

ANNUAL
REPORT
2022



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Welcome from the Chairperson

Our vision

To achieve long-term, sustainable improvements in the quality of life of those needing our services and support in the Sligo region, delivered in partnership with statutory agencies and other non-profit organisations, and through the support of our local communities.

To be flexible and innovative in our response to those who are experiencing difficulties in our community, recognising their changing needs and circumstances, in order that they will never find themselves alone and without support.

Our mission

Sligo Social Services strives to empower individuals, families and communities in the Sligo region in improving their quality of life through the promotion of social justice, equality and the dignity of the human being.

We seek to address their needs respectfully by empowerment, support and encouragement and, where appropriate, direct assistance by caring, competent and professional individuals, deployed on a full-time, part-time or voluntary basis.



On behalf of the Board of Sligo Services Council Ltd I am delighted to present the annual report for 2022, a snapshot of the work carried out in the various services we provide in supporting children, families and adults who are vulnerable and marginalised in our community within the framework of our Strategic Plan.

I would particularly like to thank our team of 150 volunteers who support the organisation in various roles, to our CEO Christina and her team of staff and CE participants, while acknowledging that the organisation is still experiencing difficulties filling vacant positions, I wish to thank you all for your commitment and professionalism in providing the very highest level of services to the public.

I also wish to acknowledge our thanks for the continued support from our statutory funders, Dept. of Social Protection, H.S.E., Tusla, Sligo Co. Council, Pobal, thank you for your continued support and our ongoing partnership with the Diocese of Elphin is valued and most welcome.

In 2022, a number of long-standing board members retired and I wish to formally thank them for their dedication and commitment to the organisation during their tenure, we also welcomed a number of new board members and I wish to thank you for your support and dedication shown to me and the organisation.

We look forward to implementing our new four year strategic plan in 2023.

Orla Barry
Chairperson
Sligo Social Service Council CLG

A Word from the CEO



I am very pleased to introduce Sligo Social Services 2022 Annual Report.

As the homelessness and housing crisis continued and food and energy costs continued to soar we saw increased pressure on our services in 2022. We met these challenges by continuing to provide high quality services and meeting the needs of people presenting to services. Our emergency accommodation was busier than ever with beds rarely left empty. For the first time additional emergency homelessness beds were made available by Sligo County Council during the winter period. Our homeless services staff team provided support to service users placed in this accommodation.

We continued to provide the Housing First Service in Counties Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal. As is expected service users required intensive support from the staff team throughout the year. The difficulty in acquiring one-bedroom units continued as a significant challenge for Housing First in 2022.

Our Open Access service continued with 532 presentations to the service in 2022. With the spiralling food and fuel cost throughout the year putting immense pressure on household budgets it was no surprise that this was a significant increase on last year. We distributed 27,289 meals through our meals on wheels service throughout the year.

Following our successful application to the The Community Foundation for Ireland and the HSE for funding to carry out research into homelessness in Sligo, Dr. Ciara Morley completed this research project, and the report was launched in ATU Sligo in October.

Sligo Social Services must generate a substantial amount of our own income each year, the details of which you will see in this report. We can only do this with the help of our supporters and volunteers. Individual donors continue to provide support by donating directly and we benefited greatly from the support of local schools and businesses. Our thanks to the many donors who supported our work throughout the year. I would like to thank our statutory funders, the HSE, DSP, Sligo County Council, The Northwest Regional Drug and Alcohol Taks Force, the Office of the Minister for Children and Tusla. Also, a particular thanks to the Friends of Sligo Social Services and the Diocese of Elphin for their ongoing support.

2022 has seen unprecedented difficulties in recruiting staff to both Community Employment positions and to Sligo Social Services positions. The lack of statutory funding increases to organisations within the Community and Voluntary Sector for more than 12 years means that we are unable to compete with the statutory and commercial sectors when seeking to attract and retain staff. This is having a direct impact on our capacity to deliver services to those in need.

We began work on developing a new strategic plan for the organisation in the latter part of the year. This is timely given the significant challenges which have emerged in recent times including the impact of the rising cost of living and staff recruitment.

Sligo Social Services' greatest strength is the commitment and passion of our workforce of staff and volunteers, who continue to show exceptional resilience and determination in the face of all the challenges this year has brought. They have enabled us to stay true to our purpose, and we are extremely grateful to all of them.

Christina Mc Taggart
Chief Executive
Sligo Social Services Council CLG

OUR WORK: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR 2022

**271 PEOPLE
WITH 430
CHILDREN**

**RECEIVED HELP FROM
OUR OPEN ACCESS
SERVICE**



**72 CHILDREN
ATTENDED OUR
CHILDCARE
SERVICES**



**84 PEOPLE ACCESSED
OUR EMERGENCY
HOMELESS HOSTEL**



27,289 MEALS

**WERE COOKED AND
DELIVERED BY OUR
MEALS ON WHEELS
SERVICE**



**OUR VOLUNTEERS
MADE AN AVERAGE
OF 70 FRIENDLY
CALLS' PER WEEK TO
OLDER PEOPLE**



Directors Report

The Directors submit their report together with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022.

1. Objectives and Activities

We aim to achieve long-term, sustainable improvements in the quality of life of those needing our services and support in the Northwest region, delivered in partnership with statutory agencies and other non-profit organisations, and through the support of our local communities.

The principal activities of the organisation consist of the provision of services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness including homeless hostels for single adults, short-term family accommodation, substance misuse support, housing liaison service and housing first services. We provide services for older people including a meals on wheels service and a befriending service. Our children and family services include pre-school, after-schools, and youth counselling services. We provide targeted community support including advice and information services and operate a large community employment scheme.

The main areas of attention are the development of the company's existing activities, securing financial and human resources to make these sustainable and achieving the highest standards of corporate governance.

Through our Strategic plan 2018 – 2022 we worked to:

- ensure that those in need in Sligo have access to the support they need when they need it enabling them to live life to the full.
- provide services which have a real and positive impact on the lives of our service users while being accountable to supporters.
- improve awareness of the work we do and influence local and national policy.
- grow and manage our income ensuring that we can sustain and develop the services needed by our clients.

2. Financial review, Achievements and Performance

The financial results for the year are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 13 of the financial statements.

The ongoing housing crisis in 2022 meant our Homeless services were busier than ever with homeless emergency beds full on an ongoing basis. As COVID 19 restrictions came to an end our emergency hostel returned to providing 15 beds each night. 2022 saw the number of individuals availing of homeless emergency accommodation increase to 84 individuals. As in previous years 2022 saw private rented accommodation in extremely short supply with rents normally outside the *Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)* limits available to clients. As such it continued to be extremely difficult for service users to access move-on accommodation in 2022. As the housing crisis deepened this year homeless presentations increased resulting in Sligo County Council offering 10 additional emergency beds within a private B&B from October onwards. Sligo Social Services emergency accommodation team offered support to residents in this accommodation also.

The Housing Liaison worker worked with 76 people who were in Sligo University Hospital all of whom had been identified as being homeless or having a housing need.

We also continued to provide the Housing First Service in Counties Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal, with the team working with 31 service users throughout the region. As is expected service users required intensive support from the staff team throughout the year. The difficulty in acquiring one-bedroom units continued as a significant challenge for Housing First in 2022. Additional funding was provided by the HSE during 2022 to begin expanding the service throughout the region.

Following our successful application to the The Community Foundation for Ireland and the HSE for funding to carry out research into homelessness in Sligo, Dr. Ciara Morley completed this research project in 2022. The report was launched in ATU Sligo in October.

Our Open Access service continued with 532 presentations to the service in 2022. With the spiralling food and fuel cost throughout the year putting immense pressure on household budgets it was no surprise that this was a significant increase on last year. Through the 'Support to the most Deprived' food programme we supported many people with food throughout the year and also distributed 360 school packs to children at the start of the new school year. In 2022, our meals on wheels service supported 182 individual recipients and we distributed 27,289 meals.

Sligo Social Services depends significantly on individual and corporate support to sustain our services. Our Thrift shop contributes considerably to our income and contributes to the community within which it is based. As is the case for many not-for-profit organisations, Sligo Social Services must maintain and grow its income sources to ensure the sustainability and continuation of its work and services. To sustain and grow the organisation the directors review the sources of income on an ongoing basis and monitor the reserve levels to ensure that they are maintained at a reasonable level in the context of planned expenditure and future commitments.

Fundraising in 2022 continued to be very challenging. Our primary fundraising income is generated from our Thrift Shop and we saw the shop income begin to slowly increase during 2022. However, despite this improvement by the year end the shop income remained considerably less than pre-Covid returns.

The Board has implemented a reserves policy which is reviewed on an annual basis. Currently that policy is to create and maintain sufficient reserves to enable continued operation for a minimum of six months.

Volunteers continue to play a key role in the organisation's work. These volunteers provided a range of help including:

Delivering services such as:

- Meals on Wheels
- Open Access
- Befriending

Assisting bucket collections

Board of Directors

Helping out working in our thrift shop

Work began in the latter part of the year on developing a new strategic plan for the organisation. This is timely as significant challenges have emerged in recent time including the impact of the rising cost of living and staff recruitment. 2022 has seen unprecedented difficulties in recruiting staff to both Community Employment positions and to Sligo Social Services positions. The lack of statutory funding increases to organisations within the Community and Voluntary Sector for more than 12 years have resulted in staff salaries remaining unchanged for the same period. Subsequently we cannot compete with the statutory and commercial sectors when seeking to attract and retain staff. This is beginning to have a direct impact on our capacity to deliver services to those in need.

3. Structure, Governance and Management

Structure

Sligo Social Service Council Company Limited by Guarantee ('Sligo Social Services') is an Irish Company incorporated under the Companies Act 2014. It is a company limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. It is governed by a Constitution, which

2016. Sligo Social Services is a public benefit entity - the benefit we provide is demonstrated through our work with individuals, children, families, and communities.

Governance

The Board of Directors of Sligo Social Services is committed to maintaining high standards of corporate governance. Sligo Social Services prepares an annual report and financial statements and makes them available to the public on our website. Members of the Board are elected by the members of Sligo Social Services at the Annual General Meeting and subject to early retirement, serve for a four-year term which may be renewed once (a total of eight years). The Board has the power to appoint directors in the interim until the next Annual General Meeting.

The Board give their time to Sligo Social Services on a voluntary basis and receive no remuneration. Out-of-pocket expenses may be reimbursed.

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

The role of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee is to keep under review the adequacy, scope and effectiveness of the internal control systems of Sligo Social Services. The Committee members have oversight of the external audit process and they review the findings of internal audits carried out by external consultants (on behalf of funders). This Committee consists of three Board members. The CEO is in attendance along with required members of the Executive Management Team. During 2022 the audit committee met with External auditors to review the companies statutory accounts.

Board Recruitment

When recruiting new directors to the Board, the Board aims to attract a diverse range of candidates with the skills Sligo Social Service's needs. When vacancies arise, the Board identifies the skills, experience and knowledge required from the new Board member by considering the collective skill profile of the current Board. Recommendations will be made to the Board. Potential candidates are identified through several channels including from members and from the non-board members. There were no changes to Board membership in 2022.

Training & Induction

All new directors are required to go through an induction process, which includes coverage of the aims of Sligo Social Services and how they are being fulfilled; the role and duties of the directors; and financial and risk management.

Directors meet with the CEO, managers, and other staff. New directors are encouraged to visit one of our projects to gain a better understanding of the services Sligo Social Services provides. When required, further training is arranged for individual directors or for the Board as a whole.

Conflicts of Interest

Sligo Social Services has a Conflict-of-Interest policy in place for all Board members. The Board members make annual declarations of conflict of interest. No conflicts of interest were declared in 2022.

Protected Disclosures

Sligo Social Services has a protected disclosures policy in place to promote the disclosure of information relating to possible wrongdoing in the workplace. The policy offers protection for workers from penalisation in circumstances where they make a protected disclosure or “whistle blow” about concerns they may have about work, standards of practice or other areas of malpractice, dangerous, illegal, or improper activity. No disclosures were made during 2022.

Decision Making

The Board ensure that the activities of Sligo Social Services are consistent with its charitable objectives and aims. There are clear distinctions between the roles of the Board of Directors and the Executive Management Team, to which day-to-day management is delegated. Matters such as policy, strategic planning, and budgets are drafted by the Management Team for consideration and approval by the Board, who then monitor the implementation of these plans. The Executive Management Team are the Key Management Personnel of Sligo Social Services.

Standards

The Board of Directors of Sligo Social Services is committed to maintaining high standards of corporate governance. Sligo Social Services Board adopted the Charities Regulator, Charities Governance Code in 2019. Sligo Social Services prepares an annual report and financial statements in full compliance with the Charities SORP (Statement of Reporting Practice under FRS102) each year and makes them available to the public on our website.

4. Directors and Secretary

The names of the individuals who were directors at any time during the year ended 31 December 2022 are set out below. All directors served for the entire year unless otherwise stated.

Liam McGurrin
 Maeliosa O’Brien
 Fr. Michael Drumm
 Orla Barry
 Dan Scannell
 Caroline Costello
 Eamonn Grennan
 Geraldine Gordon
 David Mc Guinness
 Tommy Mc Manus

Company Secretary

Fr. Michael Drumm

The Board meets ten times a year. Meetings took place both in person and via video platform in 2022. Attendance was as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Dec
Orla Barry	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	x
Liam McGurrin	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Fr. M Drumm	√	√	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	x
Maeliosa O’Brien	√	√	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	√
Dan Scannell	√	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	√
Eamonn Grennan	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	√
Caroline Costello	√	√	√	x	√	√	x	x	√	√
Geraldine Gordon	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x
David Mc Guinness	x	x	x	√	x	x	√	x	√	x
Tommy McManus	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	√	√	√

5. Principal Risks and Uncertainties

Business risks and mitigating actions are regularly scrutinised by the Board and management team.

The principal risks identified that could have a serious impact on performance are:

Financial Risk

The organisation has budgetary and financial reporting procedures, supported by appropriate key performance indicators, to manage credit, liquidity, and other financial risk.

All key financial indicators are monitored on an on-going basis.

Insufficient Funding

The company is reliant on grants from Government and donations from the public to have sufficient funding to deliver its work. The directors monitor the organisation's cash position carefully and strive to always maintain sufficient reserves to enable the organisation to continue to operate for at least six months should cash inflows deteriorate for a sustained timeframe.

6. Going Concern

The directors have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual financial statements. Further details concerning the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in note 3 to the financial statements.

7. Events Subsequent to the Financial Year End

The rising fuel prices continues to be a significant matter affecting the company since the year end.

8. Accounting Records

The measures that the directors have taken to secure compliance with the requirements of Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014 with regard to the keeping of the accounting records are the employment of appropriately qualified accounting personnel and the maintenance of computerised accounting systems. The company's accounting records are maintained at the company's registered office at, Retreat House, Charles Street, Sligo.

end.

8. Accounting Records

The measures that the directors have taken to secure compliance with the requirements of Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014 with regard to the keeping of the accounting records are the employment of appropriately qualified accounting personnel and the maintenance of computerised accounting systems. The company's accounting records are maintained at the company's registered office at, Retreat House, Charles Street, Sligo.

9. Statement of Relevant Audit Information

(a) Section 332 of the Companies Act 2014 requires the directors to ensure that the company's statutory auditors are aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

9. Statement of Relevant Audit Information

(a) Section 332 of the Companies Act 2014 requires the directors to ensure that the company's statutory auditors are aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

(b) Each director has taken all the steps he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

(c) Each director has taken all the steps he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.


(d) Each director has taken all the steps he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

10. Auditors

10. Auditors
The company's statutory auditors, Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm, have expressed their willingness to be re-appointed in accordance with Section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014.

Signed on behalf of the Board on 26th May 2023

Signed on behalf of the Board on 26th May 2023



Orla Barry
Director



Fr. Michael Drumm
Director

Out of Home



Sligo Social Services has been providing homeless services in Sligo for many years and commenced providing Housing First in the North-West Region at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic early in 2020. Over the many years we have been working with people, we have come to understand that homelessness is an issue which goes beyond geography, populations, and cultures.

While Ireland is a wealthy country, many individuals and families continue to be trapped in a cycle of homelessness, often moving from unstable housing, to emergency accommodation, to rough sleeping. For some this unfortunately can continue for many years resulting in a state of chronic homelessness.

In 2022 we continued to provide services to people who were out of home. With the support of The Community Foundation of Ireland and HSE Social Inclusion in 2022 we also carried out research into Homelessness in Sligo. This research was carried out by Dr. Ciara Morely. The report reiterated that homelessness is not solely a problem associated with housing but encompasses many factors over people's life course. However, notwithstanding its complexity, homelessness is solved by providing an adequate supply of safe, appropriate, and affordable housing. In some situations, people who experience homelessness will need ongoing community support to sustain their housing and to access other services they need like health and employment. Resolving homelessness requires a range of responses to meet the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.

The need for an adequate and affordable supply of appropriate housing is a primary recommendation in the report. Safe, secure, stable housing allows people exit homelessness and rise out of poverty. It provides a stable home, school, and community for children to be a part of and can lead to improved health for themselves and their family. Ultimately a safe, secure, stable home can create the circumstances which help break the cycle of intergenerational poverty by giving children the chance to thrive. The full report can be found on our website www.sligosocialservices.ie

Quotes from Research 'Homelessness in Sligo'

“
The situation I'm in at the moment, it's very hard to see what's going to happen in the future.
- Niall

““
Don't judge a book by its cover until you read the last page. Everyone has a story behind their situation.
- Claire

““
I'm just stuck in limbo. Just waiting until I get a house.
- Adam

””
I never expected myself in that situation, to be in a tent. The embarrassment as well.
- Fiona

““
I never felt as frightened in all my life.
- James

”
It's been a long trek.
- Paul

I want to be able to provide my children with a home, not just a room.
““ - Anna

I mean, I was never homeless. But I don't know how people do it. I really don't.
““ - Daniel

““
I'm in a stage of my life I'm hoping will pass on. I hope it won't always be like this. I'll look back and hope I'll never see myself here again. That's it really. It's probably the hardest time of my life.
- Maria

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Sligo Social Services provides a number of residential services for people who are homeless or in housing need. Accommodation Services including short-term and emergency accommodation services.

- Maryville Emergency Hostel
- Ballytivnan Short-term Accommodation and
- McAuley House Short-term Accommodation

Maryville Hostel

Maryville Hostel provides emergency accommodation to single adults, men, and women, who have been assessed by Sligo County Council as homeless. Every service user is allocated a keyworker to support them to identify and address issues which have contributed to their becoming homeless. Each person is helped to link with other services they may need in order to improve their quality of life, such as addiction counselling, mental health supports, health related services, resettlement, and education & training courses. Sligo Social Services staff in Maryville also deal with any households presenting as homeless after Sligo County Council closes to the public at 4pm.

In 2022, 84 individual clients accessed the hostel; 60 male (71%) and 24 (29%) female. This was an increase of 50% (28 individuals) on last year.

As in previous years 2022 saw private rented accommodation in extremely short supply with rents normally outside the *Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)* limits available to clients. It therefore continues to be extremely difficult for service users to access move-on accommodation. The emergency hostel was full on most nights, and services worked in partnership to ensure that resources were maximised to ensure emergency beds continued to be available. As the housing crisis deepened in 2022 homeless presentations increased throughout the year. This resulted in Sligo County Council offering 10 additional emergency beds within a private B&B, for the cold weather period – October to December. Sligo Social Services emergency accommodation team offered key working support to residents in this accommodation also.

In addition to supporting the Emergency Accommodation the team also provide support to the following:

Ballytivnan Short-Term Accommodation

As emergency beds have been more in demand and long-term move-on accommodation has become more and more sparse Ballytivnan offers 5 beds of short-term accommodation. Staff are not on site all the time, rather staff visit the project daily to meet with clients for informal contact and to carry out key-working sessions and group work sessions. In 2022, 7 individual clients accessed Ballytivnan, with the available beds fully occupied throughout the year.

McAuley House Short Term Housing

McAuley House offers four self-contained apartments, one- and two-bedroom units, which provide excellent quality short-term accommodation for up to four households who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The service also provides support to help residents build their capacity in areas which are likely to cause difficulties in their family and their future accommodation. Staff support residents access the services they or their children may need and work with residents to identify and move to permanent housing in the community. Securing move-on accommodation from McAuley House for households has also become very difficult with many families remaining in the service for much longer than the anticipated 1 year. During 2022, a total of 2 families accessed the service, one couple and one individual were accommodated in McAuley House.

HOUSING LIAISON WORKER

The Housing Liaison Worker (HLW) works with people in the hospital who have a housing need assisting with applications for social housing, negotiating with other housing service providers or referring people to other services as appropriate. The HLW encourages people to engage with primary services when leaving hospital so that they are cared for in the community whether in their own homes or in a residential/hospital setting. Part of HLW's job is to advise and advocate for homeless people attending Sligo University Hospital. In 2022, the HLW worked with 76 persons, a 10% increase on the previous year. 67% were male and 33% female. 70 clients were new referrals to the service and 65 client cases were closed in 2022.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE SUPPORT

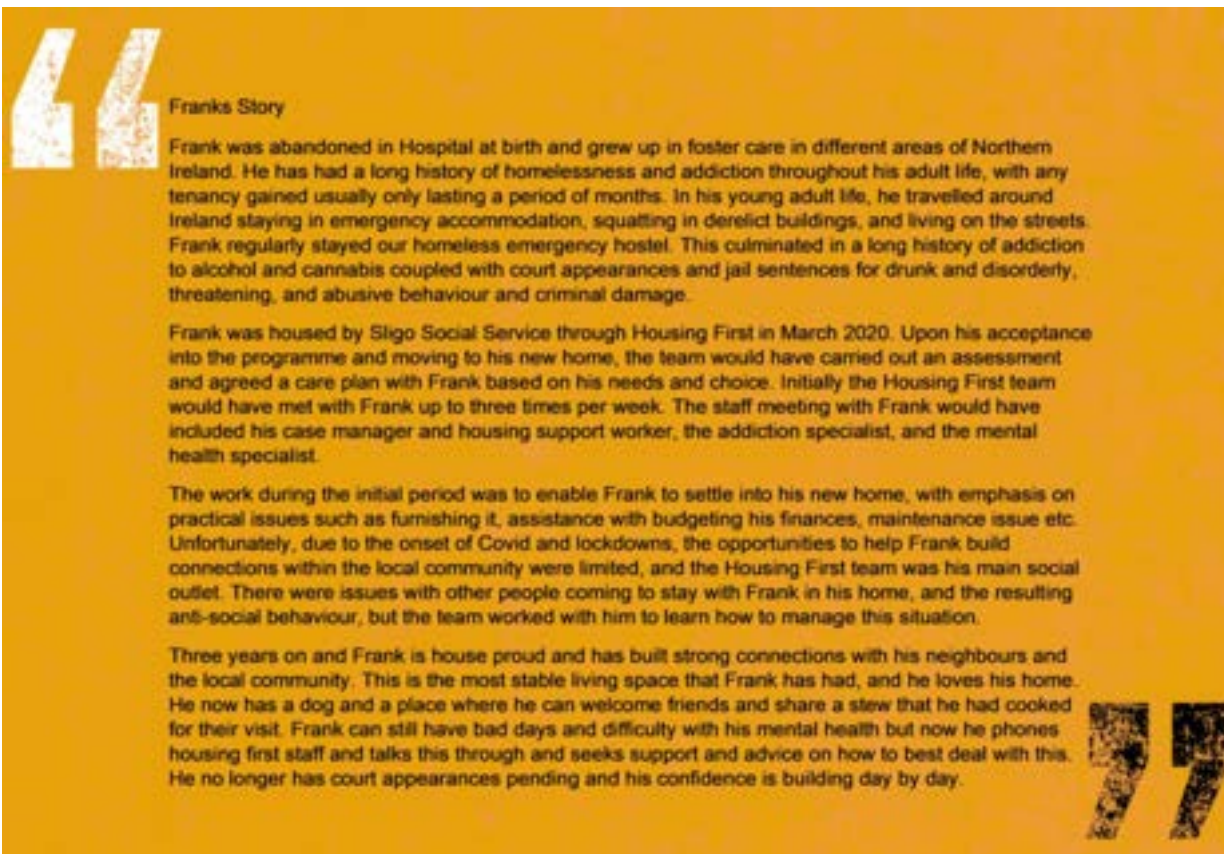
The Substance Misuse service complements and enhances existing treatment and recovery services in Sligo, targeting and engaging with service users through the delivery of an outreach-based harm reduction and support service to drug and/or alcohol users in Sligo. Services users may be both actively engaged in substance misuse or in recovery but as this is a voluntary service must have an interest in engaging with the service. The service aims to improve the individual's overall health and help them to engage in and sustain rehabilitation, by supporting them in accessing mainstream services and specialist rehabilitation services and by focusing on contributory factors that impact on personal health status such as mental health, diet and nutrition, stress management, employment status and living conditions. In 2022, 38 service users accessed the service.

HOUSING FIRST

Sligo Social Services is the service provider for the Housing First Service in the Northwest of Ireland, covering the counties of Sligo, Leitrim, and Donegal. Housing First is a proven solution to long-term homelessness, specifically targeted at people who have been rough sleeping, or are long-term users of emergency hostels and shelters, with high support needs around issues such as mental health and addiction. It provides homeless individuals with a stable, secure home of their own as a first step, in order to effectively target them with personalised housing and health support. These wrap-around services, which are provided for as long as needed, help people stay housed and supported in their recovery. Housing First will continue to support the individual in the event of a tenancy failure, to access another tenancy and the support service continues to engage with service users.

As is expected, service users require intensive support from the staff team throughout the year. The difficulty in acquiring one-bedroom units continued as a significant challenge for Housing First in 2022. The Housing First team worked with 31 service users over the Region. 20 service users were male and 11 female. Five new clients were housed during the year. In 2022 one client passed away.

The difficulty in acquiring one-bedroom properties continued as a significant challenge for Housing First in 2022. In addition to this the geographical area which the service covers also poses a challenge. The Northwest is a very large, mostly rural region. Housing First was established to operate from two hubs: Letterkenny town and Sligo town. The area serviced from these hubs is confined to a number of other small towns and villages within relative proximity to the hubs. Resources available are finite and thus it has been essential that resources available are maximised for direct client work. Inevitably this has resulted in geographical limitations on the service particularly in Counties Donegal and Leitrim. In recognition of these challenges the HSE made additional resources available to Housing First in 2022.



“

Franks Story

Frank was abandoned in Hospital at birth and grew up in foster care in different areas of Northern Ireland. He has had a long history of homelessness and addiction throughout his adult life, with any tenancy gained usually only lasting a period of months. In his young adult life, he travelled around Ireland staying in emergency accommodation, squatting in derelict buildings, and living on the streets. Frank regularly stayed our homeless emergency hostel. This culminated in a long history of addiction to alcohol and cannabis coupled with court appearances and jail sentences for drunk and disorderly, threatening, and abusive behaviour and criminal damage.

Frank was housed by Sligo Social Service through Housing First in March 2020. Upon his acceptance into the programme and moving to his new home, the team would have carried out an assessment and agreed a care plan with Frank based on his needs and choice. Initially the Housing First team would have met with Frank up to three times per week. The staff meeting with Frank would have included his case manager and housing support worker, the addiction specialist, and the mental health specialist.

The work during the initial period was to enable Frank to settle into his new home, with emphasis on practical issues such as furnishing it, assistance with budgeting his finances, maintenance issue etc. Unfortunately, due to the onset of Covid and lockdowns, the opportunities to help Frank build connections within the local community were limited, and the Housing First team was his main social outlet. There were issues with other people coming to stay with Frank in his home, and the resulting anti-social behaviour, but the team worked with him to learn how to manage this situation.

Three years on and Frank is house proud and has built strong connections with his neighbours and the local community. This is the most stable living space that Frank has had, and he loves his home. He now has a dog and a place where he can welcome friends and share a stew that he had cooked for their visit. Frank can still have bad days and difficulty with his mental health but now he phones housing first staff and talks this through and seeks support and advice on how to best deal with this. He no longer has court appearances pending and his confidence is building day by day.

”

Children and Families



Sligo Social Services currently operate three childcare services, Charles St Preschool, Cranmore Abbeyquarter Afterschool and Ballytivnan Afterschool. All three services operate from a holistic approach and ensure that the physical, emotional, educational, and social wellbeing needs of the children are being met. Quality provision in early education has a very positive impact on the future educational, psychological, and social development of every child. Good quality early education can also help to level the playing pitch for children from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds and can be of critical importance in efforts to encourage long-term educational participation, to break the cycle of disadvantage and to move towards greater equity in society.

CHILDCARE SERVICES

Charles St Preschool

The service provides a pre-school service to children between the ages of 2yrs 10mths to 5yrs. Where a need is identified, staff make referrals to outside agencies such as OT, speech and language therapists, PHN's and Tusla Social Work services. Over the past number of years the number of children availing of the service has reduced each year. Families who have availed of this service came from targeted at-risk groups, many of whom are unemployed and therefore not eligible for financial assistance for additional hours within the service. Many families no longer avail of a service and for those that do are seeking the free preschool hours only for their children. For this reason, the Charles Street service provided free preschool hours only from September 2022.

Afterschools

The Afterschool services offer children support and encouragement in doing their homework, within a safe and friendly environment. The children receive a hot meal each day. Staff provide assistance, support and encouragement with homework and has a wide variety of activities for the children to take part in. The service works from a holistic point of view, doing pieces of work with the young people on emotions, health, and wellbeing. The play and activities are based on sports, music, arts and crafts, and outside play, weather permitting. The afterschools also run activities during out of school periods within the academic year and offer Summer Activities in July.

Cranmore/Abbeyquarter

Sligo Social Services, in partnership with Cranmore/Abbeyquarter Community Centre, run an Afterschool service for the area. The service can cater for up to 33 primary school children aged between 4 and 13 years. 2022 saw the service reach full capacity,

St. Edwards Ballytivnan

Sligo Social Services provide an afterschool within St Edwards Primary School, Ballytivnan. The service can cater for 16-20 children, however due to the continued concerns regarding COVID 19 at the request of the school the number of places made available to children was reduced to 12 in 2021 and increased to 16 in January 2022. In September 2022 the service increased their capacity to 18 children.

COUNSELLING SERVICE

Sligo Social Services receive funding to provide a counselling service to young people. This is a limited service with 13hrs per week available. The counselling service is delivered entirely through one:one counselling sessions and is primarily targeted at children between 13 and 18 years of age. Repeated attempts to recruit a counsellor in 2021/22 were unsuccessful and following discussions with Tusla it was decided to seek to recruit a Family Therapist. This was also unsuccessful. As such the future of this service is in doubt.

HEALTHY FOOD MADE EASY

Healthy Food Made Easy is a standardised, tutor-led community cookery programme that is designed to help people develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to eat well and improve their health. The aim of the programme is to improve nutritional knowledge, shopping and dietary behaviours and cooking skills/ confidence in lower socio-economic and marginalized populations taking a community-based approach. The Programme consists of 6 sessions lasting 2-2 ½ hours and encompasses the following but not limited to:

1. Practical hands-on experience of food preparation to increase participants' understanding of food and food labelling.
2. Chance to review own and family eating habits - Encouragement to experiment with new dishes to increase participants' understanding of healthy eating complimented by a recipe book.
3. Nutritional education to encourage healthy and appropriate changes in eating patterns.
4. Experiential learning Increase participants' awareness of food safety issues and to enhance participants' cooking skills and increase confidence in cooking in a fun and relaxed environment.
5. Exploring shopping and budgeting advice to enhance healthy meal planning and budgeting for families - demonstrate that it is possible to eat healthily on a budget.

Additional funding was made available in the latter part of the year to provide 7 additional groups – 3 in Cranmore Abbeyquarter Community Centre and 4 in Northside Community Centre. This allowed 77 more individuals to access the programme.

Community Services

Open Access

The Open Access Service is a drop-in service, which provides families and individuals with support, advice, and information on a wide range of issues such as housing, financial, health, entitlements, and welfare issues. This service operates on a walk-in basis three afternoons per week, Mon Wed and Fri 2-4:30pm. The service is delivered by staff and volunteers and in 2022 a Ukrainian volunteer was available to support those who needed assistance.

In 2022, 271 individuals availed of the Open Access Service, in total this resulted in 532 contacts with the service. This was a 54% increase in individuals and a 66% increase in contacts on the previous year.

The majority of clients (179) were female, with 92 male service users seeking assistance from the Open Access Service. 52% of service users who accessed the Open Access Service had children i.e. 141 families with a total of 430 children under 18 years of age. 89% of the contacts were seeking material aid, be that food throughout the year and/or material aid at Christmas. Through the FEAD Program Sligo Social Services distributes nonperishable goods such as cereals, tinned items, pasta, rice etc. Staff offer service user support in managing finances and exploring budget plans.

In 2022 the 'Support for the Most Deprived' programme also provided us with School Packs for distribution through our services and through services provided by other small community groups. A total of 400 packs were received and distributed.



Community Employment

Sligo Social Services is the sponsor of a large Community Employment (CE) Project. Community Employment is an employment programme funded by the Dept. of Employment Affairs & Social Protection. Sligo Social Services deliver both a Mainstream Community Employment programme and a dedicated Drug Rehabilitation Community Employment Programme.

Mainstream Community Employment

Sligo Social Services Mainstream Community Employment (CE) programme comprises of 38 CE participants located within Sligo Town. This CE programme aims to help those who are long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged people to get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within the local community. Individual training plans are designed to incorporate the skills each participant brings to the CE programme and what they would like to achieve for themselves. Through engaging in the CE programme, participants develop their skills, achieving many and varied educational qualifications, while also securing a supportive network of colleagues.

The Community Employment Rehabilitation Programme

The Community Employment Rehabilitation Programme is a Department of Social Protection programme designed to assist those recovering from addiction to return to work through Training and Work Experience. There are 15 places available for participants and 2 for CE support workers positions also. Participants provide vital work in the community including painting and decorating, garden maintenance or cleaning, while some participants work in various Charity Shops in Sligo Town.

2022 saw a considerable number of participants secure employment and move-on from the Community Employment scheme. Referrals to both programmes have reduced significantly. The increased availability of work in the labour market has rendered the Community Employment Schemes less and less attractive as payment to participants is their existing social welfare payment plus an additional €27.50 per week. As such the number of vacancies on the schemes continued to increase in 2022.

Older People



The over-65 population having grown by 35 per cent over the past decade — more than three times the rate of growth in the overall population and faster than elsewhere in Europe. The estimated population of Ireland in 2022 includes more than one million people aged 60 or older. This includes approximately 508,000 people in their 60s, 350,000 people in their 70s, 148,000 people in their 80s, and 36,500 people aged 90 or older. The number of people in this age group is expected to almost double in the next 20 years, with the greatest proportional increase in the 85+ age group. Most hospital beds are occupied by over-65s.

The lives of older persons in Ireland are much improved on what they were 100 or 50 years ago. Most people are living longer, healthier lives and can look forward to many years of active older age. At the same time, ageist stereotypes continue as do profound inequalities. Not everyone has the same opportunity to age in comfort and security, and not every older person is empowered to participate and engage in society.

Sligo Social Services have been providing services to older people for over 50 years and currently provide a Meals on Wheels and Befriending Service.



MEALS ON WHEELS

Meals are prepared by staff in our kitchen in Charles St. seven days per week for people who are unable to provide or prepare it for themselves. The meals are collected by volunteers and staff and delivered to homes around Sligo City and environs and into North County Sligo. Recipients are referred to the service by their Public Health Nurse, other health professionals or may self-refer.

In 2022, 182 individual recipients availed on the service, this is a reduction of 25% on the previous year. 86 recipients were female and 96 were male. The majority (92%) of clients were over 65yrs of age with a small number under 65yrs. Of the recipients over 65yrs 29 of these were over 90yrs, with two over 100yrs of age.

Throughout the year 45 new service users joined the service, while 75 recipients left the service. 87% of recipients were in receipt of a contributory State pension.

An average of 2,274 meals were provided per month in 2022, with 27,289 meals provided in total in 2022. This was a 13% (4,212 meals) reduction on the number of meals provided in 2021.

Meals on Whets Service User Satisfaction Questionnaire

Sligo Social Services seek out feedback from service users in different ways one of which is through our Service User Satisfaction Questionnaire. All Meals on Wheels recipients are offered the opportunity to provide feedback anonymously. See Table 1 below for results of most recent questionnaire.

Meals on wheels has helped me improve or maintain my nutritional intake	
Yes	98%
No	0%
Unknown	2%

If I didn't have meals on wheels, I would not have a hot, fresh meal to eat	
Yes	67%
No	29%
Unknown	4%

Would you like to get information about our other services	
Yes	56%
No	38%
Unknown	7%

I think meals on wheels have helped me be able to stay in my house	
Yes	91%
No	7%
Unknown	2%

I am satisfied with the quality and variety of food	
Yes	84%
No	9%
Unknown	7%

I would recommend meals on wheels to a friend	
Yes	96%
No	2%
Unknown	2%

	How would you rate the overall meals on wheels service	How would you rate the cost of the meal	How would you rate the volunteers who deliver your meal	How would you rate the office /kitchen staff who respond to your needs on the phone
Poor	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fairly Poor	0%	0%	0%	0%
Acceptable	4%	7%	0%	0%
Good	11%	20%	4%	4%
Excellent	78%	69%	91%	91%
Unknown	7%	4%	4%	4%

BEFRIENDING SERVICE

Evidence based research has also shown that loneliness and isolation in older adults leads to numerous health issues and impacts physical and mental health. The 'friendly' call service provides a phone call for up to 5 days a week to older people or individuals who may feel lonely, isolated, and vulnerable in Sligo and surrounding areas; the service specifically targets people with chronic illness or anyone who cannot engage in an active way in the community, providing friendship and security helping clients feel safer at home. If a client does not answer the call and we are concerned about them, volunteers or staff will phone a member of their family, a neighbour, or a friend.

In 2022 the service supported 38 individuals. The majority (24) were female with 14 male service users. 53% of those availing of the service were over 80 years of age, see Table 2 below for breakdown of recipients ages.

TABLE 2: Age Range	
40-50	1
51-60	1
61-70	5
71-80	8
81-90	11
91-100	9
Unknown	3
Total	38

Quotes from Meals on Wheels Service User Satisfaction Questionnaire

“
It ensures that I get a hot meal and dessert 5 days a week. If I didn't receive this service as I am 93 years old, I might not bother cooking.”

““
Benefits are many: Nutrition in each meal. Value for money. Good choice of food. Social aspect. Volunteers coming to the house. They are quite friendly and can have a chat at the door.”

““
Being a stroke victim with limited cooking ability, I feel assured of a warm mid-day meal.”

””
Meals benefit me greatly. As I approach my 100th birthday, my appetite is declining

““
Without the mow I would be lost, they supply me with my main meal of the day”

””
My health has improved since I started getting my dinners cooked every day and I look forward to meeting the volunteers each day.”

I am guaranteed my dinner 7 days a week. The variety isn't bad, at least I know I won't starve as it arrives every day.”

““
Meals on wheels helps us provide a hot mid-day meal for my mother on weekdays making food provision easier for a working family”

““
I am 93 and have very little mobility, I live with my daughter who works and has a mildly autistic son, so she doesn't have to worry about feeding me. Your meals are very much appreciated by both of us.”

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising efforts are essential to the organisation and every year Sligo Social Services supporters fundraise in a variety of ways to help finance the various services provided. 2022 was another difficult year for fundraising but despite the challenges facing everyone the people of Sligo continued to give generously. We continued to receive donations of second-hand clothes and household items for sale in our Thrift shop. Schools, individuals, local businesses, and their staff donated money, food, and toys particularly at Christmas. This allowed us to assist more families than ever in 2022 and ensure a better Christmas for many families and children.

In 2022, we raised a total of €156,402. This was a decrease on last year. €64,677 of our income came from our Thrift Shops and Recycling. While our Thrift Shop income continued to increase it remains considerably lower than pre COVID levels.

The Annual church collection on the 8th December raised €1,057. Collections including flag days, church gate and raffles raised €5,375. Donations were received from various businesses, churches, community groups and individuals towards our work raising €85,293 this year. While it is not possible to name all our supporters, we are very thankful for all donations we receive, large and small.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an integral part of our organisation, working alongside professional staff to deliver vital services to those in need. The time dedicated by individuals ranges from new volunteers to those who have been involved in various services for many years. Over 150 volunteers offer their time and talents to Sligo Social Services and are involved in many aspects of the organisation. Volunteers help us provide following services:

- Meals on Wheels
- Open Access
- Befriending Service
- Thrift Shop
- Fundraising
- Board of Directors

Sligo Social Services also benefit from the support of professional services, who often give advice and guidance on a voluntary basis.

All our volunteers provide a caring and professional service and continue to receive support and guidance from staff and Management. COVID 19 has greatly affected volunteering in the organisation with areas such as our Thrift Shop less active due to restrictions while other areas such as our services for older people were busier than ever. Our thanks to all who have given their time and energy to help throughout the year.

SLIGO SOCIAL SERVICE COUNCIL (CLG)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

		Designated	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	Notes	2022	2022	2022	2022	2021
INCOME		€	€	€	€	€
<i>Charitable Activities</i>						
Revenue Grants and Subsidies	4	-	1,268,472	-	1,268,472	1,268,707
CE Programme	7	-	426,819	-	426,819	558,487
Capital Funding/Grants	4	-	3,700	-	3,700	14,394
Income Generated from Services	4	-	265,772	-	265,772	246,400
<i>Donations and Legacies</i>						
Donations		-	-	85,293	85,293	113,962
<i>Fundraising</i>						
Fundraising Activities/Events		-	-	6,432	6,432	4,375
Charity Stores		-	-	64,677	64,677	43,749
<i>Other Income/Gains</i>						
Sundry Income		-	-	1,983	1,983	13,177
Interest Income		-	-	27	27	13
Gain/(Loss) on Financial Assets		-	-	-	-	385
Held at Fair Value		-	-	-	-	17,411
Waiver of CAS Principal Amounts		-	17,933	-	17,933	-
Total Income		<u>—</u>	<u>1,982,696</u>	<u>158,412</u>	<u>2,141,108</u>	<u>2,281,060</u>
EXPENDITURE						
<i>On Charitable Activities</i>						
Programmes and Services		-	1,623,469	-	1,623,469	1,538,345
Expenditure		-	428,222	-	428,222	558,134
CE Programme	7	-	-	-	-	-
<i>On Raising Funds</i>						
		-	-	34,985	34,985	55,882
Total Expenditure		<u>—</u>	<u>2,051,691</u>	<u>34,985</u>	<u>2,086,676</u>	<u>2,152,361</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	5	-	(68,995)	123,427	54,432	128,699
Total Funds Brought Forward	16	612,500	189,310	350,995	1,152,805	1,024,106
Transfer of Funds		5,000	78,438	(83,438)	-	-
Total Funds Carried Forward	16	<u>617,500</u>	<u>198,753</u>	<u>390,984</u>	<u>1,207,237</u>	<u>1,152,805</u>

SHINGO SOCIAL SERVICE COUNCIL (CCLG)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Note	2022 €	€	2021 €	€
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	8	-		595	
Tangible assets	9	418,801		454,983	
		<u>418,801</u>		<u>454,983</u>	
			418,801		455,578
Current assets					
Current assets	10	245,043		43,051	
Investments	11	2,674,211		2,671,051	
Investment in bank and in hand	11	1,196,360		1,389,173	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>1,196,560</u>		<u>1,389,173</u>	
		<u>1,443,614</u>		<u>1,434,235</u>	
		1,465,992		1,434,235	
Creditors: amounts falling due					
Creditors: amounts falling due	12	(166,347)		(207,328)	
within one year	12	(166,347)		(207,328)	
			<u>1,277,267</u>		<u>1,226,907</u>
Net current assets					
Net current assets			1,299,645		1,226,907
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>1,996,068</u>		<u>1,682,485</u>
			1,918,446		1,682,485
Creditors: amounts falling due					
after more than one year	14	(511,209)		(529,680)	
			<u>(511,209)</u>		<u>(529,680)</u>
Net assets					
Net assets		<u>1,184,859</u>		<u>1,152,805</u>	
		1,207,237		1,152,805	
Funds of the Charity					
Funds of the Charity	15	617,500		612,500	
Restricted Funds	15	196,753		189,610	
Restricted Funds	15	368,000		350,000	
Unrestricted Funds	15	<u>390,984</u>		<u>350,995</u>	
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS	16	<u>1,184,859</u>		<u>1,152,805</u>	
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS	16	<u>1,207,237</u>		<u>1,152,805</u>	

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 25 May 2023 and signed on behalf of the charity by:

Orla Barry
Director

Orla Barry
Director

Fr. Michael Drumm

Fr. Michael Drumm
Director

Sligo Social Services wish to acknowledge all our funders including:

Health Service Executive

Office for the Minister for Children and Department of Justice and Equality,
administered by Pobal

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage via Sligo County
Council

Northwest Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force

Department of Rural and Community Development

Department of Social Protection

Tusla Child and Family Agency

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Environment

The Community Foundation for Ireland

Friends of Sligo Social Services

Diocese of Elphin

Revenue Generated by Thrift Shops

Income from Services

Benefactors