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## Chairperson's Statement



**Chairperson interview for Annual Report 2024**

As we reflect on the milestones of 2024, I am inspired by how our collective efforts have not only honored our enduring values of hospitality, compassion and respect but have also laid a resilient foundation for transformative growth. Looking ahead, we are energized by a vision that embraces integration—bridging gaps in access, fostering collaboration across communities, and leveraging technology to amplify our impact. Our goal is to be more than a presence in the communities we serve; we strive to be catalysts for lasting, positive change. Together, we are not just shaping services—we are nurturing hope, dignity, and belonging. This is the heart of St. John of God, and it will continue to guide us as we innovate, advocate, and grow.



**Charles Watchorn**

**Chairperson**

St. John of God Community Services.

## Chief Executive's Statement



**CEO interview for the Annual Report 2024**

As I entered into the role of CEO of St. John of God Community Services in 2024, I was excited to be in a position to lead an organisation that has such a strong heritage and ethos to delivering innovative and high-quality services to people with both intellectual disabilities and mental health difficulties. 2024 started off as a difficult year for our organisation with a number of unresolved resourcing issues at the time. Throughout the year there was a focus on intensive negotiations with our funder the HSE and, whilst these discussions are ongoing and we and other disability and health service providers continue to experience difficulties with attaining adequate resources, the power of developing and maintaining strategic relationships can never be underestimated. As I have travelled around the services I have met a large number of staff, and I am continuously encouraged by the level of commitment and dedication to providing the best possible care which is consistent throughout the entire organisation.



**Kevin Madigan**

**CEO**

St. John of God Community Services.

# Our Mission, Vision and Values



## 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.**

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 Community Services.**

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.
- 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.

# Sustainability Impact Assessment



In 2022 the Sustainability Impact Assessment commenced for the purpose of ensuring that St. John of God Community Services was sufficiently resourced to deliver high quality sustainable services, to people with Intellectual Disabilities and Mental Health difficulties. Several working groups, each co-chaired by employees of St. John of God Community Services and the HSE were created to identify the requirements to achieve sustainable, compliant, high quality services.

The work streams are listed below:

- Service and Supports
- Workforce
- Governance
- Information and Technology
- Communications
- Estates
- Finance

In early 2024 the Board of St. John of God Community Services were not satisfied that sufficient progress had been made on delivering on the outcomes of the SIA. A process of dialogue was established with senior HSE Management, and an agreement was reached.

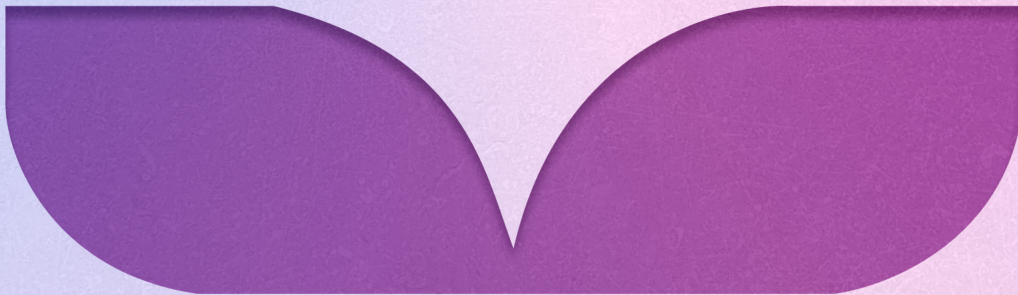
Out of that agreement St. John of God Community Services received confirmation of funding:

- To provide some support for the financial outcome in 2024
- To enhance the Community Mental Health Services
- To undertake minor works to designated buildings
- To improve the ICT Network
- To implement change management training
- To enhance the delivery of Assisted Technology
- To provide housing supports for the Dublin South East region
- To enhance Finance and HR systems

One of the objectives of the SIA process was to reduce an accumulated financial deficit. There is currently strong engagement ongoing with the HSE and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to complete this work. Members of the Executive Management Team continue to meet with the Head of Adult Disability and Sustainability on a fortnightly meetings basis to plan and monitor the ongoing roll out of the SIA.

# Regional Highlights

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



[Click to watch the video](#)

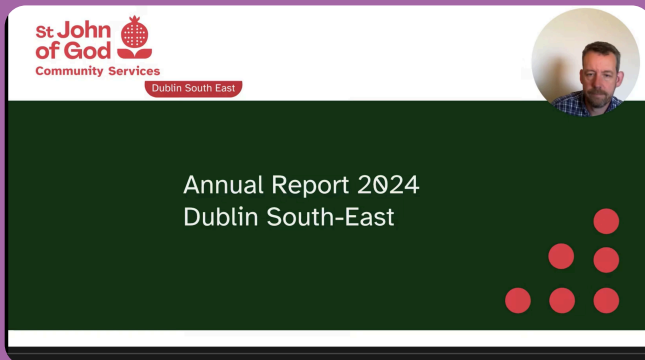


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2024 was a year of progress, innovation, and partnership across Adult and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services, driven by service user leadership and staff dedication:

- **New Health Promotion Role:** Introduced Ireland's first Clinical Nurse Specialist in Health Promotion within mental health services, focusing on the physical health of those on long-term medication, with research evaluation planned in 2025.
- **Solace Café Launch:** We opened the Solace Café in partnership with Aware. We provide an out-of-hours mental health support service by referral and have created a welcoming, appointment-based space for those in crisis.
- **Peer-Led Community Space:** The Burton Hall horticulture unit was transformed into a daily peer-led club space, fostering creativity, connection and service user engagement.
- **Service Expansion & Access:** Relocated the first community mental health team to a new site beside Dun Laoghaire Primary Care Centre. In CAMHS, the Waitlist Initiative significantly reduced wait times by increasing assessments and enhancing evidence-based treatment delivery.
- **Neurodiversity-Inclusive Practice:** A new neuro-affirmative initiative—supported by Better Life Foundation, ADHD Ireland, and NALA focused on communication, accessibility, staff training, and autism-friendly design, including a revamped Lucena website and new ADHD-friendly materials.

# Community Services, Dublin South East



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St. John of God Community Services, Dublin South East reflects on a year of both challenges and significant achievements in 2024, focusing on service quality, community inclusion, and the voice of people supported:

- **Decongregation Milestone:** Concluding a 20-year plan, the residents of Ravenswell in Bray transitioned into community homes, with the final houses opening in Obelisk (Blackrock) and Hollybrook (Bray).
- **Improved Facilities:** The day service previously based in Temple Court relocated to a larger, more suitable premises in Brookfield, Blackrock, enabling greater capacity and improved delivery of day supports.
- **Respite Services Reopened:** The respite house at 13 Wyattville Park was successfully reopened, returning essential short-term respite supports to families and service users.
- **Service Quality and Regulation:** Despite sector-wide challenges, the service maintained strong regulatory compliance, with audit scores reaching 92–93%, reflecting a consistent focus on safety and standards.
- **Advocacy and Community Partnership:** New service user forums were created to ensure rights and voices are heard. Volunteers, families, and the Parents & Friends Association continued to provide critical support, including funding and advocacy for unfunded needs.

## Community Services, Kerry



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Scan to watch the video

St. John of God Community Services, Kerry is pleased to share some of the key developments and achievements from 2024 across our community-based disability services:

- **Service Expansion:** Two new day programmes were opened in Kenmare and Listowel, expanding local supports for people with disabilities.
- **Programme Milestone:** The Castleisland Day Service celebrated 20 years of continuous operation, marking its role as a flagship programme in the region.
- **Community Partnerships:** A strong collaboration with Munster Technological University (MTU) continued, with graduates supporting certified advocacy training to empower people to speak up for themselves.
- **Public Engagement:** Minister Norma Foley visited Kerry and discussed the Disability Action Plan, highlighting the importance of political support for disability services.
- **Workforce Development:** A significant recruitment and training campaign was undertaken, along with recognition of long-serving staff, some with over 40 years of service.

# Community Services, Liffey



[Click to watch the video](#)



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St. John of God Community Services, Liffey is proud to reflect on a year of progress, inclusion, and innovation in 2024, driven by the collective efforts of staff, families, partners, and people supported:

- **Empowered Communication:** With staff and speech and language therapists, individuals were supported to lead, express, and inspire. Investment enabled twelve new touchscreen AAC devices, broadening access to meaningful communication.
- **Digital Coaching Expansion:** The DigiCoaching initiative grew through collaboration and shared learning, helping individuals and staff enhance their digital skills for communication, self-expression, and independence.
- **Creative Advocacy & Community Building:** A wide range of activities, from advocacy events to art exhibitions and charity work, demonstrated the power of community when people are empowered to share their voice.
- **Service Expansion & Access:** Recruitment, wellbeing initiatives, and service enhancement projects continued, alongside recognition of staff and individual achievements in both academic and personal development.
- **Commitment to Rights-Based Service:** Backed by the ongoing support of the staff, management, families and St. Raphael's Parents & Friends Association, 2024 was defined by immense staff effort to deliver high-quality, rights-based services, fostering inclusive services, welcoming environments where each person's voice is valued.

# Community Services, North East



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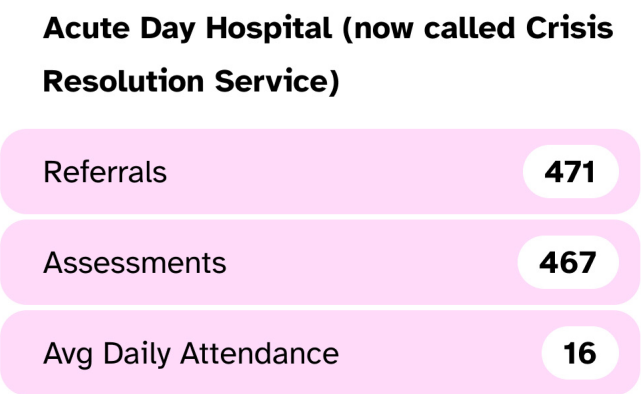
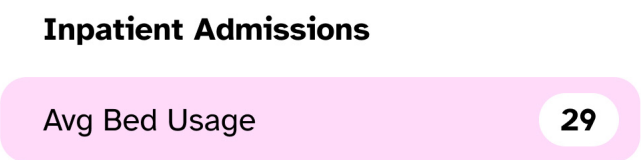
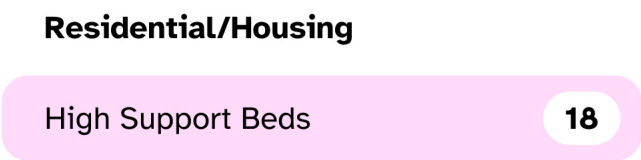
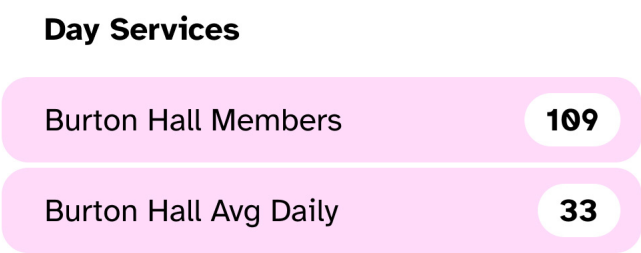
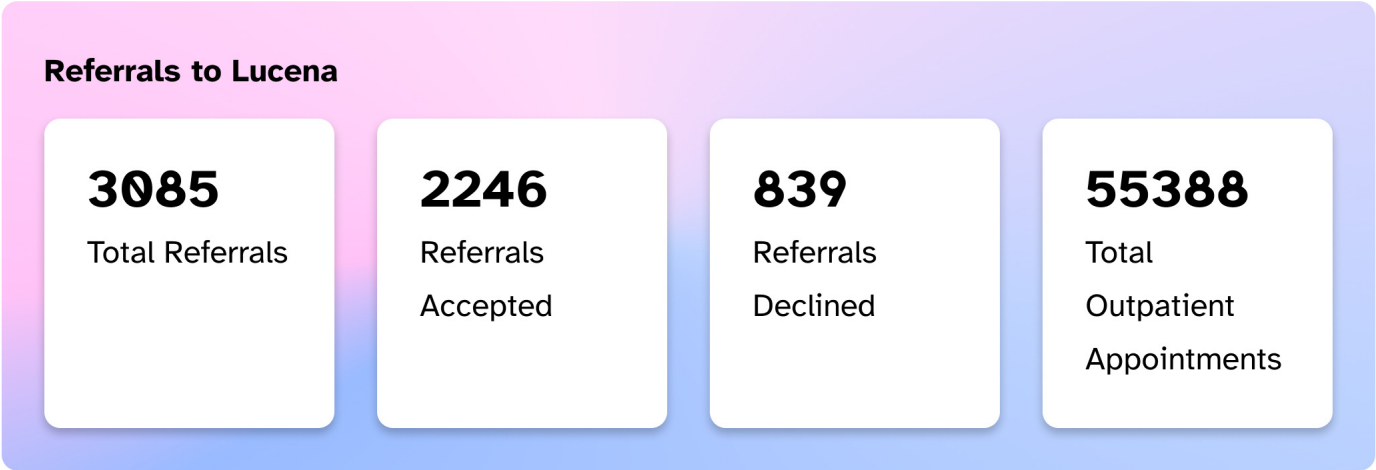
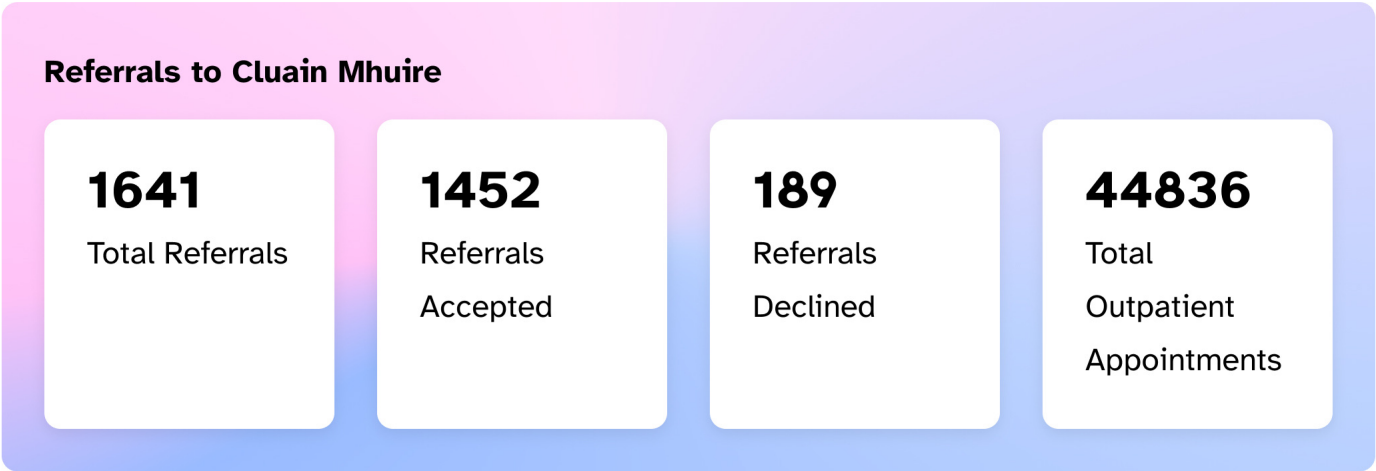
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St. John of God Community Services, North East is proud to share key achievements and milestones from 2024, reflecting a year of transformation, development, and community connection:

- **Service Transformation:** 2024 marked the final closure of the historic main house at St. Mary's, Drumcar, after 77 years of service, and the relocation of administrative operations to Hilltop Services, Dundalk, signalling a new chapter.
- **Infrastructure and Housing Developments:** Funding was secured for multiple initiatives, including the redevelopment of Seatown Day Centre, a new modular activity centre, and the opening of Shalom House, the first residential expansion since decongregation began.
- **Innovative Supports and Recognition:** New programmes like STARS were introduced to support school-to-adult service transitions for young people with autism and intellectual disability. Staff were upskilled through Autism Reality Experience training, and Gary Luckie qualified as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Positive Behaviour Support.
- **Leadership and Advocacy:** HIQA chose the service to present at Dublin Castle as a national example of regulatory transformation. Service users advocated for better local transport, and staff and individuals contributed to national conversations on assisted decision-making.
- **Community Engagement and Celebrations:** Active participation continued in tidy towns, animal welfare, and local sports clubs. Celebrations included milestone birthdays, most notably Philip's 90th, and opportunities for holidays and shared memories across the region.

# Regions and Staff in Numbers

## Community Mental Health Statistics



## Intellectual Disability Services Statistics by Region

	Dublin South East Services	Kerry Services	Liffey Services	North East Services
Residential	172	92	243	209
Day Service Attendees	393	166	509	124
		Respite		
Children	30	51	47	-
Adults	110	6	81	-

## Staff Statistics by Profession

### Average WTE of Persons Employed | Jan23 - Dec 23

Management/Admin	196.33 WTE
Medical/Dental	55.27 WTE
Nursing	525.46 WTE
Health and Social Care Professionals	704.73 WTE
General Support Services	115.18 WTE
Other Patient and Client Care	957.25 WTE

## HR - Our Team

- Recruitment remained a key priority for St. John of God Community Services in 2024. By increasing our core complement of staff, we aimed to provide a better service to the men and women in our care while simultaneously reducing both our agency and overtime spend. This year saw an additional 100 individuals join our organisation. We also grew our relief panel by + 30 WTE over the course of 2024.
- For the third successive year in a row, we reduced our staff turnover. Our 2024 figure was 9.11% which represents a 25% drop over a 24-month period.
- Following the positive results of our cultural audit we have devised a line management-led programme designed to boost and enhance employee engagement. A successful pilot was launched in DSE last autumn, and the programme is currently being rolled out nationally. We also launched and refreshed over 30 HR policies during the course of the year.
- We also led out on a programme in some of the regions designed to help promote attendance. While it's still early days, the indications are that attendance has improved resulting in better roster stability and attendance levels.
- In 2024 we launched a major programme to overhaul how training is organised and delivered Health eLearning Management (HeLM). We expect this project to launch in May 2025.
- Gender pay gap – for the third year in a row our gender pay gap reporting improved – for a breakdown of the results see below.
- We continued to work collaboratively with our Unions and we helped ensure that positive industrial and employee relations were maintained in 2024.

### Cultural Survey 2024 Executive Summary

In 2024, the Director of Culture at the St. John of God Hospitaller Services Group devised a survey to evaluate the culture across all entities of the organisation. This was to ensure that the entities are defined and recognised by their culture. Some 866 staff in St. John of God Community Services participated in the survey. Having a clear awareness of our organisation's cultural dimensions is the starting point for incorporating bespoke actions into our HR strategies to influence an effective and healthy culture. A shared, inspiring culture is essential to the delivery of our mission and our strategy.

## Results across St. John of God Community Services

The online confidential survey was designed in collaboration with senior executives. The culture survey had 7 key themes, with 40, multiple choice questions across the themes:

- **Values** - 58% of respondents noted that the values of St. John of God are upheld within the organisation.
- **Mission & Vision** - 67 % of respondents indicated that the mission and vision of St. John of God are present and steer every aspect of our work.
- **Leadership** - 50% of respondents highlighted that they were inspired and motivated by senior leaders.
- **Manager/Supervisor** - 72% of respondents indicated that they had faith in their Manager/Supervisor to support their team's performance, build positive team relationships, support resolution of challenges, encourage learning and development and foster team spirit.
- **Sense of Inclusion** - 74% of respondents felt respected and valued for who they are as individuals.
- **Work-Life Balance** - 59% of respondents experienced work-life balance.
- **Operational Effectiveness** - 68% of respondents indicated that they believe that the organisation is operationally effective.

## St. John of God Community Services Gender Pay Gap 2024

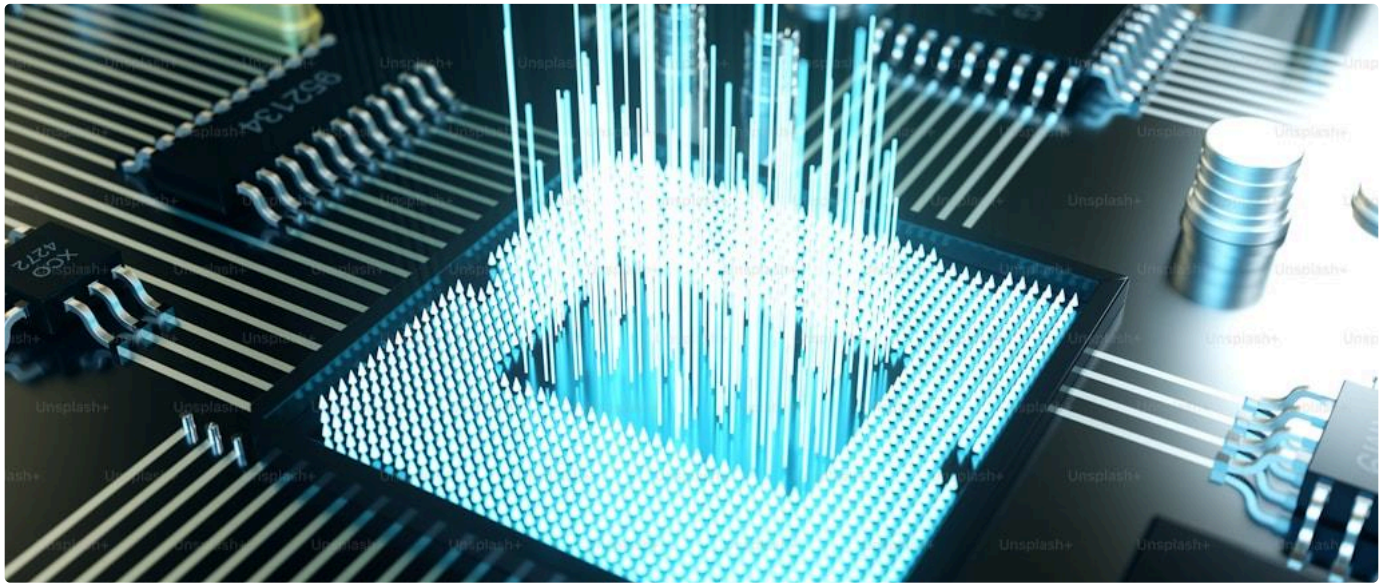
77% of staffing in St. John of God Community Services are female. The 2024 Pay Gap Analysis showed that there was a bias of 1.5% in favour of male employees versus +2.1% gap in 2023. However, when looked at under the median gender pay gap this falls to -2.4% (-0.2% in 2023). This breakdown of gender across the organisation broadly mirrors the distribution of senior/promotional roles.

## Males and Females in Each Quartile

Quartile	Male	Female
A (Upper)	21%	79%
B (Upper Middle)	19%	81%
C (Lower Middle)	19%	81%
D (Lower)	23%	77%

# ICT Department - Key Achievements

Reflecting on the past year, we are pleased to present the ICT Department's key achievements for 2024. Building on the strong foundation laid in 2023, the ICT team has continued to drive advancements in cybersecurity, infrastructure upgrades, and key system improvements. The dedication and resilience of the entire ICT team, both central and regional, have been instrumental in supporting St. John of God Community Services' goals and ensuring seamless service delivery across the five regions.



## Cybersecurity

Throughout 2024, we systematically enhanced our cybersecurity measures. Recognising the ever-evolving Cyber threat landscape, we implemented multifactor authentication, conditional access rules, and better endpoint protection. We improved vulnerability management through regular patching routines and better identification and reporting of vulnerabilities in the MS365 environment. We also introduced a phishing attack simulation to test and improve cybersecurity awareness, fortifying our defences and building on our strong culture of vigilance regarding sensitive data and the need to protect it.

## Infrastructure & Operations

Throughout the year, new group home locations had circuits commissioned and attached to the St. John of God network. We worked hard on a significant cleanup of user profiles and group policies to improve operations. Our disaster recovery capabilities were enhanced by reconfiguring the backup setup. Additionally, we upgraded the Firewall and VPN client access, completed the replacement of a new endpoint protection solution, and upgraded the data centre storage and server environments to the latest software versions.

Towards the end of the year, we made substantial progress in upgrading fundamental elements of our infrastructure. Following the approval of a small number of business cases by the HSE, we secured funding to update our network infrastructure in every location. The design of the new network was completed in 2024, but the main body of work will be done during 2025. Alongside this, another project to fund the replacement of over 200 PCs with new laptops and docking stations was also approved. The first batch of laptops was delivered and commissioned just before Christmas. This is a key step in enabling a transition to Windows 11 following the planned retirement of Windows 10 later in 2025.

## **Systems**

The MHIS team made significant progress in enhancing the system. They supported the creation of a new day managed service for Family Therapy, set up new MHIS locations, and updated templates and servers to improve security and reduce risk. Working with an external DBA, they implemented housekeeping and health check routines to ensure data integrity and system reliability.

We initiated a project to migrate our HSE Activity reporting to Power BI, a new reporting platform within the MS365 family. We also developed a secure mechanism for external sharing of documentation, enabling non-St. John of God guest access. The Mail meter email archive was upgraded and migrated to the cloud, and we implemented a room booking solution for Lucena Services.

To foster better communication, ICT rolled out the Engage platform and set up a number of communities on it. Indeed, the ICT community was actively used during Cybersecurity Awareness Month and had significant engagement from staff. These improvements have all clearly enhanced our systems, boosting our efficiency, effectiveness, and ability to collaborate securely. Additionally, there are many other changes and initiatives not mentioned here, but they all contribute to making our overall position better at the end of the year than it was at the beginning.

Looking ahead, while we have had a successful year, our work is far from complete. Significant changes are on the horizon for 2025, and we are excited about the opportunities these bring. The ICT Department is committed to leveraging these changes to enhance the working lives of our colleagues, enabling them to deliver key supports to the people who use our services. We look forward to continuing our journey of innovation and excellence, driving improvements that will benefit the whole of St. John of God Community Services.

## Programme, Quality & Safety Department

The Programme, Quality and Safety (PQS) Department continued its ongoing commitment to supporting person-centred and quality services at an organisational and regional level through their lead role in a number of governance and oversight structures and forums, policy development and a range of dedicated continuous quality inputs to residential/ respite regulated services and day services.

In 2024, there were 106 Designated Centres (DCs) for regulated Respite and Residential Services across St. John of God Community Services in their Regional services in Dublin, Louth, Kildare, Wicklow and Kerry. HIQA completed 59 inspections in 50 of DCs with full compliance at 79%, substantial compliance at 13% and non-compliance at 8%.

The PQS Department completed 216 unannounced audits on behalf of the provider and recorded a 68% full compliance, 25% substantial compliance and 6% non-compliance across all 106 Designated Centres.

Ongoing supports were provided from the PQS Department through practice development, which were given directly to DCs in preparation for upcoming HIQA inspections. Other areas of practice development and support included supporting compliance with organisational policies and Statement of Purpose regulatory requirements. Practice development was also provided in the areas of adherence to the HIQA Judgment Framework, Person-Centred Planning and a Meaningful Day. Bespoke supports were provided for some DCs in the areas of governance and management, site-specific personal emergency evacuation plans and contingency planning.

The PQS Department continued to support 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 an organisational and regional service levels. This included the Quality and Safety Executive forum which provides an oversight role in the review of organisational quality and safety data and information. The Department also continued to chair regulation meetings with Regional Services to support increased levels of compliance and quality improvement and provided regular reports and analysis relating to compliance trends from a learning perspective. The Quality Improvement Forum for Community Mental Health was re-established under the leadership of the PQS Department in 2024 in preparation for regulation of services. They chaired the Programme Managers forum, the New Directions Forum, the Safeguarding Committee and ADM Oversight Group. They also provided quarterly Quality and Safety reports to the Quality and Safety Board Sub Committee with an overview of all key areas relating to compliance and quality and safety improvements.

The PQS Department developed a draft Advocacy Strategy and the Director of PQS department presented this to SJOGCS Board. The aim of this Strategy is to drive a strong advocacy culture, increase advocacy awareness, support greater advocacy structures and place individuals/service users at the heart of practices, processes, programmes, policies, systems at all levels of the organisation. This strategy puts a lens on the involvement of individuals supported in co-design, co-decision making and co-implementation. There is a strong focus on capacity building for self-advocates, training and education for staff and the introduction of Advocacy Champions and effective mentoring structures. This is framed within a change management approach and incorporates key draft recommendations that will be finalised following consultation with self-advocates, staff and management across the organisation.

Following on from the completion of the SIA process with the HSE and aligned to the organisation's commitment towards progressing high-quality, person-centred services and supports, the Director of PQS department made a presentation on Personal Outcomes Measures to the St. John of God Community Services Board, incorporating with key actions required for the organisation to progress towards external accreditation.

In 2024 and as an output from the SIA process, HSE allocated dedicated funding to progress a number of Demonstration Projects which are aligned to key themes of person centredness, access to community services, collaboration, innovation, capacity building, enabling and enhancing natural supports.

These projects included a Community Connector Initiative which is aligned to New Direction Standards and an Alternative Respite Service. Steering groups were established with the involvement of HSE to scope out both projects which are committed to enabling citizenship and supports individuals to develop and maintain valued roles in community and extend their natural networks of support through building social connections. A programme of training will be provided to support the development of these projects.

The Director of PQS Department made a presentation to the Board of St. John of God Community Services on Innovation and Service Development across the organisation.

## **Policy Development Update**

The delivery of quality services is underpinned by a suite of comprehensive policies, procedures and protocols. The following policies and procedures under the remit of the PQS Department were approved in 2024 following review and alignment to ADM requirements.

- Supports Policy for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability (Admission / Entry / Transition / Transfer / Discharge / Exit).

- Enabling Restriction Free Practices and Environments Policy (as we support Individuals with areas of concern of risk of serious harm).
- St. John of God Community Services Safeguarding SOP in relation to the HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy and Procedures 2014.
- Dysphagia/Eating, Drinking, Swallowing (EDS) Policy and Procedure for Adults.

To ensure compliance with Schedule 5 policies under the Health Act 2007 the following HR policies were updated; Recruitment and Selection, Garda Vetting / Policy Clearance and Training and Development.

## **Assisted Decision Making**

The Organisational ADM (Capacity) Oversight Committee under the remit of the PQS Department continued it's work throughout 2024 with a key focus on supported Regional Implementation Committees;

The following is a number of key achievements for 2024:

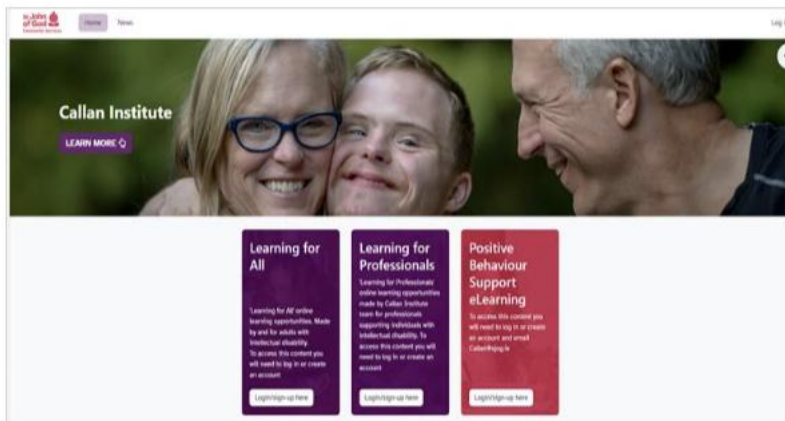
- Ongoing provision of awareness of ADM across the organisation through the dissemination of education, training and information. Provision of updated information and materials on the staff intranet. A specific focus on exiting Wardship with circulation of information to Services. A draft guidance document was completed to support individualised informed decision making associated with potential high-risk decisions and this was piloted in one region.
- Progressing an ADM Strategy and Implementation Plan for St. John of God Community Services to support greater learning and enhanced practice aligned to a human rights-based approach.
- To support and embed the ADM principles into practice at a regional level, a number of initiatives were further developed including the ADM Support and Mentoring Group which is available to regional services and supports shared learning; A review commenced of the Terms of Reference for the Regional ADM Committees and a generic Job Description for an ADM Co Ordinator post per regional service was developed.
- Working in Collaboration with several national stakeholders including the HSE National Equality and Human Rights Office and Decision Support Services to support ongoing implementation of the key elements of ADM legislation.
- Ongoing updating of St. John of God Community Services policies in line with ADM Principles

- A review commenced of St. John of God Community Services SOP on Consent in line with the updated HSE National policy.

## **QQI Update**

Following on from St. John of God Community Services successful initial access to validation to become one provider of QQI accredited programme and under the leadership and guidance of the PQS department, the next stage of the process was progressed to secure Programme Validation.

To support this process the Programme Development and Review Team coordinated the development of two new programmes – Community Education Level 1 and 2 and the St. John of God Community Service's QQI Academic Committee for QQI Training and Education met on a number of occasions to oversee and approve the programmes prior to submission to QQI for validation in November 2024. Quarterly reports were made to the Quality and Safety Sub Committee of the Board.



Callan Institute's eLearning platform launched two new learning streams, 'Learning for All' and 'Learning for Professionals', making learning units on the areas of Positive Behaviour Support and Relationships and Sexuality available and accessible for everyone.

'Learning for All' has 18 bite-size learning units designed by and for adults with lived experience of intellectual disability, including topics on relationships and sexuality and Positive Behaviour Support (using the Multi-Element Behaviour Support Model).

'Learning for Professionals' has a number of webinars including Hi5 Alive, PLISSIT, RUA's Awareness Principles, Wheel of Optimal Living suitable for staff.

Learning for All and Learning for Professionals are free to access, and anyone can log on using their email address and creating their own password. When a learning unit is completed, a certificate can be downloaded. 'Learning For All' was completed with funding from the St. John of God Foundation's Better Life Grant.

The eLearning module on PBS (using the Multi-Element Behaviour Support Model) can also be found on this platform. This is a 28-hour module, designed primarily for for St. John of God Community Services staff and volunteers and in 2024 approx. 53 people registered on this module.

The link and QR code to access Callan Institute's eLearning platform are both included here.

[Home | Callan Institute SJOGCS eLearning](#)





In 2024, we introduced a new workshop series titled “Skills Teaching through Experiential Learning” for frontline staff. These hands-on sessions are designed to equip staff with practical strategies to teach essential life skills identified through the Personal Planning process—skills that are meaningful and important to the individuals they support.

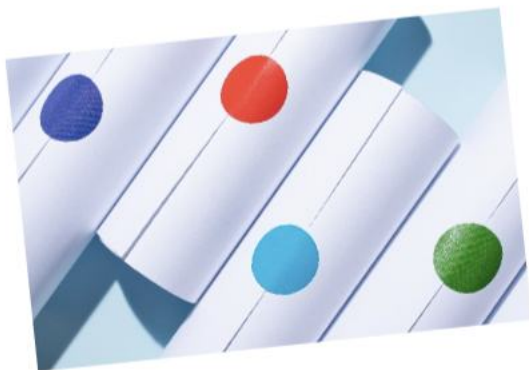
Areas of focus included: Independent living, Communication, Daily living activities, Self-care, Decision-making, Leisure and friendships, health and money management.

The workshops are highly interactive, featuring role-plays and real-life scenarios, with no assignments and streamlined paperwork to enhance accessibility and engagement.

By empowering staff to teach these skills, we create a ripple effect—where individuals supported gain greater independence, confidence, and the ability to make informed choices, ultimately leading to more fulfilling lives.

A total of 51 frontline staff completed the two-part workshop (2 x 3-hour sessions), earning 306 CPD hours. Participants highlighted the value of the training and offered suggestions for further development.

Understanding and embracing the ripple effect helps us recognise the broader impact of skill-building—not just for individuals supported, but also for staff and the wider community.



### **New Course: Certificate in Practical Case Evaluation and MEBS Plan Re-development.**

This hands-on course offers two distinct learning pathways. The first pathway is designed for frontline staff to enhance their skills in reviewing and updating existing MEBS plans. The second pathway is tailored

for Behaviour Practitioners, who will mentor frontline staff and reflect on the support they provide throughout this process.

The course provides all learners with a comprehensive theoretical immersion in the MEBS philosophy, structure, and processes. Additionally, it includes experiential learning through a mentorship arrangement between Callan Institute and St. John of God Community Services, Kerry Behaviour Practitioners. This initiative was successfully completed and all learners are in the process of completing their portfolio.



#### Relationships and Sexuality Toolkit

Some information and prompts to support people to think about Identity, Friendships, Relationships and Sexuality in Person Centred Plans

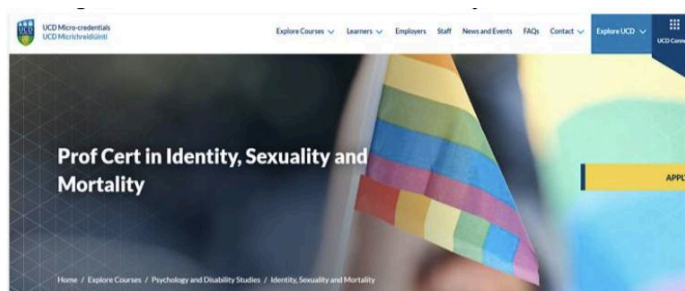
**‘Relationships and Sexuality Toolkit’.** RUA, a department of Callan Institute has an ambitious programme for a future where identity, friendships, relationships and sexuality of children and adults with intellectual disability are supported and recognised as central to a good life, social stigma and discrimination are challenged, and each individual is supported to express their sexuality and make decisions regarding their sexual expression. RUA assists professionals and families to be comfortable and skilled in providing

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Support using PLISSIT, Hi 5 Alive © and RUA’s 9 guiding principles- AWARENESS ©.

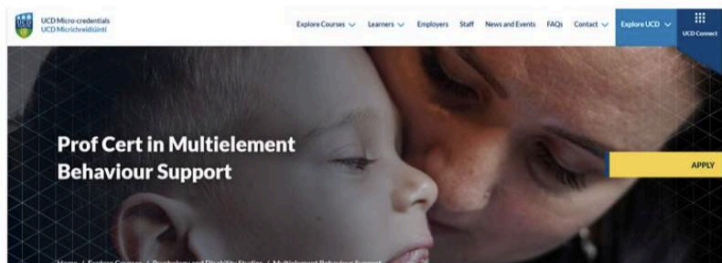
In 2024, RUA developed the ‘Relationships and Sexuality Toolkit’, co-designed with individuals with lived experience and supported by a volunteer from St. John of God Community Services Liffey Services. This resource is designed to be used within the Person-Centred Planning process, helping individuals identify the supports they need in relation to identity, friendships, relationships, and sexuality.

The toolkit includes four prompt sheets that guide and encourage meaningful conversations about these important life areas. Each sheet provides information on rights and choices, supporting individuals and staff as they explore these topics as part of their life vision and person centred plan.

The toolkit is available through the St. John of God Community Services Person-Centred Approach Policy and the St. John of God Community Services Sexuality and Intimate Relationships Policy.



Partnership with a university: Callan Institute, St. John of God Community Services in partnership with UCD, through the UCD Centre for Disability Studies within the UCD School of Psychology continue to facilitate 2 core modules on the MSc in Disability, namely, Multi-Element Behaviour Support and Identity Sexuality Mortality and Trauma.



These modules are part of the MSc in Disability and can also be taken as electives and/or standalone CPD modules and/or as a micro-credential module, post-graduate certificate. In March 2024, the Higher Education

Authority (HEA) launched the Micro-Credentials Learner Fee Subsidy under the Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3. Both the Professional Certificate in Multi-Element Behaviour Support and the Professional Certificate in Identity Sexuality Mortality and Trauma, were eligible for this 100% fee subsidy, funded and endorsed by the HSE. This means that no fees apply.

In addition to this partnership, Callan Institute, St. John of God Community Services is also part of a Memorandum of Understanding between St. John of God Community Services, St. John of God University Hospital, St. John of God Research Foundation and UCD School of Psychology.

#### MSc Disability - Module Listing - UCD Graduate Studies

The toolkit is available through the St. John of God Community Services Person-Centred Approach Policy and the St. John of God Community Services Sexuality and Intimate Relationships Policy.



In 2024, the Callan Institute hosted around 52 learning events and validated approximately 13,000 Continuing Professional Development hours. Participants earned CPD credits based on the type of activity they participated in, ranging from 1 to 200 hours. Callan Institute congratulates the many staff from St. John of God Community Services and other Irish services who took part and hopes their learning continues to benefit their work.

# Audit Risk and Compliance

Risk management is integral to governance at St. John of God Community Services, ensuring safety, compliance, and quality service delivery. The organisation follows ISO 31000 and HSE guidelines, with a strategic risk framework adopted in Q1 2024. Recent improvements include appointing a Director of Audit Risk and Compliance and plans to recruit an internal auditor in early 2025. This paper highlights key risks and the major mitigating actions.

## Key Risks and Mitigating Actions

Key Risk	Major Mitigating Actions
<b>Funding shortfalls</b> (ongoing HSE negotiations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ongoing discussions with HSE for 2025 funding to address deficits.</li><li>- Business cases submitted for capital and maintenance funding.</li></ul>
<b>Staffing shortages</b> due to labour market conditions and HSE Pay & Numbers Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Continued recruitment and workforce planning efforts.</li><li>- Advocacy on HSE policy impacts on staffing.</li></ul>
<b>Payroll process weaknesses</b> (manual input, inconsistency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Planned review and standardisation of payroll systems to improve accuracy and efficiency.</li></ul>
<b>Insufficient maintenance funding</b> (planned, cyclical, reactive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Prioritisation of essential repairs.</li><li>- Partial capital funding secured in 2024.</li><li>- Business cases ongoing for additional funding.</li></ul>
<b>Aging vehicle fleet</b> (circa 190 vehicles more than 15 years; 21 more than 20 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Funding secured for 12 new vehicles via - St. John of God Hospitaller Services Group.</li><li>- Need for dedicated vehicle replacement funding remains.</li></ul>
<b>Fire safety and electrical compliance risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Submission of business cases for remedial works.</li><li>- Partial completion of recommended works.</li><li>- Significant risk remains due to funding gaps.</li></ul>
<b>Operational Effectiveness</b>	68%

Key Risk	Major Mitigating Actions
<b>Premises compliance for HIQA and non-HIQA sites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partial improvements achieved.</li> <li>- Reliance on regional prioritisation and business cases continues.</li> <li>- Risk status unchanged since Q4 2023.</li> </ul>
<b>Outdated electronic risk register</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planned upgrade and enhancement scheduled for Q1 2025.</li> </ul>
<b>Incident management and learning dissemination delays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rollout of National Incident Management System access and Learning Notices planned across all regions in 2025.</li> <li>- Successful pilot in Northeast region.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding and recruitment compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strict adherence to Garda Vetting, Children First, and safeguarding policies.</li> <li>- Regular review of recruitment and vetting procedures.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

Significant progress has been made in governance and risk mitigation, yet funding constraints and resource shortages continue to pose challenges. Ongoing efforts to secure sustainable funding and strengthen internal controls are critical to maintaining service quality and safety.

## Service Operations



13:59

-7:00

[Click to watch the video](#)

Listen to **Liam Healy**, Director of Operations talk about his role, Regional Highlights, Finance & HR and more...



Scan to watch the video

“2024 was a challenging year but thanks to the commitment, dedication and hard work of our staff we continue to deliver quality services across the regions. We are maintaining good levels of compliance with multiple Regulators, while continuing to fight for the resources necessary to provide high quality services and to be compliant and sustainable.

My thanks to our staff, families, and especially the people we support. A special thanks to our Board Members who give so much time and effort on a voluntary basis. We must thank our funder the HSE, and all the Regulatory bodies we work with who help us to improve and maintain standards. We are a values driven organisation, and what I find most encouraging is that we continue to demonstrate hospitality, compassion and respect. It is critical we maintain those standards as part of our daily work.”

# The Better Life Programme



## **An introduction to our Better Life program**

The Better Life Programme has resulted in substantial funding being made available for a range of St. John of God services. St. John of God schools, St. John of God Community Services, Respite centres and St. John of God Hospitaller Group have all received funding from the Better Life Programme. So far this year, a total of €100,000 in grants has been awarded to projects which have ranged from adapted playgrounds to the creation of sensory rooms, and from innovative assistive technology to therapeutic intervention projects.

The Better Life program provides flexible funding to support a diverse range of projects. Projects which will enhance the lives of children, adolescents and adults living with intellectual disabilities and/or mental health challenges. These grants fund innovation in the areas of accessibility, therapy, recovery and transport. The grant programme engages with a broad range of applications, from very small to large projects, all are considered equally deserving of our support.

Additional Better Life grants have funded the installation of sensory rooms in St. John of God Community Services respite centres. Sensory rooms are designed to provide a calm and healing environments, offering a quiet safe space for the children and/or adults who access them. Other Better Life grants have funded the installation of therapeutic hoists in swimming pools to ensure greater accessibility for people living with physical disabilities.

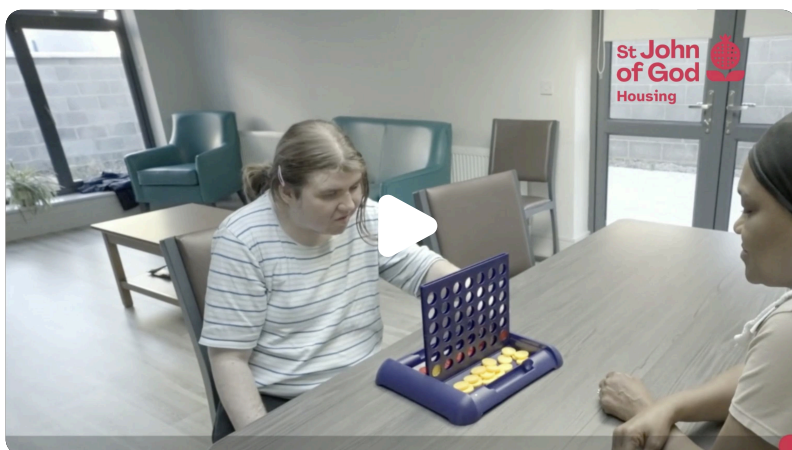
Whether small or large, the Better Life programme is dedicated to funding projects that foster greater inclusion and independence to all those who access our services. These projects have improved, and will continue to improve, the happiness and sense of fulfilment of the people we have the honour to support and it brings us great joy to be in a position to make such a positive and lasting difference.

To see just some of the innovation made possible through Better Life funding, visit:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@SJOGFoundation-BetterLife>

# St. John of God Housing Association

In 2024, St. John of God Housing Association continued its close collaboration with St. John of God Community Services to expand access to secure, community-based housing for individuals with intellectual disabilities and mental health challenges:

- **Shared Mission in Action:** The St. John of God Housing Association and St. John of God Community Services worked together to deliver safe, supported homes that serve as a foundation for wellbeing, inclusion, and mental health.
- **New Home in Bray:** A major milestone was opening a new home in Hollybrook, Bray, offering permanent housing to four individuals transitioning from congregated settings into the community.
- **Collaborative Success:** This project was a partnership model, with the Department of Housing and local authorities providing the home, and the HSE and St. John of God Community Services delivering support to residents.
- **Impact on Wellbeing:** The organisation emphasised the transformative effect of secure tenancy on self-esteem and quality of life, ensuring that individuals feel valued and connected in their local communities.
- **Urgent Call for Advocacy:** In the face of a national housing crisis, there remains a housing crisis within a housing crisis for people with disabilities. The St. John of God Housing Association stressed the need for continued advocacy to protect the rights of people with disabilities and to secure the housing and supports they urgently need.



**Housing Association**



Scan to watch the video

# St. John of God Research Foundation clg

## Driving Innovation through Research

St. John of God Research Foundation promotes a research culture throughout the St. John of God Group. In 2024, the teams across our Community Mental Health and Intellectual Disability Services benefited from the work of the Research Foundation to support and grow research that drives real change in people's lives.

From early-stage ideas to nationally and internationally recognised studies, the Research Foundation continued to provide direct support through funding, mentorship, library access, and capacity building.



Joe McCarthy and his brother Andrew McCarthy.

*The St John of God Research Foundation is proud to champion research that supports person-centred, evidence-based practice and empowers teams to innovate in their communities.*

## Building a Research-Active Culture

By the end of 2024, 29 Community Services research projects were actively supported through the Research Support Service, with an additional 6 systematic reviews progressing through the Library & Information Service.

Through educational seminar series, workshops, and inductions, the Research Foundation team helped embed research practice across our services.

Access to knowledge remained strong, with over 4,000 online journals and two physical libraries. There was growing usage of Open Athens for remote access. Library membership rose to 1,610, a 3% increase, demonstrating the continued value of this vital service.



Above Left - Dr Sharon Hardiman at IASSIDD in Chicago, USA

Above Right - Fatima Badmos at ICCHP in Linz, Austria

Below Left - Patrick Fitzgerald, Sarah Boland, Liffey Services et al. presenting at the University of Limerick PPI summer School

Below Right - Caroline Dench at APBS in Chicago, U.S.A

## Funding Research to Make a Difference

In 2024, the Research Foundation awarded over €32,000 in research funding to support Community Services-led projects. Two major Seed Grants were awarded:

- Dr Keith Gaynor: Validation of heart rate variability (HRV) as an objective measure of affective change in psychosis.
- Dr Sharon Hardiman: Feasibility pilot of group-based resistance training for adults with Down Syndrome.

In addition to the Seed and Project Grant schemes, the Knowledge, Training, Dissemination, and Translation (KTDT) funding supported innovative practice across the country. 2024 KTDT recipients included Caroline Dench, Callan Institute; Cousins; and Sharon Hardiman, St. John of God ID, Dublin Southeast Services.

## **Sharing Our Impact**

Our researchers shared their insights on national and international stages, presenting at conferences in Ireland, Austria and the U.S.A. – all supported by the Research Foundation.

These opportunities not only showcase the quality of our work but also strengthen the voices of our services in global conversations on mental health, disability, and inclusive innovation.

# Acknowledgements

- 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 Areas 4, 6, 7 and 8
- Ministers and Officials at Department of Health
- Ministers and Officials at Department of Disability, Equality, Children, Integration and 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

- 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 2024.

## **Staff**

We acknowledge the continued commitment, flexibility, creativity, and dedication of our staff. Your contribution to the continued provision and development of 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.

## **Volunteers**

We acknowledge and thank our Volunteers who so generously give their time in a variety of ways. Volunteers are involved in supporting individuals to achieve their personal goals, assisting individuals to attend sporting or recreational activities, fundraising and much more. We truly appreciate the unique contribution you make to our services.

## **A special thanks to**

We are grateful to Conor Coffey for interviewing our CEO and Chairperson, and to Sourabha Naik for designing the Annual Report. Their contributions were invaluable.

## **Annual Report Committee**

We acknowledge with thanks and gratitude the Editorial Committee for the preparation and production of this annual report. We also acknowledge and thank those who have contributed in a variety of ways to the development of this report. Your contribution has enabled us to bring to life the very real examples of the great work that is ongoing daily across our services and the impact that this work has on the quality of life for people we support and the importance of all in making a contribution to the sustainability of the world in which we live.

## Board of Directors 2024



**Charles Watchorn**  
Board Chairperson



**Gerry Boyle**  
Chairperson of the  
Nominations,  
Performance &  
Governance  
Committee



**Shane Hill**  
Chairperson of the  
Quality & Safety  
Committee



**Ger O'Sullivan**  
Chairperson of the  
Finance & HR  
Committee



**Kieran Carolan**



**Elma Clancy**



**Theresa Ghalaieny**



**Padraic White**



**Paul Ryan**



**Peter Halloran**  
(retired)



**James Hussey**  
(retired)



**Eimear O'Rourke**  
(retired)



**Ciaran Cuddihy**  
Company Secretary

## Executive Directors 2024



**Clare Dempsey**  
CEO (Outgoing Oct 24)



**Kevin Madigan**  
CEO (Incoming Oct 24)



**Liam Healy**  
Director of Operations



**Teresa Mallon**  
Director of Programme, Quality & Safety



**Barry McKimm**  
Director of HR



**Gary Watkins**  
Director of Audit, Risk and Compliance



**Tom McGrath**  
Director of Finance (Incoming Jan 25)



**Bernadette Shevlin**  
Director of Special Projects (outgoing May 24)



**Michael Murnane**  
Director of Finance (outgoing May 24)

## Regional Directors 2024



**Sarah Donnelly**  
(Interim) Community Mental Health Services



**Des North**  
Dublin South East Services



**Claire O'Dwyer**  
Kerry Services



**Elisa Doyle**  
Liffey Services



**Paula Hand**  
North East Services