



# Annual Report 2023

st John  
of God   
Community Services

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## Chairperson's Statement

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Welcome to the St John of God Community Services clg Annual Report 2023. On behalf of the Board, I wish to express our appreciation to all associated with our services for the commitment you have shown to the 8,000 individuals we support and your endeavours to provide the best possible services and outcomes for each individual.

Quality services and positive outcomes for people are to the forefront despite the very challenging financial and regulatory environment in which we operate. This annual report highlights a commitment to creativity and innovation that is a hallmark of our services and supports the delivery of quality person-centred services to people with intellectual disability and mental health support needs.

Our commitment to the delivery of best practice quality services is set out in the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan for the period 2023-2025 was approved by the Board in 2023. The Annual Plan to give effect to the implementation of the key priorities and objectives is kept under review by the Board quarterly.

The Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) completed in November 2023 with a draft report which was presented to the Board and to the HSE. The SIA Report sets out recommendations for the development of our services over a three-year period. The Notice of Termination of the Service Arrangement was deferred on a quarterly basis for the duration of the SIA, with the final deferral expiring on 31st January 2024. The Board engaged with the HSE in advance of the expiration of Notice to bring resolution to the accumulated deficit and the financial sustainability of our services.

In the absence of a resolution to the accumulated deficit and the core financial sustainability of our services, the Board took the decision to transfer responsibility for service provision to the HSE. I acknowledge the impact of this decision on those we support, their families and staff. Subsequent meetings with the HSE brought about a resolution with a commitment to agree a plan to address the accumulated deficit within 2024 and the allocation of some additional funding to our base allocation. Despite this additional funding, the Board is acutely aware of the funding constraints that prevail and the challenge of operating services effectively within the allocation.

Having reached agreement with the HSE to continue providing services, we are now engaging with them on the development of an Implementation Plan to give effect to the recommendations of the SIA Report. I anticipate that the SIA Report will be published once the Implementation Plan is complete and agreed by the key and core stakeholders. The HSE has committed to seek the funding for the implementation of the recommendations through the annual Estimates process.

The Board is delighted with the allocation of additional resources to further develop specialist mental health services in 2023 with these developments continuing into 2024. However, we remain concerned with the staffing levels of our Community Mental Health teams at a time when the demand for mental health services continues to grow significantly.

The Board is equally concerned with the lack of progress on the Transforming Lives Programme and in particular with the absence of progress on the transition of residents from campus-based services to living a life of the residents choosing in the community. We must reconcentrate our efforts to plan with the HSE to support residents in accordance with their wishes and preference to transition to a home in the community.

Realising Potential and Possibility as the theme of the Annual Report is core to our vision and mission. The Board, the leadership team, the staff and volunteers must cherish and maintain this commitment in accordance with our values of Hospitality, Compassion and Respect.

I take this opportunity to extend my thanks and appreciation to my fellow Board Directors, the staff, volunteers, the individuals we support and their families for your ongoing commitment to our services. Finally, I wish to acknowledge and thank the HSE, together with the many statutory bodies who provided us with ongoing assistance and support in 2023. We look forward to further developing the partnership approach to service delivery and development in 2024.

**Charles Watchorn**



## Chief Executive's Statement

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I am delighted together with the Chair of the Board to present the Annual Report for 2023, the theme of which is Realising Potential and Possibility. The report showcases the great work that is indicative of the commitment of staff across our services to do all that is possible to provide the best services and supports to individuals with intellectual disability and those with mental health support needs.

Realising Potential and Possibility for each individual is driven by our commitment to the values, to person-centred care and a human rights-based approach. Keeping the individual at the centre of all that we do, responding to their needs, expressed wishes and preference in real, meaningful, creative and innovative ways must always remain to the fore of our work and the realisation of our mission and vision.

The development and delivery of our services is constrained by our continuing funding challenges. Nevertheless, the creativity and innovation demonstrated by staff in pursuance of our mission as highlighted in this report is something that we can all be immensely proud of.

Development of our services continued in 2023 with the introduction of additional specialist services at our adult and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The Crisis Resolution Services commenced operation with extended opening hours providing out of hours care to adults in the community experiencing mental health crisis. The CAMHS Hub was launched as a crisis team providing urgent assessment and intervention to young people experiencing a mental health crisis. The Mental Health Commission published the report of the Review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in 2023. The report identified St John of God, Lucena CAMHS as an exemplar and an "excellent provider of care".

New day places were developed for those with intellectual disability who graduated from school and rehabilitation training. Two residents transitioned from campus to community living at North East Services. Our residential services for people with intellectual disability are regulated by HIQA. Our compliance with the regulations is touching on 90%. In the main, non-compliance relates to our inability to complete the required maintenance at designated centres in compliance with the regulations.

The draft report of the Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) process issued to the Board and to the HSE in November 2023. The draft report sets out recommendations and costings in respect of each of the six workstreams for the further development of our services in accordance with the requirements of legislation, regulation and national policy. A three-year Implementation Plan is being developed and the report is being reviewed by the core and key stakeholders to finalise in preparation for publication. I acknowledge with sincere appreciation the commitment of the workstream co-chairs and members and those across our services who contributed in many ways to the completion of this very significant project.

The commitment to our values of Hospitality, Compassion and Respect is central to all that we do. We must always cherish this commitment and ensure that the values continue to drive our actions in pursuit of excellence and the Realising of Potential and Possibility for each and every individual we support.

I wish to acknowledge the commitment, focus and dedication of staff across our services who work tirelessly and continue to innovate to improve the quality of life and outcomes for people supported by our services. Equally, I acknowledge with appreciation the support of volunteers who give up their time and expertise to support our services and individuals within our services in a myriad of ways. Your contribution makes a very positive difference to the lives of individuals. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the continued leadership, guidance and support provided by the Directors of the Board. Your commitment to the vision, mission and governance of our services is truly appreciated.

**Clare Dempsey**



## Strategic Plan 2023-2025

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The Strategic Plan for St John of God Community Services was approved by the Board in March. This plan sets out the key priorities and objectives to be achieved through the lifetime of the plan. These key priorities and objective were developed utilising the information and consultation collated as part of the Sustainability Impact Assessment process. A copy of the Strategic Plan is available on St John of God Community Services website- [www.sjogcommunityservices.ie](http://www.sjogcommunityservices.ie).

### Annual Action Plan

An Annual Action Plan is developed to give effect to the key priorities and objectives. It is reviewed quarterly by the Board.





## Our Mission, Vision and Values

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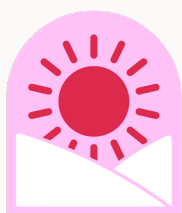
### Our Vision

Our Vision is of individuals living a life of their choosing as equal citizens of our society.

### Our Mission

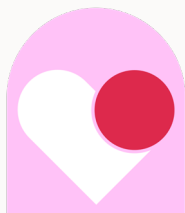
Our Mission is to work collaboratively and through the provision of person-centred, rights-based intellectual disability services and recovery focused mental health services to empower and support children adolescents and adults to enjoy valued, meaningful and inclusive lives.

### Our Values



#### Hospitality

Offering a welcome to those in any kind of need. Every day we say 'come in, you are very welcome' and every day we are inspired by the strength, humanity and hospitality of the people that we work alongside.



#### Compassion

The support we offer is underpinned by the active gift of kindness, caring and a demonstration of being willing to help.



#### Respect

We respect the dignity of each person to choose how they live, and our support and care does not degrade a person's inherent dignity.



## Key Strategic Goals and Objectives 2023-2025

- Further develop and deliver high quality, person-centred, human rights-based services and supports.
- Individuals supported by services, with their families and circle of support being active participants in the delivery of services.
- Maintain and develop a culture, structure and identity to deliver on the vision and mission in accordance with the values and ethos of St John of God Community Services.
- Achieve permanent financial and operational sustainability and be the provider of choice for the community we support.
- Enhance governance and compliance structures, systems and processes to ensure that the provision of service is in compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements.



### **Further Develop And Deliver High Quality, Person-Centred, Human Rights-Based Services And Supports.**

#### **This will be achieved by:**

- Implementing Personal Outcomes Measures, an accredited quality outcomes framework to drive and measure the development, delivery and monitoring of person-centred services and supports.
- Identifying, costing and resourcing the development of models of services aligned to best practice and national policy.
- Implementing resourced annual plans to develop residential and day services for people with intellectual disability in accordance with A Time to Move On and New Directions.
- Developing and implementing a plan for the expansion, development and delivery of a range of respite service models to children and of adults with intellectual disability.
- Implementing resourced annual plans to develop mental health services for children, adolescents and adults in accordance with two different models Vision for Change and Sharing the Vision.
- Achieving consistently high levels of compliance with regulations and standards, planning and advocating for the resources to develop services in response to unmet and changing needs of individuals we support.
- Partnering with academic institutions and community groups to enhance the educational, occupational and recreational options available to people we support.
- Developing specialist services to meet the varying needs of individuals at the different stages of life.



### **Individuals Supported By Services, With Their Families And Circle Of Support Become Active Participants In The Delivery Of Services.**

#### **This will be achieved by:**

- Adopting and implementing Hospitaller Services Group Advocacy Strategy to facilitate the involvement of individuals in the decision making process at every level of the organisation.
- Developing appropriately resourced structures to support the implementation of the Advocacy Strategy.

- Working collaboratively with individuals, families and the circle of support to ensure that all are active participants in planning, decision making and service delivery.
- Implementing the Assisted Decision Making Act (ADMA) and ensuring that its key principles are clearly understood and adhered to across the service.



## **Maintain And Develop A Culture, Structure And Identity To Deliver On The Vision And Mission In Accordance With The Values And Ethos Of St. John Of God.**

### **This will be achieved by:**

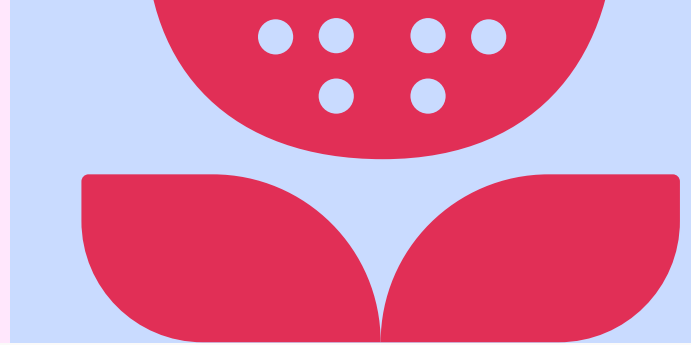
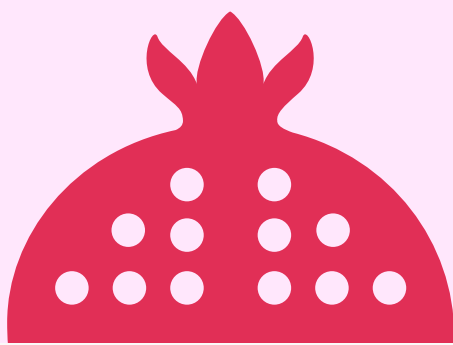
- Ensuring that all aspects of services are delivered in accordance with our values. Practice underpinned by the values drives the development of a high-performance person-centred culture of excellence.
- Implementing a proactive recruitment, retention and talent management strategy recognising staff as the key resource for the delivery of high-quality services.
- Becoming an employer of choice in the sector so that we attract and retain the best talent.
- Developing and implementing a Communications and Brand Strategy that promotes the work and recognises our services as being among the best in our sector.



## **Achieve Permanent Financial And Operational Sustainability And Be The Provider Of Choice For The Community We Support.**

### **This will be achieved by:**

- Agreeing a plan with the HSE through the Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) process to address the accumulated deficit.
- Identifying and agreeing the cost of the provision of high-quality services and supports with the HSE and progressing the commitment from the HSE to seek these resources through the estimated process.
- Developing robust management systems including financial forecasting to consistently evaluate expenditure and ensure services are appropriately resourced and funded while delivering value for money.
- Identifying alternative funding streams and securing resources to support service delivery and development.
- Developing and implementing Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) Strategy to positively impact the sustainability of the organisation and the wider world in which we operate.
- Implementing a plan to address the recommendation of the independent review of ICT services to ensure that the ICT Strategy and systems are operational to support the effective delivery of services.



## Sustainability Impact Assessment

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The Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) process initiated in 2021 completed in October 2023 with a draft report presented to the Board and to the HSE in November 2023. The SIA process considered all aspects of service provision and delivery identifying the status of each aspect relative to the requirements of legislation regulation and national policy. While many positive aspects of service provision and delivery are identified, the report sets out recommendations for the further development of our services over a three-year period.

### Key Recommendations of the SIA Report.

#### Service Co Design

- Focus on the delivery of services and supports to people with intellectual disability “Disability Services Re-imagined” in line with the principles of the “To Be Model”.
- Development of the organisation to an Advocacy led to best serve the individuals who use our services.
- Introduce an Outcomes Quality System (Personal Outcome Measures) to drive a total organisation approach to person-centred outcomes-based services and supports.
- Continue with the implementation of Transforming Lives Plans to provide all residents living in congregate settings with the opportunity to transition to community living in accordance with their wishes and preferences.
- Further develop day services and supports in accordance with the Interim New Directions standards.
- Develop a range of respite options to complement traditional residential respite service provision.
- Develop a range of residential options/models for individuals including specialist service provision.

#### Workforce and Organisational Structure

- Work closely with staff to leverage workforce opportunities that will promote and improve the alignment of supports to the agreed Service Delivery Model that promotes the involvement of natural supports and the community in the delivery of services.
- Review rosters and skill mix to ensure that staff resources are optimised.
- Implement training and development programmes to support staff and managers to develop key skills and expertise to deliver on the model of service.
- Enhance Multi-Disciplinary Team supports so that the needs of individuals are assessed and interventions provided as appropriate.
- Through the role of the proposed Director of Clinical Services, ensure the most efficient management and deployment of resources currently available.
- Develop new teams for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to meet the demand of population growth.
- Enhance the staffing levels of community mental health teams in line with the provisions of Vision for Change and Sharing the Vision.
- Maintain the Regional Service structure to promote the most responsive service possible according to local needs.



- Establish Clinical and Audit Risk and Compliance Directorates to enhance organisational governance and management.
- Establish an Estates function as a key component of the Operations Directorate.

## **Finance**

- Agree a plan to address the accumulated deficit validated by EY.
- Allocate the liquidity funding that was available for the period of the SIA to the annual base funding.
- Submit service development proposals to the annual estimates process to support the agreed plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the SIA Report.
- Increase the annual allocation of funding for the maintenance of properties and facilities.
- Identify internal and external funding streams to invest in bringing buildings and facilities to the required standards.
- Agree an annual allocation of funding for a rolling programme of vehicle replacement.

## **ICT**

- Funding to be provided as there is an urgent need to provide adequate management information systems (MIS) and to replace the Risk Management System so that it reflects the new HSE Risk Policy.
- Establish a dedicated budget for ICT to ensure consistent and sufficient investment across all areas. This will enable strategic initiatives and support transformational projects that benefit St John of God Community Services as a whole.
- Allocate additional funding to support the organisation's ICT needs and facilitate continuous improvement. Evaluate and adjust the ICT budget annually to ensure it aligns with strategic objectives and emerging technologies.
- Assess the current funding model for ICT and explore alternative approaches that ensure sustainable and equitable resource allocation. Consider centralising budget management to better support long-term ICT strategies.
- Adopt as appropriate HSE Case Management, Financial Management and National Integrated Staff Records and Pay Programme Systems.

## Estates and Facilities

- Implement a rolling schedule of vehicle replacement to ensure that 20% of the current fleet is prioritised for replacement every year for the first five years with the development of a rolling schedule thereafter to ensure that the age profile of the fleet is maintained at an acceptable level.
- Increase funding allocation for property maintenance and implement a programme of proactive, reactive and cyclical maintenance to ensure that property is appropriately maintained and in compliance with the regulations.
- Develop an appropriately funded asset management programme of reactive, cyclical and planned maintenance programmes across the portfolio.
- Develop a Sinking Fund for the replacement of key elements of the building fabric. Industry norms suggest 12% of the market value rental costs.
- Complete stock condition surveys across a selection of the property portfolio to build a fuller understanding of property condition.
- Access funding streams to address the recommendations of fire risk assessment and fire safety compliance on the existing portfolio.

The report is currently under review by the key stakeholders. The Implementation Plan is being developed for agreement with the key stakeholders after which it is expected that the report and the Implementation Plan will publish. The HSE has committed to seek the funding for the implementation of the recommendations through the annual Estimates process.





# Regional Highlights

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As we reflect on the past year, we celebrate the impact of our collective endeavours to support potential and possibility for those supported by our services. This section sets out the key highlights and achievements at each of the regional services.



## Community Mental Health

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St John of God Community Mental Health Services provide comprehensive child, adolescent and adult community mental health services. With the allocation of additional funding from the HSE we continued to develop community and specialist mental health services in 2023. These developments include:

### **Staff and Service Developments:**

#### **Adult Mental Health**

- The Crisis Resolution Service became fully operational, providing out of hours care to adults in the community experiencing mental health crisis.
- The National Gender Service appointed a Team Coordinator across both the St John of God and HSE components of the service.

#### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

- One additional consultant psychiatry post was funded to provide additional senior psychiatry input in the Dun Laoghaire and Tallaght area.
- Two additional team coordinator posts were funded to provide additional support across 3 clinical teams.
- Lucena Clinic CAMHS launched a 1 year ADHD initiative to provide Consultant Psychiatry assessment to young people referred to the services with signs of ADHD.
- We also launched a DBT initiative across each clinic to provide dialectical behavioural therapy to those with emerging personality disorders. Psychology and social work staff were appointed to a CAMHS Early Intervention in Psychosis Service. This is the first service of its kind in the state.

## **Environmental Improvements:**

### **Adult Mental Health**

A Rehabilitation Estates Group was developed to establish future plans for the development of high support accommodation for people with enduring mental health difficulties within the catchment area.

### **CAMHS**

The team worked closely with the HSE over the year to support the development of a new Eating Disorder Unit in South East County Dublin. Great strides were made over the year and it is hoped that the team will be ready to move into the new unit in 2024.

## **Community Engagement:**

### **Adult Mental Health**

A service level agreement was signed with the HSE and Aware to open a crisis café in Cabinteely in Q2 2024.

### **CAMHS**

The CAMHS Hub was launched as a crisis team designed to provide urgent assessment and intervention to young people experiencing a mental health crisis.

## **Regulatory Compliance:**

### **Adult Mental Health**

The team in our Residential Rehabilitation Service have worked to prepare for a likely regulatory inspection from the Mental Health Commission (MHC) in 2024. There has been a focus on medication management, physical health monitoring, recovery orientated care planning and making improvements to the general environment.

### **CAMHS**

The MHC report on a National Audit of CAMHS identified the Lucena CAMHS as an exemplar, providing excellent services with special recognition for our governance structure and the communication of clinical information through the Electronic Patient Record. A Senior Psychologist was appointed as a CAMHS Operational Guidelines Coordinator for 1 year across the Lucena CAMHS to introduce a systematic approach to waiting lists and standardise assessment and treatment practices.



## Intellectual Disability Services, Liffey

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St John of God Liffey Services provides day, residential and respite services to children and adults at its community and campus-based services in North Kildare and South West Dublin. In 2023, Liffey Services celebrated significant achievements, highlighting our commitment to enhancing the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Key accomplishments include:

### **Staff and Service Developments:**

We focused on empowering our staff through specialised training, improving service quality and enriching staff skill sets. This initiative has led to more tailored and impactful support for those we support.

### **Environmental Improvements:**

We undertook several projects aimed at enhancing our service environments. This included upgrading facilities and incorporating accessible design features, ensuring our spaces are welcoming and conducive to the well-being of those we support.

### **Community Engagement:**

Our services actively engage with local communities, fostering inclusivity and awareness. Through various initiatives, we've strengthened bonds between individuals and the wider community, enhancing social integration and participation. This included the production of Our Place in Riverbank Arts Centre in Newbridge. We presented at the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE) conference in Paris whose mission is to foster the role of Assistive Technology and inclusive design to create a world where all people can equally enjoy their human rights. The involvement of the team exemplified Liffey Services' dedication to advocacy and innovation in assistive technology, further establishing its role as a leader in promoting inclusivity and support for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

### **Regulatory Compliance:**

We worked diligently to exceed regulatory standards, ensuring our services comply with and surpass expected quality and safety levels. This commitment to excellence reflects our dedication to providing the highest quality care. Our biggest challenge in the absence of funding is our ability to meet the requirements of regulations in relation to premises. These achievements reflect our dedication to creating a supportive, inclusive environment that champions the rights and potentials of individuals with intellectual disabilities.



## Intellectual Disability Services, Kerry

Kerry Services provides training, employment, social and residential programmes for over 300 adults and children with intellectual disabilities. Services are based in Beaufort, Caherciveen, Castleisland, Dingle, Kenmare, Killarney, Killorglin, Listowel and Tralee. Kerry Services are committed to the delivery and development of its services in accordance with legislation, regulation, national policy and St John of God Community Services Strategic Plan. Developments and achievements in 2023 include:

### Staff and Service Developments:

- The new Digital Assistive Technology Programme commenced. This programme enables persons supported to learn how to use an iPad, apps and smartphones.
- In December, the service launched our Valued Based Recruitment (VBR) toolkit. VBR provides the individuals supported within the service with the opportunity to assist with the selection of staff.
- Staff member Shona Heaslip, international long-distance runner, competed at the European 10,000-meter cup and world half marathon. Shona has empowered persons supported to compete in the Rebel Run A Mile race in Co. Cork.

### Environmental Improvements:

The Better Life Programme provided funding to support exciting opportunities such as art and equine therapy, gardening projects and a significant contribution was made towards the development of a new day service hub in Kenmare.

### Community Engagement:

We worked closely with residents to support an opportunity for individualised holidays abroad with two residents travelling to Lourdes. Skills for Life opened Culture Night in the Kingdom County Museum, where they launched their music video 'Brave'. The video was recorded in Sonas Recording studio Cork. In July we celebrated our first ever Cairdeas music festival in St Mary's of the Angels where we celebrated friendships and the end of Covid-19 restrictions. One amazing man that we support travelled to Berlin to the Special Olympic World Games, where he competed in 3 categories, the 100m sprint, javelin, and relay race, he came home a silver medallist. The "Summer Social Club" was established to allow individuals to sample new adventurous activities such as, helicopter ride and go karting. It supported meaningful access to the community and provided an opportunity to sample new experiences.

### Regulatory Compliance:

2023 saw the service fully embrace the enactment of the ADMA. The ADM coordinator supported many initiatives to mark the enactment across Kerry Services. We already see positive outcomes that enable people to exercise their rights.



## Intellectual Disability Services, Dublin South East (DSE)

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2023 was another challenging year for DSE but was not without its little victories and big success stories. Our progress with the rights of people supported, assisted decision making information and advocacy forums was amazing. We have vibrant and functioning committees, groups and forums driving all these important issues forward at great pace and most importantly, with the men and women supported at the heart of things.

### **Staff and Service Developments:**

In 2023, people supported have started to make great headway in terms of work experiences, employment and other life goals. Staff, despite huge vacancy numbers, have continued to help people plan and progress their life visions. Staff have also continued to facilitate circles of support meetings which are integral to good communication with families and to positive and progressive person-centred planning.

### **Environmental Improvements:**

The St John of God Foundation has been very generous and supported the service with a Better Life grant of €300,000 to refurbish buildings at STEP and St Augustine's Vocational Buildings, amongst other projects.

### **Community Engagement:**

The Parents, Families & Friends Association have continued to support the service and have enabled many projects such vehicle replacement, garden refurbishments and many other vital projects that lead to enhanced quality of life for individuals and indeed families.

### **Regulatory Compliance:**

Our compliance levels in HIQA and New Directions Audits remain strong with HIQA compliances scoring 93% on average throughout 2023. Guided by our Values of Hospitality Compassion and Respect we are proud of what we have achieved in 2023 and we look forward to 2024 with clear aims and objectives and brim full of energy and enthusiasm.



## Intellectual Disability Services, North East

St John of God Intellectual Disability Services, North East provides adult residential and day services for 310 adults with intellectual disabilities in community settings across counties Louth, Meath and Monaghan.

### Staff and Service Development:

We could fill a book on all the activities and personal goals achieved in 2023. One resident achieved a significant goal of walking every GAA pitch in Co. Louth which sparked the GAA headquarters in Corke Park to invite him to Croke Park for the day where he got to walk the pitch and he received a replica of the Sam Maguire Cup. For those who did not make it to Croke Park they made it to their local GAA matches where they cheered on their teams and got involved in all celebrations.

Two gentlemen moved from their campus house to new home in the Cooley Peninsula. Two ladies moved from their two-story house to a bungalow which is allowing full access to all areas of their home. We had the pleasure of welcoming 6 people into our residential service and 4 people into our day service in 2023.

Education and training is a very important part of the development of our service. In 2023, seven managers completed their Leadership and Management Course through the Centre for Nurse and Midwifery Education (CNME). Several staff completed the Multi Element Behaviour Support (MEBS) and Skill Teaching Programme. Two staff graduated with a Post Graduate Diploma in Management of Complex Behaviours, one staff graduated with Post Graduate Diploma in Comprehensive Advanced Health Assessment, one staff member graduated with a BA (Hons) in Contemporary Disability Studies, two staff graduated with Post Graduate in Palliative Care. One staff qualified with a Post Graduate Diploma in Public Procurement and Supply Chain Excellence.

The service secured funding from the Nurse and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit (NMPDU) to bring the Autism Experience bus over from Scotland. Forty-eight staff availed of this experience to get a true understanding of living life with autism. Our Student Nurse Class of 2023 graduated with their BSc in Nursing Intellectual Disability. Martin Bannon Health & Safety Officer won the Enterprise

Risk Network, State Claims Agency Awards for his transition to NIMS electronic point of occurrence entry.

## **Environmental Improvements:**

2023 saw the closure of our communal laundry and kitchen in St Mary's Drumcar. We are delighted that most of the staff impacted were redeployed to roles in front line care, and to the maintenance and grounds teams.

People supported at the Hilltop Hub are always eager to contribute to their local community and environment. In 2023 they embarked on a project to renovate an old famine graveyard on their Hilltop site. This involved the clearing away of old shrubs, bushes, and briars. They did such an excellent job that the local priest and local historians have become involved in the project.

## **Community Engagement:**

Our residential service was very busy in 2023. The residents at several houses took part in the National Tidy Town's projects with one resident receiving a recognition award for volunteering. Our men and women are also part of active retirement groups, men's and women's shed groups, and local community forums. Several residents took part in the 'Darkness into Light' for Pieta House, a 50 Mile Walk for Autism Assistant Dogs, Laura Lynn 100k walk, a coffee morning for Down Syndrome Ireland & Christmas Shoe Box appeals.

We supported holidays abroad, to Spain, Lourdes, Liverpool and Christmas markets in Budapest. For some, it was their first time on a plane. Those who did not go on a holiday abroad took the opportunity for staycations and concerts across the country. Our annual trip to Knock returned in 2023 and a large group of staff and residents travelled to the West and had a wonderful day.

## **Regulation:**

2023 showed renewed focus from our regulator HIQA, with 32 inspections carried out within the service. As always, we strive to ensure we are in alignment with all regulations, but where we fall short, we acknowledge our shortcomings and set about improving.

We developed three new support roles to enhance service provision in 2023. They were:

- A Day Service Policy Training and Guidance Officer is engaged to ensure our services are provided in accordance with the Interim Standards for New Directions;
- A Person-Centred Planning Training and Guidance Officer to place focus and resources into Person-Centred Planning and;
- A Behaviour Specialist Post who links directly with prospective new entrants to our service from school and ensure a smooth transition for individuals entering our services.

In April 2023 we fully embraced the enactment of the ADMA. The Assisted Decision-Making Coordinator has provided information and training and sourced information from external sources, including the HSE, the Court Services and the Decision Support Service. This ensures that people supported have the required information to assist them to exercise their own rights regarding decision making. Advocacy groups were established to support the people within the service and through empowerment to exercise their rights and advocate for themselves. We have embraced a rights-based approach to service delivery and endeavour to honour the people availing of the service by fully supporting the ADMA and empowering the people we support.



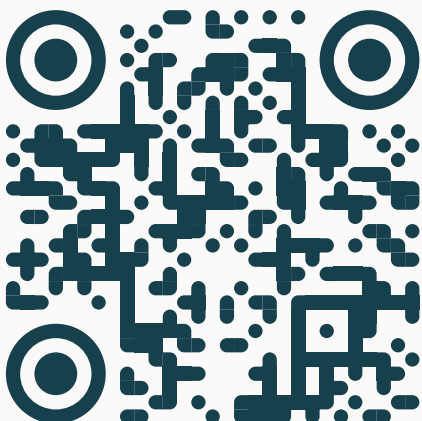
## Realising Potential and Possibilities

The following section of the report provides some focus on the diverse range of projects spearheaded by our staff and individuals who are dedicated to supporting those our communities. These initiatives are designed to foster inclusion, promote independence, and enhance the quality of life for those we support. By offering a wide range of programs that address educational, healthcare, social, and recreational needs, we aim to create a supportive environment where individuals can thrive. The methodologies, and outcomes of each project highlight our commitment to making a meaningful impact in the lives of our participants and the broader community.

Each project is accompanied by a video which can be played by either using the accompanying link, tapping the photo, or scanning the QR code provided.



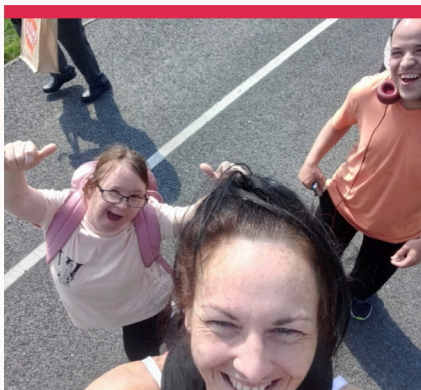
Tap to play or use the QR code



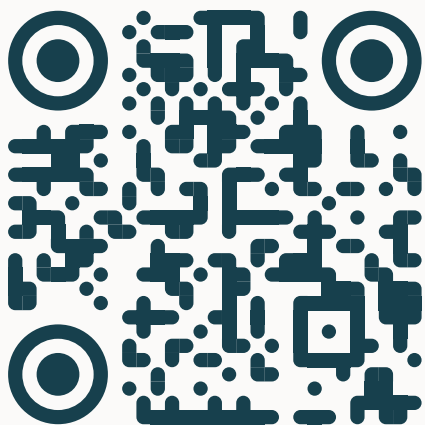
### HealthTrac

#### Cluain Mhuire, Community Mental Health

Staff nurses in HealthTrac, Cluain Mhuire, identified a need for individuals taking a specific medication to access holistic physical health monitoring services. The staff compiled a list of those taking this medication, a total of 300 people and offered them appointments. Approximately one-third of those invited attended. The nurses liaised with the treating teams and GPs to identify those at risk of metabolic syndrome, leading to preventative interventions. They also offered one-to-one health promotion sessions based on the six pillars of lifestyle medicine. This innovation has helped those who attend to be more informed and empowered about their health.



Tap to play or use the QR code



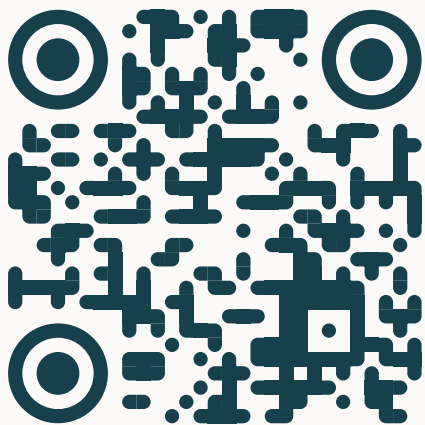
## Together We Move: The Power of Community in Advocacy and Change

### North East Services

Engagement in focused community based physical activity. This project succeeded in its aim to achieve improved outcomes for individuals with disability through collaboration and community engagement, working with groups such as Louth Meath Education Training Board (LMETB), Louth Sports Partnership, Hybrid Martial Arts, FAI and Active Disability Ireland. Choice and variety of activities allowed for increasing numbers participating, sampling new options and ultimately reaping the benefits such as improved mental health and wellbeing and increased knowledge and self-awareness, friendships reignited, and new friendships formed and are sustained with consistent engagement from each person. One great team and community effort to support our individuals with disability.



Tap to play or use the QR code



## Dingle Community Collaboration With Local TY Pobal Scoil

### Kerry

As a day/outreach satellite service based in Dingle, individuals with disabilities have been involved with the social science class for TY students in the local Pobal Scoil, for the last few years.

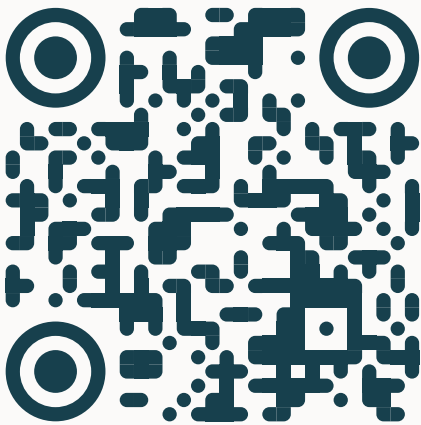
It presents an intergenerational learning opportunity for both groups. There is a different cohort of students each year who come up with ideas on how best to communicate and learn using IT, art/creativity, simply chatting and through exercise.

The school principal and teacher always provide access to the much sought after IT room on Mondays. In the last year, another local group of people with intellectual disabilities have joined the course and have added a new dynamic. We are hoping into the future to learn more about the environment and sustainability, as it is an important part of their ethos.

The overall vision is that we all learn from each other and collectively go into the world with a more positive understanding of diversity and its importance in community.



Tap to play or use the QR code



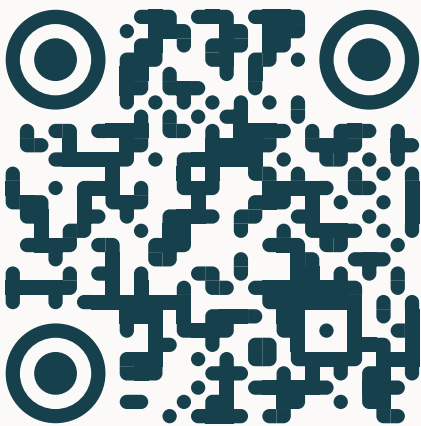
## Brain Busters Project

### Dublin South East

The Brain Busters Project is an innovative initiative aiming at evidence-based healthy aging interventions for the people we support at very high risk of developing dementia. Dr Sharon Hardiman, Senior Clinical Psychologist, DSE in collaboration with Dr Flavia H Santos, University College Dublin, led this project. Evidence from our pilot group has shown us that proactive cognitive stimulation boosts the memory skills and adaptive behaviour of adults with Down Syndrome. These findings are remarkable and give us hope that healthy ageing interventions can reduce dementia risk for this very vulnerable group of people.



Tap to play or use the QR code



## UN Zero Award Co-Design Toolkit

### Liffey

The Liffey Day Services staff played a pivotal role in securing the UN ZERO Project award for Co-Design in 2023, collaborating with Technological University Dublin to develop a toolkit that empowers individuals with intellectual disabilities to co-design digital innovations. This unique toolkit, part of the European Erasmus+ Right To Connect Program, involves users and support staff in all development stages, ensuring solutions are shaped by their needs. Over 40 courses and 30 apps have been created, significantly impacting social inclusion and digital accessibility. As the first paid co-researcher and co-designer at St John of God Community Services, Patrick Fitzgerald has created inclusive research methodologies and eLearning tools, demonstrating compassion and responsiveness. Stephanie Lynch has been key in advancing digital skills through peer support, contributing to the project's success in creating accessible digital learning environments. This initiative represents a milestone in inclusive service delivery, enhancing digital competencies and societal participation for individuals with disabilities.

## Regions and Staff in Numbers

### Community Mental Health Statistics

#### Referrals to Cluain Mhuire

Total Referrals	1887
Referrals Accepted	1508
Referrals Declined	379
Total Outpatient Appointments	42153

#### Referrals to Lucena

Total Referrals	3432
Referrals Accepted	2475
Referrals Declined	957
Total Outpatient Appointments	44386

#### Day Services

Burton Hall Members	100
Burton Hall Avg Daily	30

#### Inpatient Admissions

Avg Bed Usage	26
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#### Residential/Housing

High Support Beds	18
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#### Acute Day Hospital (now called Crisis Resolution Service)

Referrals	545
Assessments	433
Avg Daily Attendance	19

## Intellectual Disability Services Statistics by Region

Dublin South East Services	
Residential	164
Day Service Attendees	395
Respite	
Children	29
Adults	173

Kerry Services	
Residential	95
Day Service Attendees	168
Respite	
Children	52
Adults	5

Liffey Services	
Residential	247
Day Service Attendees	510
Respite	
Children	43
Adults	75

North East Services	
Residential	209
Day Service Attendees	132
Respite	0

## Staff Statistics by Profession

Average WTE of Persons Employed Jan23 - Dec 23	
Management/Admin	186 WTE
Medical/Dental	51 WTE
Nursing	527 WTE
Health and Social Care Professionals	710 WTE
General Support Services	122 WTE
Other Patient and Client Care	920 WTE





## **Our Team - Our Most Important Resource**

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St John of God Community Services was once again ranked as one of Ireland's Best Employers in The Sunday Independent/Statista Best Employers Survey 2023. The research conducted by Statista was of 1,100 companies with an excess of 200 employees. Participating employees were asked to rate various aspects of their job, from pay, work-life balance, development opportunities, work environment, the reputation of their employer and the willingness of employees to recommend their employer to family and friends. The responses to the questionnaires were scored and ranked by Statista. We are delighted with this independent validation and wish to acknowledge and pay tribute to our 3,000 staff at Community Services whose commitment and dedication to the people we support, have placed us in the ranks of Ireland's Best Employers. Well done to all staff for their contribution to this significant achievement

### Recruitment

2023 saw a 14% rise in the number of staff joining St John of God Community Services with some 395 staff commencing employment with us. We also saw a 20% drop in turnover of staff in the year.

Recruitment of staff with the appropriate qualifications and experience continues as a challenge for the sector in general. We continue to use open days, where applicants can meet service leaders and participate in a formal interview. This innovation combined with our dedicated careers page have made career progression more transparent.

In addition, the HR Department has introduced a range of employee friendly policies;

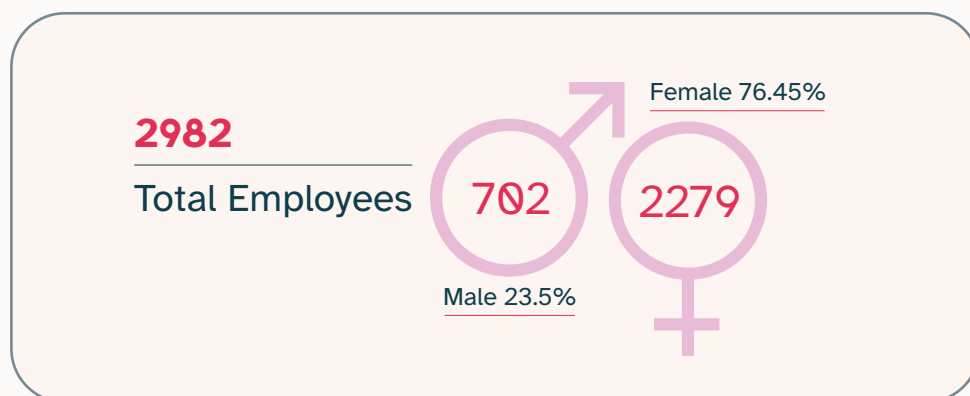
- Parental Leave – this can now be availed of up to your child's 16th birthday for all children (formerly 13 in line with legislation).
- Updated Dignity at Work policies – with a renewed emphasis on early intervention.
- Blended Working – this allows suitable roles to work from home 2 days a week.
- Domestic Violence Leave – providing staff with much needed leave during times of crisis.

Our current suite of HR Policies are under review. As policies are approved, they are disseminated to services via HR Departments and are uploaded onto the staff intranet.

## Gender Pay Gap Report 2023

Overall, our gender pay gap reveals a + 2.1% bias in favour of males. While our goal remains 0% - this is still an improvement on last year's results. However, when looked at under the median gender pay gap this falls to -0.2%.

The gender pay gap for part-time staff reveals a -8.9% (mean) or -13.6% (median) ranking in favour of female employees. This reflects the number of senior female staff who opt to work less than full time. The gender pay gap for contract staff broadly reflects pay parity between male and female staff (+0.9% in favour of males using the mean, falling to -0.5% when assessed using the median). In terms of the overall workforce, St John of God Community Services employs approximately 2,982 individuals. This breaks down as 23.5% male & 76.45% female and mirrors the distribution of senior/promotional roles throughout the organisation (see below).



Gender Pay Gap Analysis	Mean	Median
Overall Hourly Gender Pay Gap	2.1%	-0.2%
Part-Time Hourly Gender Pay Gap	-8.9%	-13.6%
Temp Contracts Gender Pay Gap	0.9%	-0.5%
Receiving Bonus Gender Pay Gap	0%	0%
Receiving BIK Gender Pay Gap	0%	0%

Minus symbols indicate a bias in favour of female employee versus a positive variance which reflect a gender pay bias in favour of male employees.

Quartile	Male	Female	Quartile Ranking System
A (Upper)	21%	79%	745.50
B (Upper Middle)	19%	81%	1491
C (Lower Middle)	19%	81%	2236.5
D (Lower)	23%	77%	2982



## Hidden Heroes

Across St John of God Community Services the contribution of all staff whether working directly with individuals or in administrative or support services, is key to the provision of quality services and positive outcomes. We acknowledge with appreciation the contribution of all. We have selected some profiles that are representative of staff and volunteers who demonstrate commitment to the values and have dedicated their careers to providing the best possible supports to those who avail of our services.



### **Sarah Boland, Assistive Technology Facilitator**

#### **Intellectual Disability Services, Liffey**



Sarah has been working in Liffey Services for just over a decade. Exemplifying the values and ethos of St John of God, Sarah shows compassion, hospitality and respect in every aspect of her role. Sarah has been involved in countless projects over her tenure and deserves recognition for promoting a co-design approach which embodies collaboration, inclusivity and innovation always keeping the people who avail of our service at the centre of all decision making. Sarah's dedication to involving individuals at every stage of the projects she has been involved in such as the AT Passport, development of the Liffey Voices, Right to Connect – Accessible eLearning Platform Project, SAID Project – Digi Coaches in schools, has resulted in exceptional outcomes and has also set a standard for inclusive design practices going forward. Recognition as a Hidden Hero honours Sarah's commitment and dedication to our service and the individuals who avail of our service.



### **Noreen Starr, Instructor**

#### **Intellectual Disability Services, Avoca Day Service, Kildare, Liffey**



Noreen is a shining example of commitment to St John of God values. She is always hospitable and makes everyone feel welcome. She greets everyone that she meets with a warm smile and treats people in a kind and respectful manner. She is very person-centred in her work. She is compassionate by nature and she takes a personal interest in supporting individuals and her colleagues who she has developed long standing relationships with over the years. She is enthusiastic and dedicated in her work and is never afraid to try something new or to learn a new skill. She is kind, flexible and adaptable and someone that you enjoy meeting or working alongside daily. Noreen embodies the 'can do attitude'. Noreen has worked with our St John of God Liffey Services since April 1995. She started work with the service as part of the FAS scheme and later became a Programme Assistant and moved to work in Early Services for several years. She then returned to work with Adult Day Services.

Noreen has always taken an interest in taking part in any training that could be a benefit to her or the group that she is working with. She participated in the Community Health Studies Course in the 1990's and more recently completed Systematic Instruction with the Callan Institute and the Instructor Initiative with the Open Training College on completion of which Noreen became an Instructor. She is now working on implementing what she has learned from these courses into her work and using these skills to help support the individuals that she works with to have a meaningful day.



## **Vera Lynch, Volunteer**

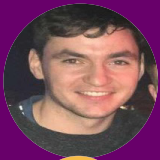
### **Intellectual Disability Services, Kerry**



St John of God Kerry walking group takes to the scenic countryside of Kerry each month. This group is in existence for over 25 years, set up by volunteer Phil O' Mahony who sadly passed away some years ago. But before Phil became too ill, she recruited a group of volunteer walkers she trusted to continue with this walking group.

Vera is one to the ladies recruited by Phil. Vera quietly organises the walkers each month for the walks, the location for the cuppa after and the most important - the annual Christmas lunch.

Her kindness and commitment to the walkers is apparent in the thoughtful consideration she takes to research suitable walks, decide upon the location monthly, the weather and of course a 'Plan B'. We thank Vera and her group of fellow walkers for all they do.



## **Killian O' Dowd, Project Co-Ordinator**

### **Intellectual Disability Services, Kerry**



Killian began working at St John of God Kerry Services in 2015 and has worked across various day and residential locations in Kerry but has spent most of his time working based in St Mary s of the Angels in Beaufort.

Killian's current role is as the Transforming Lives Project Coordinator supporting the men and women who reside in St Mary s of the Angels to transition to live in a home in the community. This role involves working with residents, staff and families to enhance quality of life outcomes for those being supported. Killian also provides training and supports the quality enhancement of the service by providing assistance to designated centres to ensure compliance with regulations.

He passionately advocates for residents and their rights to improve their quality of life and meaningful day through person-centred planning. Killian works closely with the HSE and St John of God Housing-Association to progress new houses for individuals who wish to transition to a home in the community with the aim of improving their quality of lives.



## **Mary Hocine, Care Assistant**

### **Intellectual Disability Services, North East**



Mary Hocine joined St John of God North East Services in 1997. From the beginning she demonstrated her character as one of kindness, respect and diligence. Over her years with St John of God Intellectual Disability Services, Mary worked in various houses, and has supported residents with positive outcomes going the extra mile to ensure the best outcome. Mary is very supportive of her colleagues and has taken many under her wing to guide and steer. She has been known on her days off to use her eagle eye identifying bargain items our residents would enjoy, phoning the house with where to go and purchase these items. Mary has enriched the lives of each resident she has cared for. You can call on her to do anything, well!

Mary has always demonstrated the values of St John of God across all aspects of her job and her good humour and ready smile will be missed by both residents and staff alike. We wish Mary the very best wishes for her retirement. Knowing Mary, this will not be a time for slowing down, just a change of direction. Mary you are a hero to staff and those you have supported at our services. We wish you a long, healthy and happy retirement.



## **Mary Conlon Clinical Nurse Manager 2**

### **Intellectual Disability Services, North East**

Mary started her career in 1983 in St Marys, Drumcar where she went on to complete her RNID training in our nursing school, qualifying in 1987. Following her training, Mary worked as a staff nurse in our newly opened house for females in St Mary's. This was the first time we had female admissions both for residential and respite support in the service. On promotion to CNM2 in 1992 Mary moved to work with residents with medical fragility at Chestnut Heights Drumcar. Along with overseeing the care and support needs of the gentlemen she was active in setting up a multi-sensory area with 3 rooms all equipped for the residents on St Mary's campus.

In 1999 Mary moved to our day Service in Hilltop, Dundalk where she managed a service for 20 people all with medically fragile support needs, ensuring that they were afforded the opportunity to access the community and engage in activities of their choice. Mary as a leader was very supportive to her staff teams, her common-sense approach nursing knowledge and straight talking ensured staff felt comfortable in her presence. The management team always knew if they needed a person to do a special job or project, Mary was the lady to call. She retired from the service at the end of 2023 and she is sadly missed by individuals, families and staff at North East Services.



## **Kathrina Kinsella, Household Team**

### **Intellectual Disability Services, Dublin South East**

Kathrina is a key member of our household team at Dublin South East Services. She has worked with us for many years, and has always been an excellent team member, very hard working and a great colleague. Kathrina will always go the extra mile with her team and will always step into the breach when the pressure comes on. The requirements of HIQA and Environmental Health, to name but two, are taken in their stride by Kathrina and she is the heart and soul of our organisation.

It has been said that once Kathrina and her team are on the job it will always get done, on time and to a top-quality standard. We would be lost without her. She is a true hero in our service.



## **Martin Lawlor, Transport Team**

### **Intellectual Disability Services, Dublin South East**



Martin is a member of the transport team at Dublin South East Services and has made a massive contribution over many years. Martin has supported many individuals with their journey to and from day services and never shirks a challenge. He is a true team player with an openness to meeting the holistic needs of the person to the point where he has participated in the development of complex and challenging behaviour support plans.

He is a legend in the service, highly regarded and the go to man when the going gets tough. Martin is integral to what we do and does so with a smile, calmness and with our values to the fore at all times.

There is no doubt whatsoever that Martin is a big hero at Dublin South East Services.



## **Adrienne Perdue and Herman Switzer,**

### **Community Mental Health**



Adrienne Perdue, Assistant Director of Nursing and Herman Switzer, Instructor are both based in Burton Hall. During weather warnings, and on their own time (night or morning) both Adrienne and Herman have been known to travel across the catchment area to locate service users of Community Mental Health who are living on the streets to bring them to safe shelter and in doing so, it is very fair to say that they have saved lives. They have also been successful in finding medium-long term accommodation for these people. These actions are way beyond the roles and duties of both Adrienne and Herman and epitomise their commitment to the values and the people supported by our services.



## **Adam Wlodyka, Maintenance Team**

### **St John of God Community Mental Health Services**



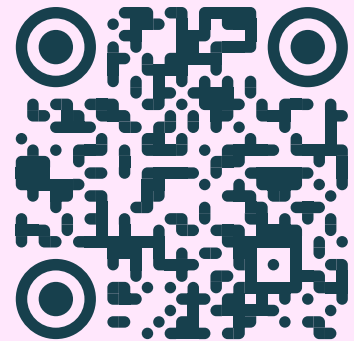
Adam Wlodyka, Lucena CAMHS demonstrated his commitment to the values in 2023 when a member of our staff Igor Kwasnicki had a heart attack on one of our premises and died in hospital shortly afterwards. Igor was a polish national living on his own in Ireland. Adam coordinated an amazing response and organised for Igor's daughter to come to Ireland immediately. The Brothers in Rathgar very kindly offered Igor's daughter accommodation and St John of God Foundation provided funds to support his funeral. Adam rallied his colleagues in maintenance and across the service as well as the Polish Community in Ireland. A real hero and a response that is truly aligned to our values.



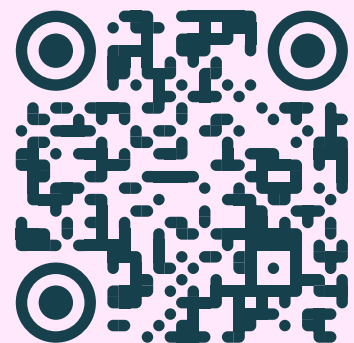
## The Better Life Programme

The Better Life Programme is an initiative of St John of God Foundation which provides the opportunity for services to seek grant funding for projects that will enhance the quality of life and the experience of children and adults who are supported at our Intellectual Disability and Community Mental Health Services.

The Better Life Programme funded 25 projects across our services in 2023. These projects range from new specially adapted playgrounds, building renovations, sensory gardens, new technology for skills and learning, to funding Volunteer Coordinators and Social Farming Programmes, the Better Life fund is making all of these life-changing projects possible.



Tap to play: Better Life Social Farming Projects



Tap to play: Suzanne House Sensory Garden Project



The Social Farming Programme is one of the most impactful for the people we support. Social farming helps individuals with engagement in the community, providing life skills and improvements in behaviours and language. Sensory gardens provide vital outside space for individuals. Having a therapeutic space that is accessible to everyone, with exciting things to touch and smell is crucial for the people we support.

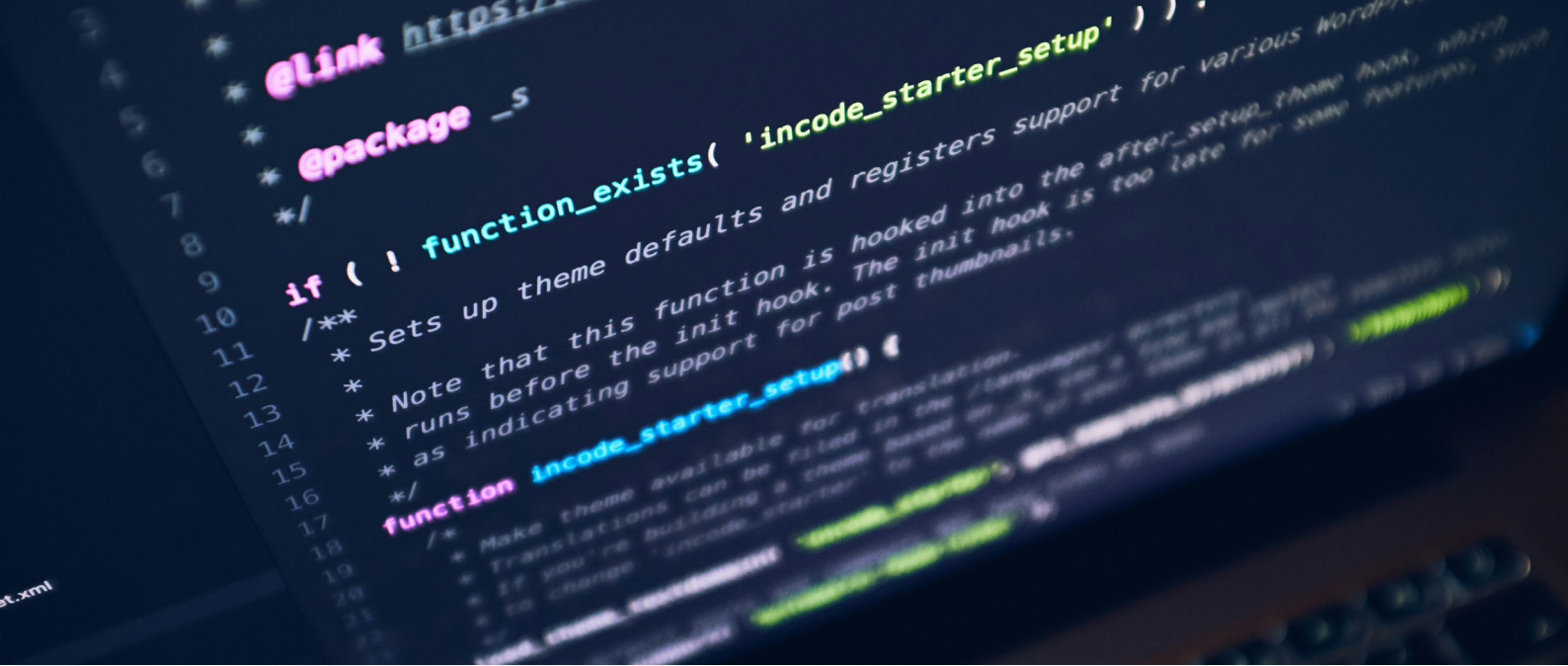
Over €500,000 was allocated for projects including:

- Sensory gardens.
- Sensory rooms.
- Upgrading facilities.
- CAMHS therapy programmes.
- Mental health programmes.
- Art and equine therapy programmes.
- Independence skills programme.
- Skills teaching programmes.
- Assistive technology.

The allocation of these grants greatly enhances the quality of life and experience of those who are associated with the projects. We would like to acknowledge with appreciation the generosity of donors and the work of St John of God Foundation

[www.sjogfoundation.ie](http://www.sjogfoundation.ie)





## ICT Department - Key Achievements

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As we step into another year of transformation in ICT, it's essential to pause and celebrate the department's successes for 2023 and in particular in mitigating risks within our intricate and legacy environment. In a landscape that's constantly evolving, we've remained adaptable, introducing new solutions and updating existing ones whenever resources permit. Amidst these changes, our priority remains managing any such transitions to ensure continuity and uphold service delivery capabilities.

We would like to acknowledge the dedication, resilience and resourcefulness of the ICT team as they support their front-line colleagues in delivering their services. Leveraging new (and old) technologies and embracing innovation, ICT continuously works to improve collaboration and efficiency in the ever-changing landscape.

Throughout the year, the ICT Department has directed strategic initiatives aimed at optimising collaboration, bolstering cybersecurity measures and aligning with the organisation's strategic goals. Below, you'll find a summary of our key initiatives.

### MS 365 Implementation

In 2023, we concluded the initial deployment of Microsoft 365 across all St John of God Community Services regions, providing a basic suite of tools designed to enhance collaboration and streamline communication. This includes applications such as email, chat, video calls, and secure file Storage and Engage (Yammer) for enterprise social networking. Through features like Teams, staff can now easily connect, share ideas, and collaborate with their team mates on projects in real-time, regardless of their actual physical location. This has not only improved teamwork and productivity but also fostered a more inclusive and connected workplace environment.

Additionally, the introduction of OneDrive has simplified file sharing and storage, making it easier for employees to access important documents and resources from anywhere, promoting flexibility and remote working options. We aim to build upon this success in 2024 by delivering additional tools to further enhance collaboration.

## **Data Centre Migration**

A significant milestone achieved was the completion of the Data Centre Migration project. This required each of the main production systems to be moved from the onsite data centre in Stillorgan to the new cloudbased data centre. This transition to a modern environment ensures enhanced recoverability and reduced risk to our business data. By eliminating single points of failure and transitioning critical systems to cloud data centres, we have significantly improved system reliability and uptime, resulting in smoother operations for all staff members. Furthermore, robust backup and replication solutions have safeguarded data against loss or corruption, providing peace of mind to both staff and service users alike. This move aligns with best practices and marks a significant step in the planned transformation of ICT systems and services over the coming years.

## **Cybersecurity**

Our commitment to cybersecurity has resulted in several key enhancements aimed at safeguarding our assets and sensitive data. In 2023, we upgraded parts of our network infrastructure, implemented a new Firewall, and introduced a new remote access method (VPN) to bolster security measures. Additionally, new security features in MS 365 have enabled better management of Windows devices, smoother rollout of updates and patches, encryption on all endpoint devices, and the implementation of Multifactor Authentication (MFA) for enhanced authentication security. The deployment of Microsoft Defender across all Windows clients has further bolstered our endpoint protection capabilities, significantly reducing the risk of unauthorized access and data breaches. Regular updates and patch management ensure that our servers remain fortified against evolving threats, instilling confidence among staff and service users that their information is handled securely and responsibly.

## **Support for Business Initiatives**

Throughout the year, the ICT Department has been the cornerstone of numerous business initiatives, from vital contract renewals to the seamless integration of new systems. At the heart of our operations lie a diverse array of services tailored to meet the dynamic needs of St John of God Community Services.

From the support provided by our regional and centralised ICT teams, to the strategic guidance offered, to the professional services such as project management, web development, network management and software testing, we hope to ensure that every aspect of the ICT landscape is optimised for success.

In summary, the achievements of the ICT Department in 2023 reflect our commitment to making technology work for St John of God Community Services and improving the overall working environment for all.

## St John of God Research Foundation clg

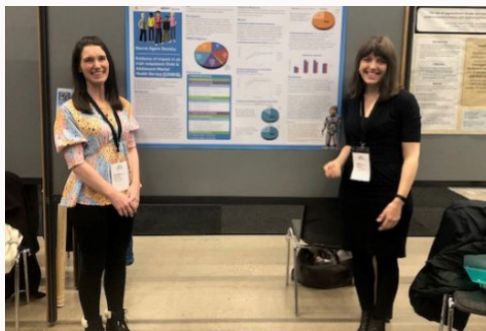
The St John of God Research Foundation worked closely with colleagues across our Intellectual Disability and Community Mental Health Services to progress research initiatives throughout 2023. At the close of the year, we had 30 Community Services projects open and receiving support through our Research Support Service. A further 8 scoping reviews/systematic reviews were receiving assistance through our Library & Information Service. Engagement was strengthened through our educational seminar series, delivered by Peter Gallagher (Head of Research Support) and the inclusion of Justin Smyth (Head of Library & Information Services) in staff inductions. The Library & Information Service enables access to over 4,000 journals in addition to 2 physical libraries with an extensive book catalogue. Library membership grew in 2023, as did requests for Open Athens access (offsite library access), illustrating the value placed on this service by Community Services staff.

### Research Funding

2023 was a very successful year for St John of God Community Services researchers who were awarded over €164,000 in research funding by the St John of God Research Foundation. The annual funding scheme invites applications for Seed Funding projects (18 month projects to the maximum value of €12,000) and Project Grants (24 month projects to a maximum value of €140,000). Funding was awarded to Professor Mary Clarke for her project titled *Personalised Psychosis Care: Is it time for a sex-specific approach?* Dr Aiveen Kirley was awarded a Seed Funding grant for her study *Evaluation of Referral Pathways to Regional Specialist Adult ADHD Services in the HSE*, and Dr Sean Naughton also received a Seed Funding grant for his study, *Early Intervention or Missed Opportunity?: Clinical Outcomes of EIP Service 'Non-Cases' in a Community Mental Health Service*.

### Research Dissemination

2023 saw a welcome return to in-person conferences and we were delighted to support several researchers from St John of God Community Services in sharing their work with an international audience.



Above left: Sarah Boland & Patrick Fitzgerald et al.  
Zero Project Conference, Vienna

Above right: Deirdre MacEvilly & Katie Maguire, INSAR  
Conference, Stockholm

Bottom left: David Marshall & Dr Donal O'Keeffe  
SIRS Conference, Toronto

## Dementia Research Receives Multiple Awards

Dr Sharon Hardiman was awarded a Seed Funding grant in 2022 to for her Brain Busters Project. This project, which Dr Hardiman leads with Dr Flavia H. Santos (Assistant Professor, UCD) is an innovative study that aims to measure the feasibility and effectiveness of group based Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (Cst; developed by Prof Aimee Spector and colleagues, London, UK) for people with intellectual disabilities who are at increased risk of developing dementia in the future.

The Brain Busters Project hopes to show that proactive cognitive stimulation can help to bolster resilience and cognitive reserve for this vulnerable population. At the Dementia Research Network Ireland Conference (held in October 2023), Dr Hardiman received two awards (Best Overall Presentation & Best Theme Presentation – Dementia Risk Reduction and Prevention), for her very well received presentation on The Brain Busters Project. The research team added to their success at the annual St John of God Research Study Day in November 2023 where they won the best oral presentation competition. Dr Hardiman's research also achieved media attention and was featured in the Irish Medical Times on two occasions throughout the year. The research team would like to thank their PPI contributors, research participants and the St John of God Research Foundation for their funding of this research project.



Sharon Hardiman & Rory Cousins, Dementia Research Network Ireland Dublin.



## Service Operations

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St John of God Community Services is committed to developing and enhancing the delivery of our services. We work with a number of external bodies and auditors to ensure that quality and Standards are measured and improved. During 2023 we engaged with HSE, HIQA, the Mental Health Commission, PWC, EY, QQI, the State Claims Agency and the Health & Safety Authority among others. We welcome their involvement with their feedback assisting us to progress to our objective of delivering a high quality, compliant and sustainable services.

We face significant operational challenges to achieve this objective. We are working with our funding partner the HSE, to meet the challenges that arise as the needs of those we support change, demand for service grows, and policies and legislation evolve.

In 2023, four Regional Directors in Intellectual Disability Services were awarded their Professional Diploma in Strategic Transformational Leadership in Healthcare. Congratulations to Elisa Doyle, Claire O'Dwyer, Paula Hand and Des North for completing the Diploma. The course is sponsored by HSE and delivered by the Irish Management Institute. Our thanks to Pat O'Boyle and her team in HSE Capability and Culture, for providing these opportunities for our team.

### Intellectual Disability Services

Compliance with HIQA Care and Support Regulations continues to be a major focus for our Intellectual Disability Services. In 2023 we achieved a compliance or substantial compliance level of 89% with the regulations. This represented a 2% drop from 2022, largely driven by lower levels of compliance in Premises and Fire Compliance. Remedial action plans were put in place, with many of these actions now completed. Compliance with the regulations is an ongoing challenge as we continue to seek the adequate funding required to manage the areas of non-compliance.

The Regional updates in this report highlight that we continue to innovate and improve our services with further progress on community living and integration, community participation and , more innovative ways to use IT and multi media to support service provision.

### Community Mental Health

Our teams continue to provide high quality service despite operating at staffing levels well below those recommended by national policy. The demand for mental health services continues to grow very significantly. We have received significant investment from the HSE to facilitate the opening

of several new specialist mental health services. Our priority is to improve staffing levels in the core community teams and to further enhance services and reduce waiting lists. The Mental Health Commission published its report of the review of CAMHS in 2023 identifying Lucena CAMHS an exemplar, providing excellent services with special recognition for our governance structure and the communication of clinical information through the Electronic Patient Record.

## **Health and Safety**

The National Health and Safety group continues its work to further enhance the focus and awareness on health and safety as a key priority for the organisation. The enhanced focus and awareness manifests itself in coordinated communication regarding health and safety between the regional services, the executive management team and the Board of Directors. The completion of Health and Safety Audits are ongoing across our services resulting in improvements to safety process and systems.

A number of locations within St John of God Community Services have been subject to satisfactory inspections by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). In two locations the inspectors found no areas for improvement. Action Plans are implemented at locations where the report of inspections recommended areas for improvement.

The State Claims Agency also conducted an audit of St Raphael's Campus Celbridge. The audit assessed the safety management system for the location using ISO 45001 as a basis for the audit. The audit report noted that: "Throughout the audit there was a good level of knowledge demonstrated and the focus on health and safety was apparent".

## **Fire Safety**

Funding requests for fire safety upgrades at services locations in accordance with the fire safety assessment recommendations, were submitted by all regions to their local CHO's in 2023. A number of locations received approval and the works have been completed or are being scheduled. Regions will continue to liaise with their local CHO's in order to access funding so that they can progress the recommendations arising from the fire safety assessments.

A National Fire Safety group is now well established in the organisation, and we continue to manage fire safety risks in line with best practice.

## **Procurement**

The Procurement Policy was updated in November 2023 to reflect the changes from national circulars which increases the threshold for written quotations for goods and services to €50,000. This change is envisaged to provide further opportunities to small and medium enterprises. An updated Procurement Compliance form was also issued on our intranet to support the regions to evidence procurement compliance when spending within this threshold. With a possible increase in demand for minor capital works, the organisation activated its access to the Supplygov Procurement Portal to support the upload of Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) tenders for this category. Regional procurement support staff are now in place in four out of five regions with two full-time and two part time staff. Another two staff completed the UL course on Public Procurement in 2023. Procurement has completed 7 new tenders and 8 central government activation and contract extensions in 2023.

## Estates

A detailed review of the properties used by St John of God Community Services was undertaken including an assessment of the works required to maintain and upgrade these properties. The output of these assessments has been costed and will form part of the implementation of the SIA Report.

## Data Protection and Freedom of Information

The role of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) is currently outsourced. Throughout 2023, the DPO collaborated with stakeholders across the organisation, to ensure compliance with requisite Data Protection and Privacy requirements. This includes oversight of the data breach process, providing guidance and advice on data subject rights requests and monitoring deadlines to ensure the required timeframes are adhered to. Throughout the year, regular reviews and updates to our GDPR and FOI policies reflect our commitment to compliance and best practices. Moreover, our emphasis on ongoing staff training demonstrates the importance we place on Data Protection within the organisation. As we begin 2024, the DPO aims to continue to take a proactive approach to data protection to instil confidence in those we support, employees and all other stakeholders regarding the security of their data.

In 2023 we developed an FOI log dating back to 2014 which is now available on our corporate website and updated our FOI Statement, Data Protection Policies and Privacy Notices.

## Programme, Quality & Safety Department

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St John of God Community Services is committed to the development and delivery of quality services and supports to individuals availing of its Intellectual Disability and Mental Health Services. There are a range of governance and oversight structures and forums in place to support a continuous quality improvement approach and delivery of quality person-centred services aligned to national policy, standards, regulation and best practices at organisational and regional service levels. To support this objective, the Guidelines on Quality & Safety Governance, and Reporting Structures & Systems were updated and rolled out in 2023 to regional services.

St John of God Community Services operate 103 designated centres for respite and residential services across Dublin, Louth, Kildare, Wicklow and Kerry. HIQA completed 51 inspections in 2023 across our services with recorded levels of 73% compliance, 16% substantially compliance and 11% non-compliance.

The Programme Quality & Safety Department completed 201 unannounced audits on behalf of the provider and recorded 65% compliance, 30% substantial compliance and 5% non-compliance rates across all 103 designated centres. The department updated the audit tool to incorporate an increased focus on the nine-outcome quality of life domains and the lived experience of individuals supported.

The Programme Quality & Safety Department continued to chair regulation meetings with regional services to support increased levels of compliance and provided regular reports and analysis relating to compliance trends from a learning perspective. They also provided quarterly Quality and Safety Reports to the Quality & Safety Board Sub Committee with an overview of all key areas relating to compliance, quality and safety improvements.

A key focus for 2023 from the Safeguarding Governance Committee was the development of educational material to support a human rights approach to safeguarding and the Quality & Safety Executive Committee were successful in putting in place a system to collate and review key quality data to support learning and improvements across the organisation.

On-going inputs through practice development were given directly to regulated services.

## Policy Development

The delivery of quality services is underpinned by a suite of comprehensive policies, procedures and protocols. The following policies and procedures were approved in 2023 following review and alignment to Assisted Decision Making (ADM) requirements:

- Framework for Developing PPPGs for Intellectual Disability and Mental Health Services (Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines)
- Personal and Intimate Care Policy for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability
- Positive Behaviour Support Policy (Children and Adults Intellectual Disability)
- Policy on Falls Prevention for Adults with an Intellectual Disability
- Food, Nutrition and Hydration Policy for Individuals in St John of God Community Services
- Guidelines on St John of God Community Services Quality and Safety Governance Structures, and Governance & Reporting Structures and Systems
- Standard Operating Procedure for Infection Prevention Control in line with the HSE Community Infection Prevention and Control Manual (Intellectual Disability and Mental Health Services)
- Policy on Access to Education, Training and Development Opportunities for Adults in Intellectual Disability Services
- Guidelines for Unannounced Visits by the Registered Provider or Nominee to a Designated Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities
- Policy and Procedure on External Feeding (Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy and Button Gastrostomy ONLY)

## Serious Incident and Risk Management

To support consistency of approach and shared learning in the area of incident management across the organisation, a Serious Incident Management Team is in place for St John of God Community Services with Local Incident Management Teams operating at regional services. As part of our commitment to continuous quality improvement, all serious and moderate rated incidences are reviewed appropriately with a focus on learning from an incident and implementing actions to prevent recurrence of incidents.

2023 was another very busy year for the Risk Department in providing support to services for Risk and Incident Management. Some 80 workshops were carried out across the organisation in a range of risk related areas. One particular focus of the sessions was the importance of services closing out on incidents on the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) so that the incident cycle is complete and all relevant information is uploaded to the system. In tandem with this, 2023 saw the first audit in Intellectual Disability Services, Liffey by the State Claims Agency (SCA) and this was a positive experience for both organisations.

The commencement of the Assisted Decision Making and Capacity Act 2015 (ADMA) in April 2023, has begun to filter through into the risk assessment process. One of the enhanced core tenets of risk training incorporates the will and preference of the individual's we support so that a human rights-based approach is taken to the management of risk.

The draft Strategic Risk Framework was developed to assist the Board and the Executive Management Team (EMT) to enhance and improve the flow and management of Enterprise Risk throughout the organisation and importantly to link all our risk processes to the published strategic objectives of St John of God Community Services. This framework includes draft Risk Appetite and Tolerance Statements that when agreed will be published by the Board and disseminated through the services and monitored via Key Risk Indicators (KRIs) so that risk priorities can be set in line with the Board Strategy. In 2023, a procurement process initiated for the replacement or upgrading of Risk Management System to support an integrated approach to risk management across the organisation.

## **Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act (ADMA) 2015**

The ADMA 2015 commenced in April 2023. St John of God Community Services welcomes and are fully committed to the provisions of the Act to support a human rights approach across its services. The Organisational ADM Oversight Committee continued its work throughout 2023 with a key focus on supporting Regional Implementation Committees.

## **Key Achievements for 2023**

- A very successful ADM Awareness Event was organised in November 2023 to provide guidance and support to services and practitioners with a focus on the practical implementation of the Act. This event was recorded and had inputs from external expert speakers with a focus on key changes to practice arising from the commencement of the Act, updates on the revised National Consent Policy and Transitioning from Wards of Court Arrangements. Speakers from our services and self-advocates also showcased best practice approach to supporting informed decision making and aligning of ADM principles into day-to-day practice.
- Further development of the ADM Mentoring Group which works toward embedding the ADM Guiding Principles into everyday practice. This group is available to regional services on a weekly basis to support problem solving, collective learning, and skill development and knowledge of staff in a safe and supportive manner.
- Provision of ongoing bespoke training to regional managers, staff members and self-advocates and provision of ADM awareness information to families.
- Development of tools and templates to support informed decision-making practices across the organisation.
- Creating greater awareness of ADM across the organisation through the dissemination of education, training and information materials and hosting of all relevant materials on the staff intranet.
- Working in collaboration with HSE National Equality and Human Rights Office to progress ADM implementation as a member of the HSE ADM Disability Reference Group and National ADM & Finance Subgroup who have a specific focus on addressing the barrier for individuals with a disability accessing banking services. We were also successful in securing placement for a number of staff onto the HSE Mentor and Mentee National Programme.
- Updating policies in line with ADM Principles.
- There will be a continued focus on supporting practice and culture aligned to a human rights approach through the provision of ongoing awareness building for individuals, their families and staff throughout 2024.

## QQI Accredited Programmes;

We were successful in our application and achieved initial access to validation with QQI as one provider of accredited QQI training programmes. As a requirement of this application and to ensure a clear separation of responsibility between the academic and operational work of the organisation, a defined governance structure was established with a link to the Quality & Safety Sub Committee of the Board. This includes the commencement of an Academic Committee for QQI Training and Education which is chaired and co-chaired by members of external academic bodies. A QQI Programme Development and Review Team and QQI Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures Team are established to support the governance structure.



## Acknowledgements

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We wish to acknowledge and thank the following people and groups for their ongoing assistance, advice and support throughout 2023.

- The individuals we support and their families.
- Staff across all areas of St John of God Community Services.
- Volunteers.
- Chief Executive HSE and officials at HSE National Office.
- Stability and Sustainability Team HSE National Office.
- Chief Officers and staff at CHO 4, 6, 7 and 8.
- Ministers and Officials at Department of Health.
- Ministers and Officials at Department of Disability, Equality, Children, Integration & Youth.
- Secretariat and the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers.
- Chief Executive and staff at The Wheel.
- Chief Inspector and staff at Health Information and Quality Authority.
- Chief Executive and staff at Mental Health Commission.
- Chief Executive and staff at Mental Health Reform.
- National Parents and Friends Association.
- Parents, Friends and Family Associations.
- Hospitaller Order of St John of God.
- St John of God Hospitaller Services Group.
- St John of God Hospital.
- St John of God Housing Association.
- St John of God Research Foundation.
- St John of God Foundation.
- St John of God Special Schools.
- Staff Representative Bodies.
- Charities Regulator.
- Companies Registration Office.
- Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland.
- University College Dublin.
- Trinity College Dublin.
- National University of Ireland Maynooth.
- Dundalk Institute of Technology.
- Munster Technological University Kerry.
- Legal, Public Relations and Financial Advisors.
- Suppliers of Goods and Services.

We also acknowledge the various corporate and community groups who gave of their time and expertise in various ways to support the work of our services and who openly welcome the participation of the individuals we support as equal and active members of community groups.

## **Expressions of Sympathy**

We express our sympathy and condolences to the people we support, their families and friends and staff who have lost loved ones during 2023.

## **Our Staff**

We acknowledge the continued commitment, flexibility, creativity, and dedication of our staff. Your contribution to the continued provision and development services and supports is truly appreciated.

## **Families and Guardians**

We equally acknowledge the continued commitment and support of families and guardians to their family member.

## **Retired Members of Staff**

We thank and acknowledge all retired staff members, many of whom have worked with our services for a long number of years. Your commitment and dedication to the people we support is appreciated. We wish you and your family a long, happy and healthy retirement.



## Board of Directors 2023



Theresa Ghalaieny



Peter O'Halloran



Charles Watchorn



James Hussey



Shane Hill



Elma Clancy



Gerard Boyle



Eimear O'Rourke



Ger O'Sullivan



Kieran Carolan



Ciaran Cuddihy  
-Company Secretary

## Executive Management Team



Clare Dempsey



Liam Healy



Bernadette Shevlin



Barry McKimm



Teresa Mallon



Michael Murnane

## Regional Directors



Claire O'Dwyer  
Kerry Services



Paula Hand  
North East Services



Elisa Doyle  
Liffey Services



Des North  
Dublin South East  
Services



Kevin Madigan  
Community Mental  
Health Services