payment of the rental costs to be made to Tuath Housing of community units used for refuge
HSE National Lottery Grant	€6,500	Training equipment, booklets and resources to raise awareness of our work
Women's Aid	€10,000	Emergency Grants to women experiencing domestic violence
Children's Rights Alliance	€6,775	€5,200 Christmas food vouchers for families  €1,575 leadership course funding for Children's Team
Edmund Rice Fund	€2,000	Emergency Grants to women experiencing domestic violence
Protestant Aid	€1,800	Emergency Grants to women experiencing domestic violence
National Lottery Good Causes Award 2023	€36,000	Counselling, Training and Development
Katherine Howard Foundation	€10,000	Evaluation of Children's Community programme work
Ireland Funds	€5,000	Counselling Grant
Knights of Columbanus	€3,000	Christmas Toy Vouchers to families in refuge and community

Mason, Hayes and Curran	€16,500	€1000 Group Programmes for Children  €6000 Play Therapy  €2500 Children's Educational Fund  €7000 Educational Trips and Resources for Children
CFI Toy Show	€30,000	Salary for Children's worker in refuge and activities budget for children
CFI Bank of Ireland Fund	€10,000	€5000 in Emergency grants to women experiencing domestic violence  €5000 for Helpline Training using web text for frontline staff and new leaflets and cards with new freephone number
META Grant	€34,600	€19,100 counselling  €10,000 Digital Relationships Campaign  €5,500 Staff Training on the Freedom Programme



Bank of Ireland Navan hosted the launch of our 2023 Annual Report and new 24 Freephone Helpline.

# Audited Financial Statements 2023

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG**  
**Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements**  
**for the financial year ended 31 December 2023**

## Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

<b>Directors</b>	Sinead Christian Frank Long (Resigned 4 December 2023) Meabh Smith Claire Sheeran Michelle Sweeney Richelle Manning Ruth Keegan Liam Keane Sinead Gogan
<b>Chairperson</b>	Sinead Gogan
<b>Company Secretary</b>	Meabh Smith
<b>Charity Number</b>	8685
<b>Charities Regulatory Authority Number</b>	20021634
<b>Company Registration Number</b>	127494
<b>Registered Office and Principal Address</b>	39 Flowerhil, Navan, Meath
<b>Auditors</b>	Whelan Dowling & Associates Block 1, Unit 1 & 4, Northwood Court Santry Dublin 9 Ireland
<b>Principal Bankers</b>	Bank of Ireland Navan Co. Meath.

Whelan Dowling & Associates  
Block 1, Unit 1 & 4,  
Northwood Court  
Santry  
Dublin 9  
Ireland

Company Number: 127494  
Charity Number: 8685  
Charities Regulatory Authority Number: 20021634

## Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

The directors present their Directors' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and Trustees' Report, and the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.

### Message from Our Chairperson and Director

Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG continued to provide a wide range of support services to women and children impacted by domestic violence in Co. Meath in 2023.

Through increasing our core funding from both Tusla and Victims of Crime, we were positioned to meet an increased demand in services, including access to court support. We maintained our overall levels of donations and grants received through engaging a wide range of community stakeholders and we recognize the importance of these resources in facilitating us to be agile in our responses to the needs of women and children living in Co. Meath.

We continued the implementation of our business plan to support the growth and development of the organization, which included the updating of the plan and continued work on our new refuge building development and the initiation of a new middle management team for our frontline services in refuge, outreach and the children's programme and new office spaces for our growing team.

We continue to experience high demand for services. In 2023 we provided refuge to 185 women and children (93 children and 92 women). In addition, we worked with 492 women and 36 children in the community. Through fundraising and grants we provided 540 counselling sessions and 66 sessions of play therapy and our helpline managed 1122 incoming calls.

The organization continues to enhance and has made real inroads in addressing the acute needs of women and children who experience domestic violence. Our ambition to do more will be realized over the next 2.5 years through the implementation of our strategic plan. On behalf of the Board, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Sinead Smith, CEO and her excellent team for the impact they make and their individual personal dedication in service of women and children.

Ms. Sinead Gogan  
Chairperson

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective from 1st January 2019.

The Directors' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Directors' Annual Report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the directors of Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances for the financial year 2023.

The charity is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102, the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

The charity is limited by guarantee not having a share capital. Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding €1 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of a winding up.

### Mission, Objectives and Strategy

#### Objectives

To provide emergency crisis accommodation and supports to women and children who have to leave home due to domestic abuse within the family. To also provide outreach support services (including information on their options), to women in the community that are experiencing domestic abuse. To provide these services and supports in a caring and non-judgmental environment.

#### Subsidiary Objects

A) To provide educational programmes that promote self-esteem, safety, and confidence to women and children who are or have experienced domestic abuse.

B) To provide a range of supports, and individual counselling where appropriate to women who are or have

## Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

experienced domestic abuse.

C) To provide awareness of domestic violence within the community. To promote a zero tolerance of domestic violence and violence against women in our society.

D) To engage with other agencies on behalf of women and children experiencing domestic abuse.

E) To advocate on behalf of women and children who have experienced or who are experiencing domestic abuse.

### Strategy

Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG continued the implementation of Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 which sets out four high level goals which was implemented via our annual work plan. The strategic plan contains 4 high level strategic priorities which are in line with our business development plan:

#### Priority 1 – Sustainable Organization

We strive to be a sustainable, secure organization, with the right people, delivering the right services, funded appropriately to meet the needs of an ever-growing population of women and children experiencing Domestic Violence.

#### Priority 2 – Development of People and Services

To deliver on this strategic plan we must invest in developing our own capacity and capability. This will ensure we can deliver a high-quality set of services and supports to the women and children we work with while also maintaining a strong and healthy organization.

#### Priority 3 – Technology, Infrastructure and Space

This strategic plan takes in the local, national, and global context in which we work. This means we will need to place a priority on the physical space we offer as well as how we use technology to support and enhance the services we provide.

#### Priority 4 – Advocacy and Profile

We are part of a bigger movement of societal partners working to eliminate gender-based violence. Challenging the narrative on Domestic Violence through bringing the voice of women and children to everything we do will have a community wide impact. We know that by advocating for women and children we can affect real policy and social change.

#### Other Highlights

In 2023, we moved our non-refuge services off site until our new building is completed to ensure our refuge building and children's services have the space, they require to provide the services families need. This means that our outreach team now have an office in the community and our CEO and finance team have a separate office.

We launched a new freephone helpline service in September 2023, and we were very proud to win the National Good Cause of the Year award through the National Lottery.

We launched a new sexual violence counselling service as a project partner with Rape Crisis Northeast, the first of its kind in Co. Meath. This will support anyone over the age of 14 in Co. Meath who experiences sexual violence.

In 2023, for the first time we submitted our Annual Report to the Good Governance Awards to enhance our reporting of work and to learn and improve how we document and present our work.

By the end of 2023, we had our full middle and senior management team installed in the organization.

### Structure, Governance and Management

## Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

### Governance

The organisation is a charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form, which complies both with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014 and also the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)).

The organisation is a company registered in Co. Meath Ireland (Registration Number 127494), and is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital. The objects of the company are charitable in nature and it has established charitable status.

We are fully compliant with the Charities Governance Code for Community and Voluntary organisations in Ireland and the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising. We are fully compliant with the annual requirements of the Charities Regulatory Authority and the Companies Registration Office. We are compliant with the Government Circulars including Circular 44/2006 and Circular 13/2015. We reviewed our Children Safeguarding Statement and adopted an updated Child Safeguarding Statement in line with obligations under the Children First Act 2015 in May 2023.

### Composition of the Board and Board Appointment Process

The board of directors elect a chairperson following each annual general meeting. In accordance with the Articles of Association of the company, at every AGM, one third of the elected members of the Board shall retire from office but shall be eligible for re-election. If the number on the board should be an uneven number, then the number of members which, with the addition of one would make one third of the Board shall retire. The board members to retire in every year shall be those who have been longest in office, and if some of these have become members on the same day, those to retire (unless they otherwise agree amongst themselves) will be determined by lot.

The board is supported by a committee structure, which helps to deal with specific aspects of the organisation's business.

1. The Finance and Risk Sub-Group, which met three times in 2023 (in January, March, and November) consists of three directors including the treasurer. The CEO and financial administrator attend these meetings, with the new finance manager taking over the role of the financial administrator on the group in November 2023. In 2023 this group had a wider brief which included governance and is now called the Finance, Risk and Governance Subgroup. The treasurer acts as the chairperson of this group.

2. The fundraising and communications subgroup which oversaw the development of the fundraising and communications strategies is made up of three directors with the CEO reporting into this group. This group met on four occasions in 2023 and is chaired by a director of the board who has expertise in this area.

3. The Human Resources Subgroup met on two occasions in 2023, in March and November. This group supports the HR functions in the organization and the chairperson sits on and chairs this group.

2. The fundraising and communications sub group which oversaw the development of the fundraising and communications strategies is made up of three directors with the CEO reporting into this group. This group met twice formally in 2022.

Company Secretary  
Meabh Smith

Directors on the Finance & Risk Subgroup  
Richelle Manning (Treasurer)  
Frank Long until December 2023  
Liam Keane

### Attendance at Board meetings

There were two changes to the directors with a new director Ruth Keegan was appointed in January 2023 and Frank Long who retired from the board in December 2023

There were 9 board directors in 2023 up to year end. The board met 6 times including the AGM on the 29th May 2023.

## Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

### Management

Our CEO reports directly to the board, has operational responsibility in line with their delegated schedule of duties which are documented in the board governance handbook and provides bi-monthly reports on behalf of the organisation. The strategic plan guides the development of annual work plans that are implemented on a year-to-year basis. All new policies and procedures are reviewed by the board before ratification. Decisions by the board are made using a consensus model, however if this is not possible then a voting system applies in line with the organisation's constitution.

### Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance

The organization continued to deliver high quality services at a difficult time in terms of a cost of living crisis. We are proud that we increased the levels of services and supports to women and children during this time through the support of our funders and donors.

### Financial Review

We managed the organisation prudently and efficiently, ensuring a wide range of services and programme activity. Public funding, grants, and philanthropy were key sources of funding for the organization in 2023. In May 2023, we signed off on a new set of financial policies and procedures which enhanced our financial management structures and in October 2023, we recruited a qualified accountant to a new role in the organization, that of finance manager. This new role will be part of the Senior Management Team in the organization alongside the CEO and the fundraising and communications manager.

The results for the financial year are set out on page 10 and additional notes are provided showing income and expenditure in greater detail.

We managed the organisation prudently and efficiently, ensuring a wide range of services and programme activity. Public funding, grants, and philanthropy were key sources of funding for the organization in 2023.

The results for the year, the balance sheet and the cash flow statement are set out in these accounts.

### Financial Results

At the end of the financial year the charity had gross assets of €1,192,683 (2022 - €1,129,179) and gross liabilities of €77,918 (2022 - €53,182). The net assets of the charity have increased by €38,768.

### Financial Position

The total assets of The Company includes Property with a net book valued of €727,310 at the year end 31 December 2023.

### Reserves Position and Policy

The Board of Directors updated our reserves policy in March 2023, and this was signed off by the board of directors on the 27th of March 2023. The intent of sustaining operating reserves is to ensure that the strategic goals of the organisation continue to be met by setting the minimum operating reserve to 3 months of the annual salaries and running costs budget. Our operating reserves are contributed to on an annual basis from unrestricted net assets. This contribution is dependent on the financial outcome for the year and is subject to an annual review of the overall operating budget and projected results for the following year. Our reserves were not utilized in 2023.

A drawdown from the Operating Reserve Fund must be approved by the Board.

The directors submit their report together with the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.

Apportionment and financial procedures and policies

In line with best practice, the organisation has an apportionment policy which allows for clear allocation of income to activities, staffing and related expenditure. All financial activities are undertaken in line with financial procedures and policies.

### Principal Risks and Uncertainties

We carry out a risk assessment at the beginning of each year and maintain an annual risk register. The board reviewed risk at the start of 2023 and updated our risk register in March 2023, and it is a standing item at quarterly finance and risk subgroup meetings with issues arising being fed back to the main board for decision making. Risk areas include finance and sustainability, external factors, governance, data breaches, continuity of services and work, staffing and staff welfare. Quarterly reports on the risk register are documented and provided at board meetings.

## Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

### Plans for the Future

In 2024 we will implement the next phase of our business plan which includes a number of new frontline roles, a new three-year pilot project to develop a local community-based response to Gender Based Violence for Co. Meath with the Department of Justice. In terms of our new refuge development, the submission of our Stage 2 Cost plan is expected to be submitted in early May, followed by the submission of a part 8 planning application. It is envisaged that building will begin in early 2025. Finally, we continue to work to ensure we have a sustainable model of funding for the organization into the future with the updating and submission of our 2025 business plan and in September 2024 we will undertake a midterm review of our 5-year strategic plan.

### Directors and Secretary

The directors who served throughout the financial year, except as noted, were as follows:

Sinead Christian  
Frank Long (Resigned 4 December 2023)  
Meabh Smith  
Claire Sheeran  
Michelle Sweeney  
Richelle Manning  
Ruth Keegan  
Liam Keane  
Sinead Gogan

In accordance with the Constitution, the directors retire by rotation and, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

The secretary who served throughout the financial year was Meabh Smith.

### Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards

The charity engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Companies Act 2014
- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)

### Investment Policy

The policy of the board of directors is to invest any monies so that risk is kept to a minimum. Hence, to date any funds that have accrued have been held in a savings deposit account with Bank of Ireland.

### The Auditors

The auditors, Whelan Dowling & Associates have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014.

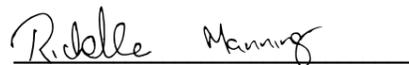
### Statement on Relevant Audit Information

In accordance with section 330 of the Companies Act 2014, so far as each of the persons who are directors at the time this report is approved are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the statutory auditors are unaware. The directors have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and they have established that the statutory auditors are aware of that information.

### Accounting Records

To ensure that adequate accounting records are kept in accordance with Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014, the directors have employed appropriately qualified accounting personnel and have maintained appropriate computerised accounting systems. The accounting records are located at the company's office at 39 Flowerhill, Navan, Meath.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 8 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Richelle Manning | Director



Sinead Gogan | Chairperson

## Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Annual Report and Financial Statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and applicable regulations.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", applying Section 1A of that Standard, issued by the Financial Reporting Council. 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 charity as at the financial year end date and of the net income or expenditure of the charity for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting 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 charity will continue in operation.

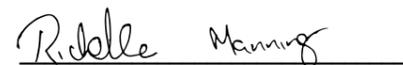
The directors confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the charity keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the charity, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and net income or expenditure of the charity to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and the Directors' Annual Report comply with Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the directors are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the charity's auditor in connection with preparing the auditor's report) of which the charity's auditor is unaware, and
- the directors have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as directors in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 8 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Richelle Manning | Director



Sinead Gogan | Chairperson

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT to the Members of Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG

### Report on the audit of the financial statements

#### Opinion

We have audited the charity financial statements of Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG ('the Charity') for the financial year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the notes to the financial statements, including the summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 2. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", applying Section 1A of that Standard and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Charity as at 31 December 2023 and of its surplus for the financial year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland"; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

#### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described below in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report.

We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard for Auditors (Ireland) issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

#### Other Information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our Auditor's Report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- in our opinion, the information given in the Directors' Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements;
- in our opinion, the Directors' Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014; and
- the accounting records of the charity were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited and the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which, to the best of our knowledge and belief, are necessary for the purposes of our audit.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT to the Members of Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG

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

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the Directors' Annual Report. The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions required by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not complied with by the charity. We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Respective responsibilities

#### Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement set out on page 9, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework that give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless they either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditor's Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

#### Further information regarding the scope of our responsibilities as auditor

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

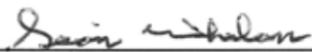
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our Auditor's Report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our Auditor's Report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT to the Members of Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG

### The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the charity'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 charity'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 charity and the charity's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

  
Sean Whelan FCA  
for and on behalf of  
**WHELAN DOWLING & ASSOCIATES**  
Block 1, Unit 1 & 4,  
Northwood Court  
Santry  
Dublin 9  
Ireland

8 April 2024

## Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

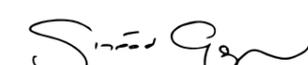
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)  
for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2023 €	Unrestricted Funds 2022 €	Restricted Funds 2022 €	Total Funds 2022 €
<b>Income</b>							
Donations and legacies	3.1	163,712	-	163,712	155,703	455	156,158
Charitable activities - Grants from governments and other co-funders	3.2	36,000	1,203,748	1,239,748	16,950	868,516	885,466
Other income	3.3	14,718	291,905	306,623	11,400	-	11,400
<b>Total income</b>		<b>214,430</b>	<b>1,495,653</b>	<b>1,710,083</b>	<b>184,053</b>	<b>868,971</b>	<b>1,053,024</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>							
Charitable activities	4.1	226,502	1,444,813	1,671,315	128,052	958,298	1,086,350
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		<b>(12,072)</b>	<b>50,840</b>	<b>38,768</b>	<b>56,001</b>	<b>(89,327)</b>	<b>(33,326)</b>
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds for the financial year</b>		<b>(12,072)</b>	<b>50,840</b>	<b>38,768</b>	<b>56,001</b>	<b>(89,327)</b>	<b>(33,326)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>							
Total funds beginning of the year	15	995,304	80,693	1,075,997	939,303	170,020	1,109,323
<b>Total funds at the end of the year</b>		<b>983,232</b>	<b>131,533</b>	<b>1,114,765</b>	<b>995,304</b>	<b>80,693</b>	<b>1,075,997</b>

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the financial year. All income and expenditure relate to continuing activities.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 8 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

  
Richelle Manning | Director

  
Sinead Gogan | Chairperson

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG**  
**BALANCE SHEET**

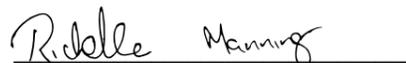
as at 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Tangible assets	9	<u>740,060</u>	<u>733,022</u>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	10	<u>21,524</u>	<u>30,709</u>
Cash at bank and in hand	11	<u>431,099</u>	<u>365,448</u>
		<u>452,623</u>	<u>396,157</u>
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	12	<u>(77,918)</u>	<u>(53,182)</u>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<u>374,705</u>	<u>342,975</u>
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>		<u>1,114,765</u>	<u>1,075,997</u>
<b>Funds</b>			
Restricted trust funds		<u>131,533</u>	<u>80,693</u>
General fund (unrestricted)		<u>983,232</u>	<u>995,304</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	15	<u>1,114,765</u>	<u>1,075,997</u>

The total unrestricted funds includes a revaluation reserve of €(465,981) (2022 - €(465,981))

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", applying Section 1A of that Standard.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 8 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Richelle Manning | Director



Sinead Gogan | Chairperson

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG**  
**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net movement in funds		<u>38,768</u>	<u>(33,326)</u>
Adjustments for:			
Depreciation		<u>9,962</u>	<u>5,726</u>
		<u>48,730</u>	<u>(27,600)</u>
Movements in working capital:			
Movement in debtors		<u>9,185</u>	<u>(17,185)</u>
Movement in creditors		<u>24,736</u>	<u>8,495</u>
		<u>82,651</u>	<u>(36,290)</u>
Cash generated from/(used in) operations		<u>82,651</u>	<u>(36,290)</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Payments to acquire tangible assets		<u>(17,000)</u>	<u>-</u>
		<u>65,651</u>	<u>(36,290)</u>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<u>65,651</u>	<u>(36,290)</u>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year</b>		<u>365,448</u>	<u>401,738</u>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	11	<u>431,099</u>	<u>365,448</u>

## Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

### 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in Ireland. The registered office of the company is 39 Flowerhil, Navan, Meath which is also the principal place of business of the charity. The financial statements have been presented in Euro (€) which is also the functional currency of the charity.

### 2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the charity's financial statements.

#### Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102". Irish statute comprising the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, effective 1st January 2020.

the Charity has applied the Charities SORP on a voluntary basis as its application is not a requirement of the current regulations for charities registered in the Republic of Ireland. As permitted by the Companies Act 2014, the charity has varied the standard formats in that act for the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet. Departures from the standard formats, as outlined in the Companies Act 2014, are to comply with the requirements of the Charities SORP and are in compliance with section 4.7, 10.6 and 15.2 of that SORP.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

#### Statement of compliance

The financial statements of the charity for the financial year ended 31 December 2023 have been prepared on the going concern basis and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102", applying Section 1A of that Standard.

#### Fund accounting

The following are the categories of funds maintained:

#### Restricted funds

Restricted funds represent income received which can only be used for particular purposes, as specified by the donors. Such purposes are within the overall objectives of the charity.

#### Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds consist of General and Designated funds.

- General funds represent amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the board, in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

- Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that the board has, at its discretion, set aside for particular purposes. These designations have an administrative purpose only, and do not legally restrict the board's discretion to apply the fund.

#### Income

Income is recognised by inclusion in the Statement of Financial Activities only when the charity is legally entitled to the income, performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, the amounts involved can be measured with sufficient reliability and it is probable that the income will be received by the charity.

#### Income from charitable activities

Income from charitable activities include income earned from the supply of services under contractual arrangements and from performance related grants which have conditions that specify the provision of particular services to be provided by the charity. Income from government and other co-funders is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income because it is fulfilling the conditions contained in the related funding agreements. Where a grant is received in advance, its recognition is deferred and included in creditors. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, it is accrued in debtors.

Grants from governments and other co-funders typically include one of the following types of conditions:

## Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

continued

- Performance based conditions: whereby the charity is contractually entitled to funding only to the extent that the core objectives of the grant agreement are achieved. Where the charity is meeting the core objectives of a grant agreement, it recognises the related expenditure, to the extent that it is reimbursable by the donor, as income.

-Time based conditions: whereby the charity is contractually entitled to funding on the condition that it is utilised in a particular period. In these cases the charity recognises the income to the extent it is utilised within the period specified in the agreement.

In the absence of such conditions, assuming that receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured, grant income is recognised once the charity is notified of entitlement.

Grants received towards capital expenditure are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities when received or receivable, whichever is earlier.

#### Expenditure

Expenditure is analysed between costs of charitable activities and raising funds. The costs of each activity are separately accumulated and disclosed, and analysed according to their major components. Expenditure is recognised when a legal or constructive obligation exists as a result of a past event, a transfer of economic benefits is required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be reliably measured. Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but cannot be attributed to one activity. Such costs are allocated to activities in proportion to staff time spent or other suitable measure for each activity.

#### Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost or at valuation, less accumulated depreciation. The charge to depreciation is calculated to write off the original cost or valuation of tangible fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows:

Land and buildings freehold	-	4% Straight line
Fixtures, fittings and equipment	-	15% Straight line
Motor vehicles	-	25% Straight line

#### Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due. Income recognised by the charity from government agencies and other co-funders, but not yet received at financial year end, is included in debtors.

#### Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand comprises cash on deposit at banks requiring less than three months notice of withdrawal.

#### Taxation and deferred taxation

No current or deferred taxation arises as the charity has been granted charitable exemption. Irrecoverable valued added tax is expensed as incurred.

3.	INCOME	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2023	2022
3.1	DONATIONS AND LEGACIES	€	€	€	€
	Fundraising & Donations	163,712	-	163,712	156,158
		<u>163,712</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>163,712</u>	<u>156,158</u>
3.2	CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2023	2022
		€	€	€	€
	<b>Grants from governments and other co-funders:</b>				
	TUSLA	-	970,250	970,250	683,475
	Meath County Council	-	28,323	28,323	10,300
	Victims of Crime	-	69,000	69,000	49,570
	Meta Grant	-	34,600	34,600	36,000
	Safe Ireland Covid Grant	-	-	-	8,000
	Safe Ireland Grant	-	-	-	5,550
	Womens Aid Emergency Fund	-	10,000	10,000	10,000
	Community Foundation Ireland - BOI	-	10,000	10,000	-

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

continued

Court Donations	-	-	-	16,950
Ireland Fund	-	5,000	5,000	-
Grant - HSE Lottery	-	6,500	6,500	9,100
Department of Children	-	-	-	5,000
Department of Rural & Community Development	-	-	-	4,048
Childrens Rights Alliance	-	6,775	6,775	-
National Lottery Good Cause	36,000	-	36,000	-
Edmund Rice	-	2,000	2,000	-
Protestant Aid	-	1,800	1,800	-
Katherine Howard Foundation	-	10,000	10,000	-
Mason Hayes & Curran	-	16,500	16,500	-
Knights of Columbanus	-	3,000	3,000	-
Community Foundation Ireland - Toyshow	-	30,000	30,000	47,473
	<u>36,000</u>	<u>1,203,748</u>	<u>1,239,748</u>	<u>885,466</u>

<b>3.3 OTHER INCOME</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	€	€	€	€
Other income	<u>14,718</u>	<u>291,905</u>	<u>306,623</u>	<u>11,400</u>

<b>4. EXPENDITURE</b>					
<b>4.1 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Direct Costs</b>	<b>Other Costs</b>	<b>Support Costs</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	€	€	€	€	€
Facebook/Meta Grant	-	-	-	-	9,852
Victims of Crime	69,000	-	-	69,000	49,570
Toy Show Appeal Project	10,256	-	-	10,256	34,800
Counselling Contributions	-	-	-	-	615
OLC - Community Foundation	-	-	-	-	2,249
Tusla	944,393	25,861	-	970,254	684,428
Knights of Columbanus	-	-	2,800	2,800	-
National Lottery - Counselling	-	-	3,820	3,820	-
Court Accompaniment	-	-	-	-	3,091
Edmund Rice	-	-	1,587	1,587	-
Tuath Housing (Reimbursed)	-	-	-	-	2,335
New Building Costs	-	291,905	-	291,905	36,650
Childrens Rights Alliance	-	1,575	4,800	6,375	-
BOI Cost of Living - CFI	-	-	5,691	5,691	-
Womens Aid - Client Fund	-	-	200	200	-
Womans Aid Emergency Fund 2022	-	-	-	-	25,315
Meath County Council	-	-	21,823	21,823	3,800
Unrestricted Donations	-	-	-	-	115,087
Donations (Restricted)	-	-	-	-	25,879
TLC	-	-	-	-	34,154
Expenditure on charitable activities	-	91,519	182,198	273,717	35,694
Department of Children Conference	-	-	-	-	5,070
META Grant	-	-	13,887	13,887	15,628
What Works	-	-	-	-	1,573
Tusla Seed Funding	-	-	-	-	560
	<u>1,023,649</u>	<u>410,860</u>	<u>236,806</u>	<u>1,671,315</u>	<u>1,086,350</u>

<b>4.2 SUPPORT COSTS</b>		<b>Charitable Activities</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
		€	€	€
Support		<u>236,806</u>	<u>236,806</u>	<u>61,587</u>

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

continued

<b>5. ANALYSIS OF SUPPORT COSTS</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	€	€
Support	<u>236,806</u>	<u>61,587</u>

<b>6. NET INCOME</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	€	€
<b>Net Income is stated after charging/(crediting):</b>		
Depreciation of tangible assets	9,962	5,726
Auditor's remuneration: - audit services	<u>4,505</u>	<u>4,505</u>

<b>7. EMPLOYEES AND REMUNERATION</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	€	€
The staff costs comprise:		
Wages and salaries	866,907	682,427
Social security costs	92,668	74,923
Pension costs	48,672	46,004
	<u>1,008,247</u>	<u>803,354</u>

**8. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

As required in the Circular 13/2014 Section 5, Subsection 21 (g)

There are no employees who received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than €70,000 for the reporting period.

The directors of Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG are all unpaid volunteers.

<b>9. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>Land and buildings freehold</b>	<b>Fixtures, fittings and equipment</b>	<b>Motor vehicles</b>	<b>Total</b>
	€	€	€	€
<b>Cost</b>				
At 1 January 2023	785,819	212,246	15,575	1,013,640
Additions	-	-	17,000	17,000
At 31 December 2023	<u>785,819</u>	<u>212,246</u>	<u>32,575</u>	<u>1,030,640</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 January 2023	52,797	212,246	15,575	280,618
Charge for the financial year	5,712	-	4,250	9,962
At 31 December 2023	<u>58,509</u>	<u>212,246</u>	<u>19,825</u>	<u>290,580</u>
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31 December 2023	<u>727,310</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,750</u>	<u>740,060</u>
At 31 December 2022	<u>733,022</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>733,022</u>

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

continued

10. DEBTORS	2023 €	2022 €
Trade debtors	7,218	23,072
Other debtors	5,853	3,475
Prepayments	8,453	4,162
	<u>21,524</u>	<u>30,709</u>
11. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	2023 €	2022 €
Cash and bank balances	15,133	18,127
Cash equivalents	415,966	347,321
	<u>431,099</u>	<u>365,448</u>
12. CREDITORS Amounts falling due within one year	2023 €	2022 €
Taxation and social security costs	21,680	25,580
Accruals	46,238	22,602
Deferred Income	10,000	5,000
	<u>77,918</u>	<u>53,182</u>
13. STATE FUNDING		
<b>Agency</b>	<b>Department of Children and Youth Affairs</b>	
Government Department	TUSLA Child and Family Agency	
Grant Programme	Community Services	
Purpose of the Grant	Restricted to Salaries	
Term	1 Year	
Total Fund	€968,354	
Expenditure	€968,354	
Fund deferred or due at financial year end	€ Nil	
Received in the financial year	€968,354	
Capital Grant	No	
Restriction on use	Restricted to Salaries	

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

continued

State Funding	The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime
Agency	
Department	
Grant Programme	Grant Programme
Purpose of the Grant	Restricted Grant
Term	1 Year
Total Fund	€69,000
Expenditure	€69,000
Fund deferred or due at financial year end	€ Nil
Received in the financial year	€69,000
Capital Grant	No
Restriction on use	Restricted
<b>State Funding</b>	<b>Department of Housing, Local Government &amp; Heritage</b>
Agency	Meath County Council
Department	
Purpose of the Grant	Reimbursement of New Building Costs
Term	Ongoing
Total Fund	€291,905
Expenditure	€291,905
Fund deferred or due at financial year end	Nil
Received in the financial year	Yes
Capital Grant	No
Restriction on use	Yes

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

continued

**State Funding**

Agency	HSE
Department	HSE
Grant Programme	HSE National Lottery Grant Scheme 2023
Purpose of the Grant	
Term	1 Year
Total Fund	€6,500
Expenditure	€6,500
Fund deferred or due at financial year end	€0
Received in the financial year	€6,500
Capital Grant	Project Grant
Restriction on use	Restricted to use on Music for recovery - women & young children project

**14. RESERVES**

	Revaluation reserve	Funds	Total
	€	€	€
At the beginning of the year	931,962	144,035	1,075,997
Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year	-	38,768	38,768
At the end of the year	<u>931,962</u>	<u>182,803</u>	<u>1,114,765</u>

**15. FUNDS**

**15.1 RECONCILIATION OF MOVEMENT IN FUNDS**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	€	€	€
At 1 January 2022	939,303	170,020	1,109,323
Movement during the financial year	56,001	(89,327)	(33,326)
At 31 December 2022	995,304	80,693	1,075,997
Movement during the financial year	(12,072)	50,840	38,768
At 31 December 2023	<u>983,232</u>	<u>131,533</u>	<u>1,114,765</u>

**15.2 ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENTS ON FUNDS**

	Balance 1 January 2023	Income	Expenditure	Transfers between funds	Balance 31 December 2023
	€	€	€	€	€
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Restricted	80,693	1,495,653	1,444,813	-	131,533
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
Unrestricted General	995,304	214,430	226,502	-	983,232
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>1,075,997</u>	<u>1,710,083</u>	<u>1,671,315</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,114,765</u>

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

continued

**15.3 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BY FUND**

	Fixed assets - charity use	Current assets	Current liabilities	Total
	€	€	€	€
Restricted trust funds	412,498	(319,473)	38,508	131,533
Unrestricted general funds	327,562	772,096	(116,426)	983,232
	<u>740,060</u>	<u>452,623</u>	<u>(77,918)</u>	<u>1,114,765</u>

**16. STATUS**

The charity is limited by guarantee not having a share capital. Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding €1 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of a winding up.

The liability of the members is limited.

Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of its being wound up while they are members, or within one financial year thereafter, for the payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before they ceased to be members, and the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributors among themselves, such amount as may be required, not exceeding € 1.

**17. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS**

The charity had no material capital commitments at the financial year-ended 31 December 2023.

**18. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES**

There were no contingent liabilities at the year end.

**19. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

There were no transactions with the Directors during this period.

**20. POST-BALANCE SHEET EVENTS**

There were no post balance sheet events as at 31 December 2023.

**21. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 8 April 2024.

**MEATH WOMEN'S AID HOUSING ASSOCIATION CLG**

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

**RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**NOT COVERED BY THE REPORT OF THE AUDITORS**

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
OPERATING STATEMENT**

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Schedule	2023 €	2022 €
Income			
- Donations & Fundraising Activities		178,430	183,968
- Reimbursement of Building Costs		291,905	-
- Government Grants and other funders		1,239,748	869,056
		<u>1,710,083</u>	<u>1,053,024</u>
Charitable activities and other expenses	1	<u>(1,671,315)</u>	<u>(1,086,350)</u>
<b>Net surplus/(deficit)</b>		<u><u>38,768</u></u>	<u><u>(33,326)</u></u>

**Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**SCHEDULE 1 : CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES AND OTHER EXPENSES**  
for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Expenses</b>		
Wages and salaries	866,907	682,427
Social security costs	92,668	74,923
Staff defined contribution pension costs	48,672	46,004
Staff training	19,071	1,573
Client Funds	14,152	25,315
Rent payable	25,626	2,335
Service charges	18,919	23,041
Insurance	10,617	10,114
Light and heat	27,055	26,328
Cleaning	466	-
Repairs and maintenance	15,791	6,051
Printing, postage and stationery	5,429	6,491
Advertising	5,021	1,178
Telephone	12,343	8,088
Computer & Office equipment costs	47,487	16,594
Hire of equipment	1,768	10,540
Motor & Travel expenses	280	2,255
Travelling and entertainment	6,190	5,084
Room Hire	-	4,025
Consultancy fees	17,860	19,859
Counselling costs	45,180	37,820
Programme Costs	15,973	-
Auditor's/Independent Examiner's remuneration	4,505	4,505
Bank charges	403	413
Building Costs	321,345	36,650
General expenses	35,345	19,689
Subscriptions	2,280	310
Legacy Depreciation write off	-	9,012
Depreciation	9,962	5,726
	<u>1,671,315</u>	<u>1,086,350</u>



