

# **Annual Report 2023**

**Sligo Social Services**







**CHARITY NUMBERS**

CHY9731  
CRA 20024390

**COMPANY NUMBER**

140759

**AUDITORS**

Gilroy Gannon  
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm  
Stephen Street  
Sligo

**BANKERS**

Allied Irish Banks PLC  
Stephen Street  
Sligo

**SOLICITORS**

Hegarty & Armstrong Solicitors  
Top Floor, Millennium House  
Stephen Street  
Sligo

Permanent TSB  
O’Connell Street  
Sligo

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# foreword

Orla Barry  
Chairperson  
Sligo Social Services

On behalf of the Board of Sligo Services Council Ltd I am delighted to present the annual report for 2023, a snapshot of the work carried out in the various services we provide in supporting children, families and adults who are vulnerable and marginalized 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 again this year 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 those in need.

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, and our ongoing partnership with the Diocese of Elphin is valued and most welcome.

In June 2023, we took the very difficult decision to close the Preschool in Charles Street, however, we are still committed to continue to deliver services in areas of need, and we look forward to implementing more of our strategic objectives during 2024.

Finally, I want to thank my board colleagues for their commitment and support to the development of Sligo Social Services during 2023. We lost some long-standing board members who retired, and I wish to 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 look forward to working with you in 2024.





# the year in numbers

THERE WERE 576 PRESENTATIONS TO OUR  
OPEN ACCESS SERVICE THIS YEAR



WE PROVIDED AN AFTERSCHOOL SERVICE TO  
51 CHILDREN EACH DAY DURING THE SCHOOL  
TERM IN 2023



WE DELIVERED 28,892 MEALS TO OLDER  
PEOPLE LIVING IN OUR COMMUNITY IN  
2023

211 INDIVIDUALS AVAILED OF THE MEALS  
ON WHEELS SERVICE IN 2023: 105 MEN &  
106 WOMEN

IN 2023 WE ACCOMMODATED 81 INDIVIDUALS  
IN OUR EMREGENCY ACCOMMODATION AND  
SUPPORTED 24 INDIVIDUALS IN PRIVATE  
EMERGENCY B&Bs



30 INDIVIDUALS AVAILED OF OUR  
FRIENDLY CALL SERVICE

# welcome

Christina Mc Taggart  
CEO  
Sligo Social Services

The beginning of 2023 saw us coming together to develop our new Organisational Strategy. This will shape our work from 2023 to 2028. During which time we will focus on delivering and developing services which allow us to meet the needs of service users. We will work to ensure that the organisation continues to be fit for purpose and sustainable into the future. As part of the development of our strategy we reflected on how Sligo Social Services has developed since our inception in 1969. We now deliver multiple targeted programmes and services in Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal. As we have evolved as an organisation the current name no longer conveys what we do or the geographic area we operate within. In recognition of this growth, we updated our Mission and Vision statements this year. After careful consideration we have also taken the decision to rebrand our organisation. There is also significant confusion between our existing name and various Statutory Services. We expect to be in a position to launch our new brand in 2024.

The continued increase in the cost of housing and the cost of living resulted in greater demand for many of our services in 2023 and you will read about all our services within this report. Our Homeless services continued to be very busy with homeless emergency beds full on an ongoing basis. Escalating food prices saw many families struggling and requiring food aid from our Open Access service. Our Meals on Wheels service has been severely impacted by the escalating energy and food costs, but luckily a once off grant from the Community Foundation of Ireland assisted us with the service food costs in 2023 and thus we did not have to pass this cost on to service users.

Sligo Social Services must maintain and grow its income sources to ensure services can be continued. Fundraising as always remains a challenge. We depend on the generosity of individuals, schools and businesses to support us to sustain our services. We are very grateful to the many individuals who support our work each year by donating to us, attending our fundraising events, or raising money in their local communities to support our work.

I would like to thank our statutory funders who supported our work over the course of the year including, the H.S.E, Dept. of Employment Affairs & Social Protection, Sligo County Council, The Northwest Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force, Tusla Child and Family Agency, and The Office of the Minister for Children and Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Also thank you to the Community Foundation of Ireland and a particular thanks to the Friends of Sligo Social Services and to the Diocese of Elphin for their ongoing support.

My sincere thanks to all our volunteers who give so generously of their time and talents to Sligo Social Services. We are privileged to have so many committed and dedicated volunteers, without whom we could not provide our services. I also want to thank all our staff and supporters of for all their hard work and dedication to the organisation.

Thank you.





# directors report

## 2023

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

### **1. Objectives and Activities**

Sligo Social Services aims 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. We also provide early education pre-school and two afterschool support services. Sligo Social Services 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.

2023 saw us come together to develop a new strategic plan which will guide our work from 2023 – 2028. Our areas of focus during this period will be:

- 1. Meeting Service User Needs**
- 2. Continued Service Development**
- 3. A Sustainable and Fit for Purpose Organisation**

As part of this process, we have reviewed and updated our mission and vision statements to encompass the growth of the organisation into the Northwest Region. Alongside this has come the decision to rename the organisation. In doing so we hope that while acknowledging the vast work and history of the organisation that we are better able to reflect the work of the organisation today. Our Strategic Plan 2023-2028 is outlined in greater detail within our annual report.

### **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.

2023 saw the continuation of the housing crisis with the result that our Homeless services were busier than ever. 81 individuals were accommodated in Maryville Emergency accommodation in 2023. Demand for emergency beds continued to be greater than those available in the community voluntary sector and as a result the local authority continued to accommodate single adults who were homeless in private accommodation. Sligo Social Services homeless service team provided support to 24 individuals who were accommodated in private accommodation throughout the year.

The Housing Liaison worker was in even greater demand in 2023 than in previous years, working with 114 people who were in Sligo University Hospital, all of whom had been identified as being homeless or having a housing need.

Sligo Social Services continued to provide the Housing First Service in Counties Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal, with the team working with 31 service users who were housed and 8 individuals who were awaiting their housing throughout the region. 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 2023. Additional funding was provided by the HSE and the Department of Housing during 2023 to begin expanding the service throughout the region.

Households continued to experience immense financial pressure in 2023 and as a result we saw an increase in presentations, (576 presentations) to our Open Access service. With the support of the FEAD programme, we supported many people with food throughout the year. We also distributed 120 school packs to children at the start of the new school year. Our meals on wheels service supported 211 individual recipients and we distributed 28,892 meals.

Sligo Social Services depends significantly on individual and corporate support to sustain our services. Our Thrift shop contributes considerably to our income and to the community within which it is based. 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.

Our primary fundraising income is generated from our Thrift Shop, and we saw the shop income continue to slowly increase during 2023. 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 delivering services, assisting with fundraising including bucket collections and working in our thrift shop.

The unprecedented difficulties in recruiting staff to both Community Employment positions and to Sligo Social Services positions continued in 2023. The lack of statutory funding increases to organisations within the Community and Voluntary Sector for more than 12 years has resulted in staff salaries remaining unchanged for the same period. Subsequently we struggle to compete with the statutory and commercial sectors when seeking to attract and retain staff. This has had 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 was last amended at the Extraordinary General Meeting on 30th August 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 the required members of the Executive Management Team. During 2023 the audit committee reviewed and updated the Company Risk Register and met with external auditors to review the company's statutory accounts.

## **Board Recruitment**

When recruiting new directors to the Board, the Board aims to attract a diverse range of candidates with relevant skills. 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. Potential candidates are identified through several channels including from members and from the non-board members. There were three changes to Board membership in 2023 with three Board members retiring and two new Board members appointed.

## **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 of Directors make annual declarations of conflict of interest. No conflicts of interest were declared in 2023.

## **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 2023.

## Decision Making

The Board ensures 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 2023 are set out below. All directors served for the entire year unless otherwise stated.

Fr. Michael Drumm  
 Dan Scannell (retired June 2023)  
 Liam McGurrian (retired June 2023)  
 Orla Barry  
 Maeliosa O'Brien  
 Caroline Costello  
 Eamonn Grennan  
 Geraldine Gordon  
 David Mc Guinness (resigned October 2023)  
 Tommy Mc Manus  
 Anne Hickey (appointed June 2023)  
 Martin Kavanagh (appointed June 2023)

### Company Secretary

Fr. Michael Drumm

The Board meets ten times a year. Meetings took place both in person and via video platform in 2023. Attendance was as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	Aug	Sept	Oct	Dec
Orla Barry	√	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	√
Liam McGurrian	√	√	√	x	√	√				
Fr. Michael Drumm	x	√	√	x	√	x	√	√	√	√
Geraldine Gordon	x	x	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	√
Eamonn Grennan	√	√	x	√	x	x	√	√	x	√
Dan Scannell	√	√	√	√	√					
Maeliosa O'Brien	√	√	√	√	√	x	√	√	x	√
Tommy Mc Manus	√	x	√	x	√	√	√	√	x	√
David McGuinness	√	√	√	x	√	√	x	x		
Caroline Costello	√	x	√	x	√	x	x	x	x	√
Martin Kavanagh						√	√	√	√	√
Anne Hickey							√	√	√	√

## 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 inflow 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**

There have been no significant events effecting 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.

#### **9. Statement of Relevant Audit Information**

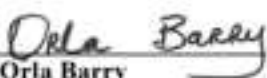
In the case of each of the persons who are directors at the time this report is approved in accordance with Section 332 of the Companies Act 2014:


- (a) So far as each director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the statutory auditors are unaware, and
- (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.

#### **10. Auditors**

Gilroy Gannon, 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 30th May 2024

  
Orla Barry  
Director

  
Fr. Michael Drumm  
Director

# VISION

ALL IN NORTHWEST OF IRELAND HAVE A  
GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE AND LIVE IN A FAIR  
AND JUST SOCIETY

# MISSION

SLIGO SOCIAL SERVICES SERVICES THE  
COMMUNITY THROUGH THE PROVISION OF  
TRAGETED SERVICES WHICH IMPROVE THE  
QUALITY OF LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES  
IN THE NORTHWEST OF IRELAND



# values

Our work will be guided and informed by

**A person centred approach and needs driven services** putting people and their needs at the core of our decision making and service delivery

**A collaborative approach** working effectively and developing partnerships for successful outcomes for our service users

As an organisation we value

**Respect** acknowledging the diversity of individual experiences, perspectives and circumstances

**Empowerment** believing in and encouraging individual's own ability and strength for change

**Confidentiality** being respectful of and securely storing individual's information and narrative

**Empathy** seeking an understanding of and compassion for others' experiences

**Social justice and equality** striving for the fair treatment of all people in society

**Inclusivity** providing welcoming and safe space and services for all service users

**Accountability** ensuring transparent and responsible use of funding & resources

**Resilience** adapting and responding to service user needs within a changing context

# strategy 2023 – 2028

## **FOCUS AREA ONE: MEETING SERVICE USER NEEDS**

**Strategic Objective:** Deliver targeted services to meet identified need

### **1.1 Children and Family Services**

- Continue to deliver childcare and family services in areas of need

### **1.2 Community Employment**

- Continue to deliver the Community Employment Schemes

### **1.3 Homeless/Housing Services**

- Continue to provide emergency and short term accommodation for people experiencing homelessness
- Provide relevant training to support staff in meeting the needs of clients with complex issues
- Undertake a feasibility study about flexible accommodation options for the Finisklin site
- Continue to deliver current Housing First services

### **1.4 Older People's Services**

- Continue to provide existing SSSC older people's services
- Map regional older people's services
- Consider SSSC response to identified gaps in older people's services
- Create and deliver an older people's services organisational strategy

### **1.5 Open Access**

- Continue to deliver Open Access
- Explore opportunities for enhancement of Open Access

### **1.6 Substance Misuse Service**

- Deliver the Substance Misuse Service
- Promote the Substance Misuse Service to other relevant service providers and professionals



## **FOCUS AREA TWO: CONTINUED SERVICE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Strategic Objectives**

#### **2.1 Expand organisational reach as relevant to identified needs**

- Consider services expansion and enhancement
- Consider and apply a regional focus across all services as appropriate

#### **2.2 Continue to develop strategic connections for increased service efficiency and effectiveness**

- Network with other organisations for increased information share and strengthened relationships
- Seek opportunities for relevant and effective collaborative service delivery
- Develop synergies across SSSC services as relevant

#### **2.3 Influence policy and decision making for the benefit of service users**

- Seek representation on local, regional and national fora

#### **2.4 Continue to seek positive outcomes for services users**

- Develop internal monitoring and evaluation systems across all services

## **FOCUS AREA THREE: A SUSTAINABLE AND FIT FOR PURPOSE ORGANISATION**

### **Strategic Objectives**

#### **3.1 Strengthen financial sustainability through diverse income streams**

- Develop a finance strategy
- Develop a fundraising strategy

#### **3.2 Ensure capacity appropriate to service delivery**

- Create a fit for purpose staffing structure
- Invest in human resources via employed staff, CES and volunteers
- Undertake a recruitment drive for additional staff
- Develop staff succession planning
- Invest in mechanisms to retain qualified staff

#### **3.3 Strengthen organisational identity**

- Rebrand the organisation
- Promote the organisation's impact and services
- Develop a communications strategy
- Document SSSC service delivery models

#### **3.4 Maintain and develop organisational good governance**

- Develop Board succession planning considering diverse representation and complement of skills
- Ensure up to date policy and procedures including the development of a realistic environmental policy



# supporting older people

## 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. There was an increase in the number of people availing of the service, this year with 211 recipients, (105 male and 106 female), an increase of 29 on the previous year. This resulted in a 6% (1603 meals) increase in the number of meals provided throughout the year. 12% of recipients were over 90 years of age. As is always the case there was considerable movement in and out of the service, with 82 recipients leaving the service and 58 new recipients availing of the service. This movement is largely due to individuals accessing the service as they need the additional support of meals if they have been unwell, but for a short period only or those leaving the service when their needs are such that they require hospital or residential care. The service is very flexible and responds quickly to the changing needs of recipients. The service cooked and delivered a total of 28,892 meals in 2023.

## befriending service

Sligo Social Services offer a home visiting Befriending Service whose primary aim is to reduce the service user's social isolation providing social and emotional support for people who are isolated and living alone. We also provide a Friendly Call service which 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 helping service users feel less isolated at home.



# out of home residential services

Sligo Social Services provides residential services for people who are experiencing homeless or in housing need. This includes:

## ***Maryville Hostel***

Emergency accommodation, providing 15 beds for single adults, men, and women, who have been assessed by Sligo County Council as requiring a homeless service. 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 to improve their quality of life, such as addiction counselling, mental health support, and health related services. Sligo Social Services staff in Maryville also deal with any households presenting as homeless when Sligo County Council is closed to the public.

## ***Ballytivnan Short-Term Accommodation***

Ballytivnan offers short-term accommodation to individuals who have been unable to secure long-term housing but can live independently with floating support. Staff are not on site all the time but visit the project as frequently as possible to meet with clients for informal contact and to carry out key-working sessions.

## ***McAuley House Transitional Housing***

McAuley House offers four self-contained apartments, one and two-bedroom units, for up to four households who have housing difficulties or are at risk of becoming homeless. The service also provides off site support to help residents in areas which are likely to cause difficulties in their future accommodation.

Housing continued to be in extremely short supply with rents outside the HAP limits available to clients. It therefore continues to be very difficult for service users to access move on accommodation. Bed occupancy remained high throughout the year and our Homeless services were busier than ever. 81 individuals were accommodated in Maryville Emergency accommodation in 2023. Demand for emergency beds was greater than those available in the community voluntary sector and as a result the local authority continued to accommodate single adults who were experiencing homeless in private accommodation. Sligo Social Services homeless service team provided support to 24 individuals, 12 male and 12 female, who were accommodated in private accommodation throughout the year.

## **Housing Development**

For many years Sligo Social Services has recognised that the Maryville property is no longer fit for purpose and required major redevelopment. Progressing this has been difficult and in 2023 we once again engaged with Sligo County Council regarding the redevelopment of the site. In late 2023 we submitted a proposal to the Housing Agency seeking assistance from their Projects and Procurement. The Housing Agency Projects and Procurement team provide assistance to those Approved Housing Bodies who do not have sufficient resources or capacity to progress projects. The Housing Agency's Projects and Procurement section has a full technical team which includes architects, engineers, project managers, quantity surveyors and technologists. They offer independent guidance and advice in relation to construction-related procurement, design, and contract administration. As our proposal has been accepted we will be working with Housing Agency in 2024 on the redevelopment of the Maryville site.

In addition to residential services Sligo Social Services also offers a range of other support services to people who are out of home or at risk of homelessness. This includes the following:

## housing liaison worker

The Housing Liaison Worker (HLW) works with people in Sligo University 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 and supports people to engage with primary care 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 people who are attending the hospital and are experiencing homelessness. The Housing Liaison worker was in even greater demand in 2023 than in previous years, working with 114 persons, a 50% increase on the previous year. 78% were male and 22% female. 73 clients were new referrals to the service and 102 client cases were closed in 2023.

## 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. Service 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. 2023 saw us spend considerable time seeking to recruit a replacement Substance Misuse Worker. In the latter part of the year we recruited a part-time worker, who will increase to full-time in mid - 2024. The worker engaged with 8 service users one on one. The service also completed a programme with 8 participants to encourage harm reduction/ continued recovery. This took place over a 4-week period in the run up to Christmas and covered topics including healthy eating, refreshing cookery skills, wellness activities and guest speakers covering issues in relation to recovery as well as a Christmas dinner to encourage socialising without the use of substances. This programme was funded by the Northwest Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force.

# Housing First: Five Key Principles

Immediate  
access to  
permanent  
housing with no  
housing  
readiness  
requirements.

Participant  
choice and self-  
determination.

Recovery  
orientation

Individualized  
and participant-  
driven support.

Social and  
community  
integration.

## housing first

Sligo Social Services provides the Housing First Service in the Northwest of Ireland, covering the counties of Sligo, Leitrim, and Donegal. Housing First is 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. Housing First provides individuals with a stable, secure home of their own as a first step, alongside which personalized housing and health support is provided. These wrap-around services are offered for as long as they are needed and seek to 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. Additional funding was provided by the HSE and the Department of Housing during 2023. This allowed the service to begin extending to more geographical areas throughout the region.

The team working with 31 service users who were housed and 8 individuals who were awaiting their housing throughout the region. Service users required intensive support from the staff team throughout the year.

The team provided intensive support to those accommodated and awaiting accommodation throughout the year. The difficulty in acquiring one-bedroom units continued to be the most significant challenge for Housing First in 2023. The Housing First team worked with 39 people, 31 of whom were housed and 8 who are awaiting housing. Seven service users were allocated housing in 2023. One service user passed away in 2023.









For many years Sligo Social Services have operated several childcare services, Charles St Preschool, Cranmore Abbeyquarter Afterschool and Ballytivnan Afterschool.

#### ***Charles St Preschool***

The service provides a preschool service, and extended hours are available for children between the ages of 2yrs 10mths to 5yrs. The Early Years Inspectorate of Tusla has responsibility of inspecting preschools and this in turn promotes a very high standard/quality of practice within the service. Due to changes in funding arrangements many of the targeted at-risk groups which the service traditionally worked with are no longer eligible for financial assistance and as such qualify only for the Free Pre-school hours. This has seen the numbers of children in the service decline significantly over recent years. In 2022/23 the service provided free preschool only and as the number of children seeking the service continued to be very low in June 2023 the organisation made the decision to wind up this service.

#### ***Afterschool's***

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. The afterschool's also runs activities during out of school periods within the academic year and offers 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. In 2023, 33 children attended the afterschool service in Cranmore/Abbeyquarter.

#### ***St. Edwards Ballytivnan***

With the support of St. Edwards School staff and management, Sligo Social Services provide an afterschool on the grounds of St Edwards Primary School. In 2023 the service increased their intake of children up to 18.

All three services were awarded the Tusla Children and Young Persons Participation award in 2023.

# 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, finance, health, entitlements, and welfare issues. This service operates on a walk-in basis three days per week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9.30am to 12noon. The service is provided by a team of trained volunteers. We work closely with the FEAD Programme which provides a wide range of nonperishable food items such as cereals, tinned items, pasta, rice etc. We also receive very generous food donations from the public and through community groups and schools which allows us assist those in need of food assistance throughout the year and in particular at Christmas time.

Households continued to experience immense financial pressure in 2023 and as a result we saw an increase in presentations, (576 presentations) to our Open Access service in 2023 with 267 individuals availing of the service. 77% of those accessing the service were female. Families with children under 18 years of age accounted for 57% of those accessing the service. The total number of children within these families was 439. 7% of those accessing the service were homeless.

The service provided material aid, in the form of food to 82% of contacts. 17% of contacts were supported with advice and information. 120 school packs were distributed through the service in 2023. The service also supported other voluntary and community organisations, providing them with food parcels to distribute to families and individuals (84 adults and children) whom they had identified as needing food assistance.

## sligo social services

# FOOD DRIVE

Helping People in Need in Our Community



**PLEASE DONATE ONLY**  
**NON-PERISHABLE AND UNEXPIRED GOODS**

### WHAT WE NEED:

Canned fruits/vegetables, canned pasta sauces, hot or cold cereal, tea, coffee, sugar, rice, pasta, dried snacks, etc.

For more information visit [www.slighsocialservices.ie](http://www.slighsocialservices.ie) Tel: 071 9149582

# 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. We deliver a Mainstream Community Employment programme and a dedicated Drug Rehabilitation Community Employment Programme.

## **Mainstream Community Employment**

The 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 worker positions also.

The increased availability of work in the labour market has rendered the Community Employment Schemes less and less attractive and recruitment of participants continued to be very difficult in 2023. With the reduced number of participants, this in turn resulted in the scheme not receiving approval to recruit the assistant supervisor's role in 2023.



## fundraising

Every year Sligo Social Services supporters fundraise in a variety of ways to help finance the various services provided by the organisation. Our Thrift shop contributes considerably to our income and contributes to the community within which it is based. Sligo Social Services must maintain and grow its income sources to ensure the sustainability and continuation of its work and services.

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 this year and ensure a better Christmas for many families and children.

In 2023, we raised a total of €115,153. €78,845 of our income came from our Thrift Shop and Recycling which was a slight increase on 2023, however this has still not reached pre-covid levels.

The Annual church collection on the 8th of December raised €6,141. Donations were received from various businesses, churches, community groups and individuals towards our work raising €38,068 this year. While it is not possible to name all our supporters, we are extremely grateful for all donations large and small, once off, or regular.

## volunteers

Volunteers work alongside professional staff to deliver vital services to those in need. Every year new volunteers join us while those who have been involved in various services for many years remain as committed as ever. Over 200 volunteers offer their time and talents to Sligo Social Services and are involved in many aspects of the organisation. Volunteers help us provide the following services:

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

We 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. Our sincerest 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 2023**

		Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	Notes	2023 €	2023 €	2023 €	2023 €	2022 €
<b>INCOME</b>						
<i><b>Charitable Activities</b></i>						
Revenue Grants and Subsidies	4	-	1,192,148	-	1,192,148	1,268,472
CE Programme	7	-	440,323	-	440,323	426,819
Capital Funding/Grants	4	-	7,367	-	7,367	3,700
Income Generated from Services	4	-	265,469	-	265,469	265,772
<i><b>Donations and Legacies</b></i>						
Donations		-	-	44,783	44,783	85,293
<i><b>Fundraising</b></i>						
Fundraising Activities/Events		-	-	11,105	11,105	6,432
Charity Stores		-	-	73,456	73,456	64,677
<i><b>Other Income/Gains</b></i>						
Sundry Income		-	-	4,299	4,299	1,983
Interest Income		-	-	120	120	27
Gain/(Loss) on Financial Assets Held at Fair Value		-	-	-	-	-
Net Waiver of CAS Principal Amounts		-	18,471	-	18,471	17,933
<b>Total Income</b>		<u>-</u>	<u>1,923,778</u>	<u>133,763</u>	<u>2,057,541</u>	<u>2,141,108</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
<i><b>On Charitable Activities</b></i>						
Programmes and Services						
Expenditure		-	1,629,774	-	1,629,774	1,623,469
CE Programme	7	-	443,680	-	443,680	428,222
<i><b>On Raising Funds</b></i>		-	-	40,810	40,810	34,985
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<u>-</u>	<u>2,073,454</u>	<u>40,810</u>	<u>2,114,264</u>	<u>2,086,676</u>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year</b>	5	-	(149,676)	92,953	(56,723)	54,432
Total Funds Brought Forward	16	617,500	198,753	390,984	1,207,237	1,152,805
Transfer of Funds		-	164,387	(164,387)	-	-
<b>Total Funds Carried Forward</b>	16	<u>617,500</u>	<u>213,464</u>	<u>319,550</u>	<u>1,150,514</u>	<u>1,207,237</u>

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## SLIGO SOCIAL SERVICE COUNCIL (CLG)

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### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

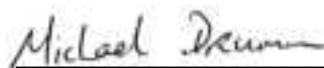
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	Note	2023 €	€	2022 €	€
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Intangible assets	8	-		-	
Tangible assets	9	385,464		418,801	
		<u>385,464</u>		<u>418,801</u>	
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	10	51,982		267,421	
Investments	11	2,011		2,011	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,556,088		1,196,560	
		<u>1,610,081</u>		<u>1,465,992</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	12	(352,847)		(166,347)	
		<u></u>		<u></u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			1,257,234		1,299,645
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<u>1,642,698</u>		<u>1,718,446</u>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	14	(492,184)		(511,209)	
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>1,150,514</u>		<u>1,207,237</u>
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>					
Designated Funds	15	617,500		617,500	
Restricted Funds	15	213,464		198,753	
Unrestricted Funds	15	319,550		390,984	
<b>TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS</b>	16	<u>1,150,514</u>		<u>1,207,237</u>	

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and signed on behalf of the board by:



**Orla Barry**  
Director



**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