

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

Welcome to our 2024 Annual Report, an important part of our public accountability. Our important work includes providing a suite of eight key services in order to support women, children and families who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

At Good Shepherd Cork, we believe that each and every person has an intrinsic human value and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. During 2024, we were directly involved with the lives of 930 people, including 398 children. Our core focus remains providing crucial services for the women, children and families in our care. We also run programmes that seek to maximise life opportunities for our service users, particularly in the lives of children.

Unfortunately, it saddens me to say, once again, that there has been a truly shocking increase in demand for our homelessness services this year. The number of families in emergency homeless accommodation in Ireland continues to escalate. As a society, I'm not convinced that we are concerned enough about the traumatic impact on the people involved. In my view, we simply aren't doing enough to break the negative cycle that this creates.

The Annual Report outlines the ways in which we try to help people in 'Making Change' in their lives. Our Strategic Plan, 'Building Hope' includes a number of initiatives that we hope will reshape the organisation, allowing us to focus on what we can do to help address some of our challenges as a society. I am happy to report that progress on delivering the strategy has been considerable. I'm proud to say that our management team and staff are able to make this progress, even though they are problem solving at a micro level every single day of the year.

In that regard, I want to thank our CEO, Allison Aldred and the entire team, for their ongoing commitment to our mission. Myself and the other trustees are in awe of the Good Shepherd Cork team who every day, in so many ways, provide vital assistance to the people that they serve. We remain mindful that there is so much more important trauma-informed work to do in order to break a number of damaging cycles, or stop them developing.

I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the very many women and children whose paths we cross on a daily basis. Their courage and determination to overcome barriers to make a better life for themselves and their families is a constant inspiration to us.

As we look to the future, we have ambitious plans that will continue to adapt the scale and the scope of our work to bring about more positive change for the 'at risk' women, children and families in Cork. We have strong and productive relationships with our funders and for that we are extremely grateful.

In building for the future, we will continue to deepen our relationship with Cuanlee CLG who provide the local domestic violence refuge facilities. Together, we are progressing exciting plans for a new and modern way to provide this service in Cork. We recently received Department of Housing approval for the development of a new Domestic Violence refuge for Cork which is an important step forward. We are currently working very closely with Cuan and Cork City Council to make this a reality. I hope that we will be able to report significant progress on this in 2025.



Brendan Lenihan
Chairperson

GOOD SHEPHERD CORK MISSION, VISION, VALUES

Good Shepherd Cork is an independent, registered charity established in 1981. We work with women, children and families who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. We welcome people of all backgrounds, ages and stages of life. Our work is grounded in our belief in social justice and equality. We address the root causes of homelessness and social exclusion and aim to break the cycle of homelessness through generations.



OUR MISSION

Through trusting relationships we support women, children and families who are vulnerable to homelessness to live more empowered, fulfilled and self-sufficient lives.



OUR VISION

Our vision is a society where every woman, child and family enjoys a secure, safe and dignified home in a supportive environment, respectful of their rights.

OUR VALUES

■ Welcome

We welcome women, children and families of all backgrounds, ages and stages in life in a non-judgmental way.

■ Ambition

We are ambitious for the women, children and families we serve: we aim for lasting, positive change.

■ Social Justice

We believe in social justice and equality: we look to address the reasons for homelessness.

■ Accountability

We work to clear standards; we are transparent and answerable to our stakeholders; we are outcomes-focused and learn from each experience to improve our service.

■ Respect & Dignity

We acknowledge and respect the intrinsic dignity and value of each individual person, and promise trust, confidentiality and integrity in our conduct.

■ Leadership

We look to lead and to give example in shaping a better future.

■ Collaboration & Partnership

We are open and responsive to those we serve and to working with other agencies and organisations.

OUR SERVICES

■ Edel House

Emergency shelter for women and children

■ Redclyffe

Family hub emergency accommodation for families who are homeless

■ Riverview

Residential centre for teenage girls

■ Baile an Aoire

Long-term supported housing for single women

■ Bruac

Education and development service for teenage girls and young women

■ B&B Outreach

Support for people in B&Bs and other private emergency accommodation

■ Support & Advocacy

Support for women and families who have moved on from homelessness

■ Fernbrook

New family hub service being established in Clonakilty which is due to open in 2025

SCOPE OF OUR SERVICES

In 2024, we supported 930 women, children and fathers who were homeless or vulnerable to homelessness. This represents an increase on the 850 people we supported in 2023.

During the year we accommodated 140 women and children in Edel House, our emergency shelter for women and children, (139 in total in 2023). In Redclyffe Family Hub, we accommodated 122 parents and children (106 in total in 2023). Women and families continue to stay for long periods in our emergency accommodation services, typically over a year. One family has been with us for more than four years, due to the extreme shortage of affordable accommodation in Cork city and county. Our B&B outreach service worked with 331 adults and children during 2024, up significantly from 250 in 2023.

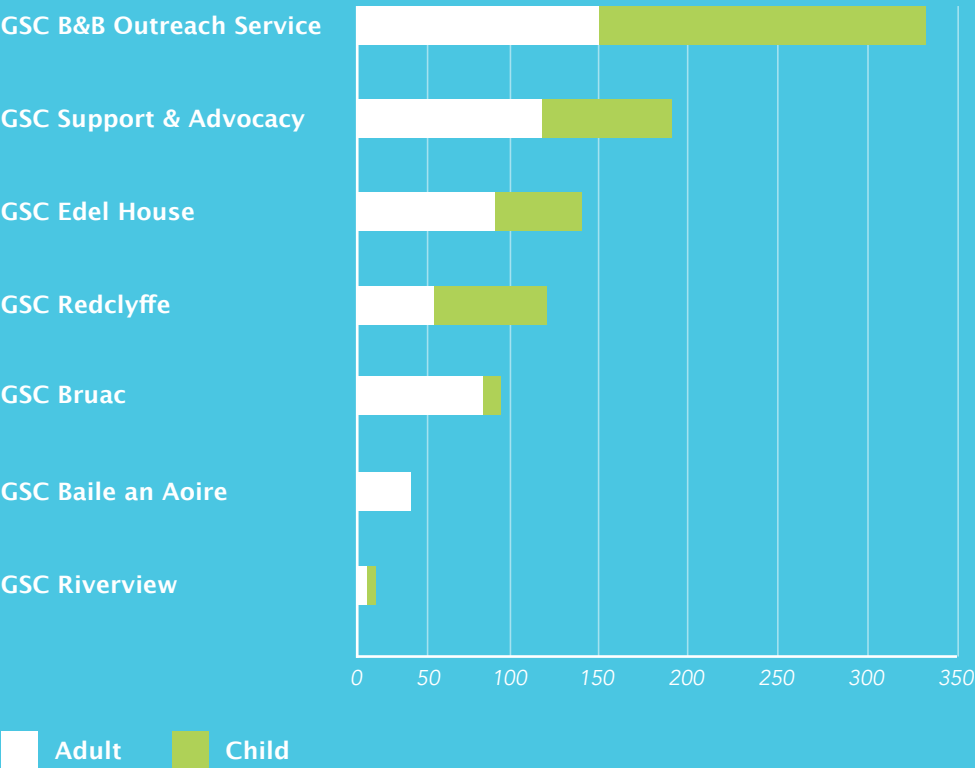
37 women were accommodated in Baile An Aoire, in our long-term supported housing service. Nine girls and young women stayed in Riverview, our residential centre for teenage girls who are out of home.

Our Support & Advocacy service continued to provide service users with a range of practical and emotional supports. The service supported 191 adults and children during 2024.

94 women and girls engaged with formal, and informal, educational supports in Bruac, our education and training centre.

We have continued to deliver a wide range of practical, educational, therapeutic and emotional supports to our residents in order to help them manage through, and exit successfully from, homelessness.

Number of active service users, by service in 2024



Note: Some service users will engage with more than one service

THE 2024 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONTEXT



Over 10,300 adults and more than 4,500 children were counted as homeless in Ireland at the end of December 2024. Women and children accounted for 57% of those in homeless services.

Outside of Dublin, Cork City and County has the highest number of people experiencing homelessness. In December 2024, there were approximately 770 homeless adults and children in Cork.

Whilst more people than ever are entering our services, the acute lack of supply of social and affordable housing in Ireland means that the options for moving on from homeless accommodation are severely limited. This results in residents remaining in our services for unreasonably long periods. A growing number of families are remaining in emergency accommodation for two or three years. Therefore, homeless services are becoming the only available long-term solution for the thousands of children who are homeless in Ireland.

The supply of emergency accommodation is also very constrained, with a growing proportion of people in homeless services staying in bed and breakfast and other private emergency accommodation without adequate supports. At the close of 2024, almost two-thirds of people in homeless services in Ireland were in private accommodation, without onsite professional support.

Further rises in the cost of living during 2024 continued to be a severe financial challenge for our many service users who were struggling to maintain tenancies in the community. This also resulted in significant financial challenges for Good Shepherd Cork in the delivery of our 24/7 residential services.

The cost-of-living crisis has also impacted the fundraising environment over 2024. In Good Shepherd Cork, we saw a marked drop in our donations income, although we were able to largely counter this with an increase in grants from philanthropic sources.

The creation of the new agency, CUAN, in 2024, has provided a welcome impetus to the development of services for women, children and families experiencing domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV). CUAN is tasked with working towards a society with zero tolerance for any form of DSGBV or the attitudes which underpin it, and ensuring victims/survivors have access to the full range of supports and services they need.

After very significant recruitment challenges during, and in the year or two after, the Covid pandemic, we saw some improvement during 2024 in our ability to recruit social care professionals, reflecting the stronger recruitment market.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

By the end of 2024, we were three years into our 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan. The plan, titled 'Building Hope,' as we strive to offer women, children and families who are vulnerable to homelessness the chance of a brighter future, sets out our ambitions through to the end of 2025. By the end of the plan period, we want to be delivering the following positive outcomes for the people who avail of our services:

- Women, children and families in Cork who are homeless, or out of home, have access to a safe place to stay with access to quality, trauma informed supports and are assisted to move on to suitable long-term accommodation.
- Children in our services build resilience and are better equipped to deal with the trauma of homelessness, and the trauma that may have brought them into homeless services. Our hope is that this will reduce the likelihood of a return to homelessness.
- Women, children and families staying in B&Bs, and other private emergency accommodation, have access to basic necessities and realistic supports to deal with the many challenges associated with this type of accommodation. This will enable them to move on to more suitable accommodation.
- Women, children and families supported by Good Shepherd Cork in the community have an enhanced quality of life and are able to avoid a return to homelessness.
- Service users who are non-nationals, or from minority groups in Ireland, are assisted, including through language and literacy supports, to better access relevant internal and external services and supports, facilitating their successful integration into Irish society.

As an organisation, we understand that we can only deliver positive change for our services users through the committed efforts of our excellent staff. Therefore, a priority during the Strategic Plan period is to invest sufficiently in all staff, ensuring that staff feel appropriately valued and rewarded, whilst strengthening our structures and systems to better support staff.

During the Strategic Plan period, Good Shepherd Cork is committed to being responsive to the evolving needs of service users and to providing top quality, trauma-informed care across all services, in line with best practice.

A review carried out in early 2025 identified encouraging progress against our strategic objectives, as outlined below.



PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Provide short and long-term accommodation options with adequate supports for women, children and families who are homeless, or out of home.

The re-development of Edel House, with funding of €8.35 m provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, through Cork City Council, was completed in 2022. During 2024, we were able to convert communal and office spaces to provide three more apartments in Edel House, bringing the total number of self-contained one and two-bedroom apartments to 36.

Both Edel House and Redclyffe, our family hub service, operated at full capacity throughout 2024.

During the period January to end December 2024, 93 women and 47 children were accommodated in Edel House, whilst 70 children, 41 women and 11 men were accommodated in Redclyffe.

A key development in Redclyffe during the year was the opening of a sensory room in the garden, which provides a calming, therapeutic space for children challenged by the rough and tumble of life in a busy homelessness hub. This is proving a valuable addition to the support we offer our families.

During 2024, we worked closely with Tusla's Children's Residential Service, CRS, to draft a new Statement of Purpose and Function for our Riverview service. Historically, Riverview has provided four beds for 16 – 18-year-old girls on voluntary care orders, and two for young women, 18 yrs and over. In line with wider changes within Tusla, the new service will provide four beds for 16- to 18-year-old girls on full care orders, with changes to be implemented in 2025. During 2024, we continued to see young people coming into the service with increasingly complex behavioural and support needs.

During 2024, we made further progress with plans for the development of a new domestic violence refuge in Cork city, in collaboration with Cuanlee DV refuge, along with an adjoining social housing scheme. We ran a successful tender process for selection of the design team who have developed detailed plans for the project.

During 2024, we worked closely with Cork County Council to plan a new family hub service in Clonakilty, West Cork, which is now due to open in 2025.

Our Making Change informal education project for women experiencing homelessness, has continued to provide a range of educational and social activities across Edel House, Redclyffe and our long-term supported housing service, Baile an Aoire. During 2024, a wide range of activities were organised to support service users to build confidence and self-esteem as learners and to develop practical and coping skills. Activities included:

One to one direct support and advocacy to enable participants to access educational and employment opportunities, including supports with study skills and developing CVs, information on relevant courses in the community, and assistance with applying for, and undertaking, external courses in, for example, art, health, beauty and childcare skills.

Wellbeing activities such as yoga, healthy eating, pottery, creative arts, gardening and mindful colouring activities and group activities to foster social connections such as baking, coffee mornings and movie nights. An Exhibition of residents' artwork was held in the Glucksman gallery, UCC, in October 2024.

During 2024, we invited researchers from the School of Applied Social Studies in UCC to review our Making Change Programme data. They concluded that: 'The Making Change Programme helps women to lay a foundation in developing confidence, capacity and resilience. This foundation can be built upon to continue to develop and strengthen these attributes. The Making Change Programme achieves this by utilising what Ó Tuama (2022) describes as seed capital. Seed capital is described as a baseline of learning and skills. It may not present via formal learning, but rather through informal or non-formal learning. Once a baseline has been achieved, individuals are more likely to continue to accumulate beneficial learning and skills arising from their renewed confidence and wellbeing.'

Our collaboration with HSE Social Inclusion allowed us to recruit three additional health professionals, funded for a twelve-month period, with a full-time Clinical Psychologist, Social Worker and an Addiction Outreach Worker recruited by the end of the year. Two further posts, a DV Outreach Worker and an Occupational Therapist due to be advertised early in 2025, will complement the support of the mental health professionals (a mental health nurse, part-time clinical psychologist and support of a psychiatrist), introduced in 2023. We have continued to provide counselling for women in our services, with funding provided by Tusla.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Improve outcomes for children in our services, particularly those affected by adverse childhood experiences, and ultimately reduce the likelihood of children returning to our services as adults.

During 2024, we supported more children than ever, as the crisis of family homelessness in Ireland causes more families to lose their homes. During the year, a total of 117 children stayed in Edel House and Redclyffe and we supported 181 children in B&Bs and other private emergency accommodation. 73 children from families in the community at risk of losing their homes were also supported during the year. We accommodated nine teenage girls in Riverview during 2024.

Our Child and Youth and Family Support Workers (C&Y/FS Workers), funded by Tusla and philanthropic donors, deliver a wide-ranging programme of activities, often in collaboration with Tusla's Springboard Project, in addition to funding from Healthy Ireland and the Cork Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC). Activities are designed to promote children's emotional wellbeing, support developmental milestones and strengthen family bonds. During the year, these have included:

Weekly Group activities that create routine and connection

- Youth Club for children in homeless services – this weekly group provides safe social connection and fun for children facing instability.
- Parent and Toddler Group – A lifeline for isolated parents, this weekly group offers peer support, playtime for young children, and regular input from a Public Health Nurse, who can also help advocate for urgent housing solutions based on developmental concerns.
- Homework Clubs – A calm, supportive space where children can learn and play after school – a particular challenge for families in B&B accommodation. The club also supports healthy peer interaction and routine.

Special Activities

- Day Trips to Leahy's Farm and Fota Wildlife Park - These outings are more than recreation: they offer freedom. Children run, explore, and laugh without restriction. Parents reconnect with their children in safe, joyful settings, free from the pressures of shared accommodation.
- Seasonal Events: Easter Family Days – These celebrations provide fun and belonging during especially tough times. From festive outings to gifts and meals delivered to those without cooking facilities, we aim to ensure every child feels seen and included.
- Our busy calendar of outings – Beach trips, circus visits, arts and crafts, and nature walks give families moments of joy, normality, and relief from stress.
- Summer camp placements and family fun days – Helping children access enriching, inclusive summer experiences that build confidence and connection.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Supports that empower parents and strengthen families

- Parenting courses – These courses give parents a chance to pause, reflect, and build skills in a supportive, non-judgmental space. Many leave with renewed confidence and a sense of pride in their role as caregivers.
- Yoga and mindfulness sessions – Gentle but powerful, these sessions support emotional regulation, ease anxiety, and promote wellbeing for parents under pressure.
- Practical parenting support – From routine advice to referrals, our staff support parents with positive parenting strategies and help link them to essential services like schools, Tusla, disability services, CAMHS, and crèches.
- System navigation – For families with limited English, we offer hands-on support to navigate the education system, helping them to access services confidently.

Focused support for individual children

- One-to-one sessions – Whether through play, creative activities, or quiet conversation, these sessions help children feel seen, safe, and supported. They build emotional resilience and give children the space to process complex feelings.
- Therapeutic referrals – Where needed, we connect families with play therapy, art therapy, speech and language services, and other specialist supports.
- Links to wider Good Shepherd Cork supports – Including School Connect, Making Change, mental health services, and our Child Support Worker for families affected by domestic violence.

These varied supports are rooted in trauma-informed practice, ensuring children experience safety, consistency, and choice in their interactions, and all staff have been trained accordingly. The work of the Child and Youth/Family Support Workers is guided by key principles: fostering trust, celebrating voice, encouraging peer connection, and creating space where children and parents feel valued, laying the foundation for long-term resilience.



PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Together, these activities are not only mitigating the harmful impacts of emergency accommodation, but they also help children develop and grow, help families to connect and contribute to long-term wellbeing. Through ongoing observation and parent/staff feedback, we've seen children:

- Grow more confident in sharing their feelings and experiences.
- Build friendships and peer connections.
- Develop interests, hobbies, and healthy habits.
- Learn to express opinions and preferences, in a safe environment.

During 2024, we have continued to explore a range of approaches to the assessment and measurement of outputs and outcomes of our work with children and young people.

Our School Connect project supports families who are homeless to keep children in school. The nature, type and length of this support varies from family to family, but can involve supporting school placement options, assistance with school transport, provision of educational resources or materials, support with setting a routine for a child's learning (homework for example) and providing targeted and timely advice on all matters related to the child's education. The School Connect staff liaise directly with individual schools, engage with local councils and link with the STAR project (supporting Traveller and Roma families), in order to advocate for children in our services.

One of the critical supports provided to families is facilitating their access to LEAP cards (to cover the cost of public transport) to enable the child to get to and from school. We have again secured funding for school transport from Tusla's Education Support Services (TESS). At any one time in the last year, School Connect Coordinators have been administering/managing 65 LEAP cards for families in our services. (Free LEAP Cards are provided to all families in homeless services in Dublin and we continue to advocate for a similar arrangement in Cork.)

Good Shepherd Cork is also working at a national level to raise the systemic issues that compound the disadvantages faced by children who are homeless. Through active participation in the Children's Rights Alliance, Good Shepherd Cork was able to raise issues such as school transport, access to disability supports and general health needs, with key decision makers during 2024. We were invited to speak about the School Connect work at a national event as part of End Child Poverty Week 2024.



PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Provide women, children and families in B&Bs and other private emergency accommodation with additional supports to deal with the considerable challenges of staying in this type of accommodation, and to move on to more suitable accommodation.

The number of women, children and families who are homeless and forced to stay in B&Bs and other private emergency accommodation continued to rise throughout 2024. In the twelve months between January and December 2024, we saw a 17% increase in the number of adults in such accommodation in Cork and Kerry, whilst the increase across all types of homeless accommodation was 9%.

Behind these statistics are individuals of all ages, from the newborn to the elderly, who are living in an environment that is often chaotic and stressful. In some cases, entire families are staying in emergency accommodation for extended periods, such as B&B accommodation or hotel rooms which, typically, is only equipped for short-term stays. This accommodation lacks space, privacy and security, without access to basic needs such as laundry and cooking facilities. There is very rarely any provision for children with additional needs.

But even this inadequate emergency accommodation is in short supply, with women, children and families increasingly placed in accommodation a significant distance from family, friends, support networks and schools, leading to isolation and mental health challenges.

Our B&B outreach team are typically supporting more than 50 women and families at any one time, with outreach support and advocacy, to assist their move on from private emergency accommodation and supports to cope with the many challenges of life in this type of setting. Throughout 2024, we continued to advocate for the better provision of emergency accommodation for families, in more convenient locations, through our work with the City and County Councils, Tusla's Children and Young People's Services Committee, Cork and national advocacy groups.

The B&B team also run a weekly peer support group 'Brighter Days' for families in B&Bs, to provide a safe place to talk openly and share their experiences.

The B&B Outreach team have continued to access specialist supports for the families they engage with, both internally within Good Shepherd Cork (linking families with a counsellor, psychologist, mental health nurse or DV support worker, as relevant) and through external services. Our School Connect team have helped to ensure families in B&Bs have access to education and childcare services.

As part of our 2022 – 2025 strategic plan, we have aimed to establish a drop-in centre for families living in B&B's, to provide a welcoming environment for social interaction and a safe place for children, as well as basic cooking and laundry facilities. Unfortunately, due to funding and staffing constraints, we have not been able to progress this objective in 2024.



PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Ensure women and families moving on from emergency accommodation receive adequate supports to settle in well and remain in long-term accommodation in the community.

Throughout 2024, our long-term supported housing service, Baile an Aoire, was at full capacity, providing 37 single women with a safe home and supports to maintain their tenancy, enhance independent living skills and improve well-being.

The profile of residents continued to evolve in 2024, with those who have lived in institutional care for most of their lives now forming a minority of residents. Newer residents present with ever more complex needs, including mental health, intellectual disabilities and other health challenges. As part of Baile An Aoire's response to more complex needs among residents, a new social care team leader position was filled during the year to support the development of the service.

Wellbeing is a key feature of the service and a wellness space was created during the year, with design inputs provided by residents. Throughout 2024, the wellness programme continued to offer a range of services including massage, reflexology, mindfulness, breathing practices and aromatherapy and added a new option of candlelit restorative nighttime yoga, to support residents to relax and unwind. The wellness programme is supported by a wellness practitioner specialising in trauma informed care.

Other activities facilitated during the year include cookery classes, outings (to the donkey sanctuary, pet farm, seaside towns for example), festival celebrations (birthdays, Easter, Christmas), bingo sessions, DVD nights, BBQs and high teas. Gardening is another significant activity at Baile An Aoire, with three raised beds planted, sowed and tended by residents from which they can enjoy fresh produce.

Each week there is a group session involving mindful colouring and artistic activities encouraging mindfulness, the reduction of stress and anxiety and improvements in focus, vision and motor skills. The group sessions also promote social interaction, reduce feelings of isolation and create a sense of community. Some residents have started to engage in mindful colouring outside of the weekly sessions, using this tool to maintain and promote their own wellbeing.

The team in Baile an Aoire also provide individual support to residents who want someone to sit and talk to; loneliness and isolation being one of the challenges experienced by many residents. Other interventions include support with personal hygiene and self-care and with money management. Time is the vital ingredient in all interventions, with the timing and level of support determined by residents.

The programme recognises the way in which trauma may affect individuals and is informed by feedback shared by residents and observation by the staff team. Positive outcomes of these activities includes emotional, psychological, physical and relational wellbeing of our residents.

Our Support and Advocacy team provide community-based support to women, children and families who have moved on from emergency accommodation to their own homes, through a client-led service tailored to individual needs and goals.

Many of our service users in the community struggle with social isolation when they make this transition. Therefore, the group activities and outings organised by the Support & Advocacy team are very important in helping service users build connections and promote wellbeing. During 2024, the team were able to expand the number and frequency of groups offered, including Taking Action groups providing mental health supports, weekly DVD evenings, cinema trips and bingo afternoons.

Funding received from the Cork Education and Training Board and Children's Rights Alliance again enabled the team to assist families with vouchers for the purchase of groceries. We were also able to provide passes for families to swim at Leisureplex facilities and to pay for local summer scheme places for children. This provides much needed respite and fun for families.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

We were pleased to be able to continue to provide therapeutic supports to children, including play therapy sessions for children to help them transition successfully from the stresses of homelessness, and factors that may have taken them into homeless services, and support them to settle into their new homes and schools in the community. Funding from the UBU scheme, through CETB, allowed us to provide a wider range of activities for children and young people.

Our education and training centre, Bruac, has had another successful year, with five students achieving their QQI major award and others achieving QQI component awards and skills-based activities certificates.

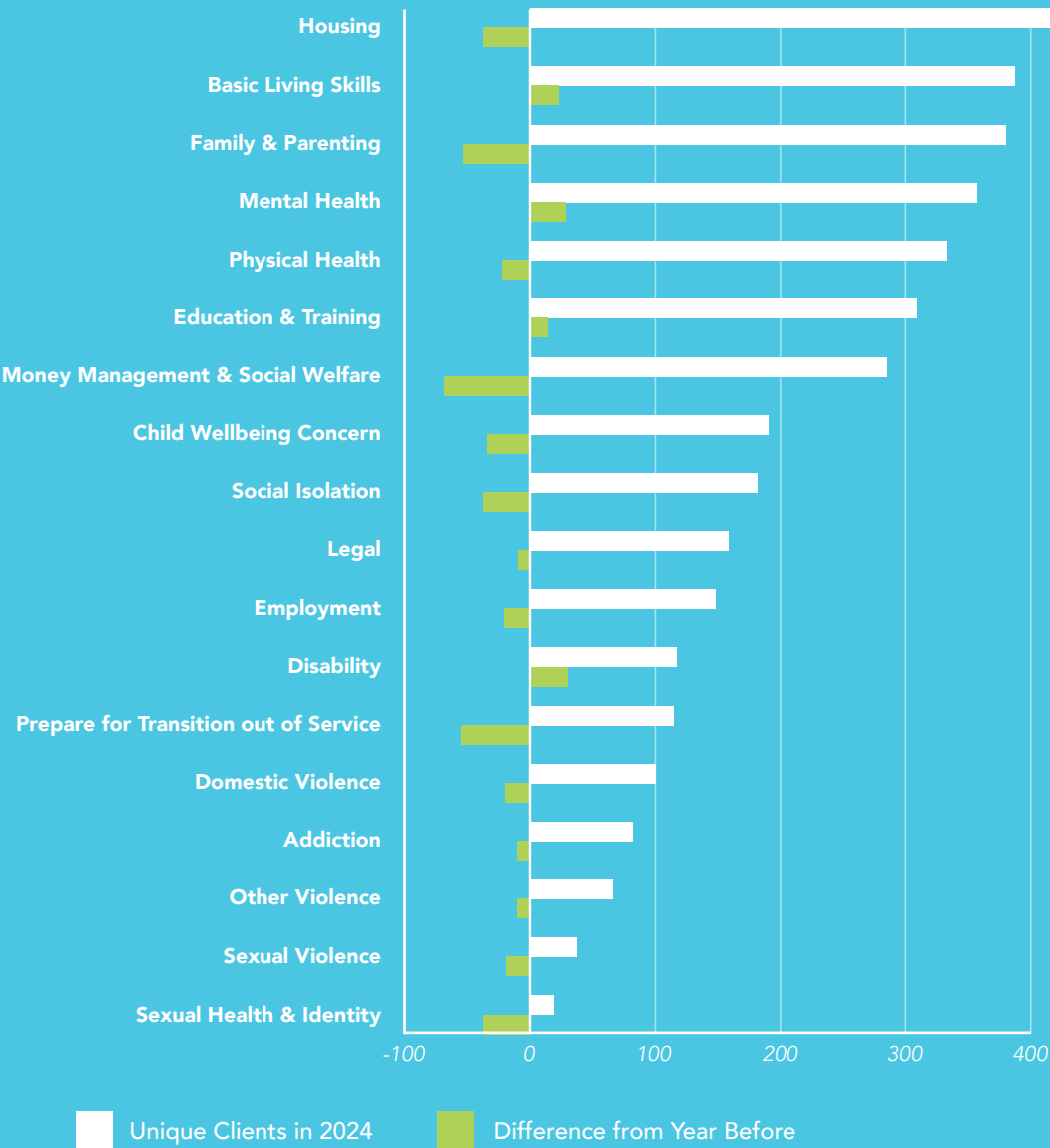
We were delighted to see students celebrate their success with their families at the graduation ceremony in April. In the same month, we took part in the lifelong learning festival opening our doors to members of the public. Visitors took part in sewing workshops, cookery and nail-art demonstrations. The garden and poly tunnel were prepared in the spring, and we enjoyed the benefit of fresh vegetables which were used in our kitchen and culinary classes.

The outside space was improved significantly by volunteer groups who worked on the neglected parts of our garden with enthusiasm, ensuring an accessible space for students and staff.

We introduced night classes in 2024 to increase access and to create a new, less structured, pathway into learning. Hair and makeup classes were facilitated by experienced staff, as well as a short gardening programme delivered in partnership with our colleagues in Baile an Aoire. The popularity of these classes led to funding being secured from SOLAS and allowed us to build our collaboration with the Traveller Visibility Group and women from Spring Lane.

Our programme delivering numeracy through the art of sewing was selected from 130 projects by SOLAS to highlight the positive effect of Literacy and Numeracy funding on communities. A film crew came to Bruac to interview staff and service users discussing the benefits of the course, for broadcast early in 2025.

Number of service users supported, by type of issue 2024, and comparison with 2023



Unique Clients in 2024 Difference from Year Before

Note: Some service users will be supported with multiple issues

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Improve outcomes, in our own services and in interactions with external agencies, for service users who are non-nationals or from minority groups - with a particular focus on English language and literacy skills.

Approximately 50% of our service users are from ethnically diverse groups, many of whom are non-Irish nationals or are from minority groups in Ireland, including the travelling community. We understand that people from minority groups often experience additional barriers in accessing housing and other services, and we are committed to ensuring that Good Shepherd Cork's services are fully accessible and relevant to the needs of all service users.

Throughout 2024, we continued to offer English language supports for service users, including English as a second language classes. Good Shepherd Cork also provides funding for the use of translators for service users who do not have English as their first language. This has been beneficial in helping service users navigate their exit out of homelessness. Translation supports have also been beneficial in supporting women who have experienced domestic violence to navigate court processes.

We have continued to build valuable collaborations with relevant local agencies, including NASC and the Traveller Visibility Group (TVG).



PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Make sufficient investment in our staff, skills, structure and systems across Good Shepherd Cork to ensure professional and trauma informed development of our people, service and ethos, in line with best practice and relevant standards.

We have continued to invest in the development of our staff, with a particular emphasis on becoming a more trauma-informed service. This will help ensure that our services are delivered in ways that reduce barriers and prevent further harm or re-traumatisation for those who have experienced psychological trauma, or adversity, at any stage in their lives.

Support from our funders has allowed us to continue to roll-out in-house trauma informed training for staff and to complete a process of trauma informed audits, including environmental assessments, across our services. All staff have now had at least one training session in Trauma Informed Care (TIC) and many staff have had additional training or other capacity-building inputs. Through the trauma audits and environmental assessments we have been able to review our service design and delivery and have made adjustments to the service environment to be fully trauma sensitive. Many of our systems, processes and premises have been enhanced to support TIC.

We have established an active Trauma Change Group to review the progress of implementation of the Trauma Informed Care environment across Good Shepherd Cork and to help us embed trauma into the fabric of everything we do. Trauma is now an embedded agenda item in all forums and meetings, ensuring that it holds a central position in thinking, decision making and planning across our services.

With the support of the psychologist working in Good Shepherd Cork, through our collaboration with HSE Social Inclusion, we have established a programme of reflective practice groups across all services which, with the offer of the Taking Action Programme to staff and service users, also builds on the trauma informed approach being fostered in Good Shepherd Cork.

During 2024, we implemented a major upgrade of our GSConnect electronic database system to improve our ability to collect, manage and analyse data about our services, providing us with a much more detailed overview of activity across all services. This greatly enhances our ability to monitor and report on the outputs and outcomes of our work.



CHALLENGES IN DELIVERING ON OUR OBJECTIVES

The acute lack of supply of social and affordable housing in Ireland means that more people are coming into homeless services and are staying for longer periods. Whilst we endeavour to provide the best possible service to those who stay with us, emergency accommodation is neither designed for, nor suitable for, long-term living. On a daily basis, we see the negative impacts of this on the women, children and families in our services.

We are finding that women and families coming into our services are presenting with increasingly complex mental health issues, requiring high levels of support. This is particularly challenging for our staff who, in the main, have not been recruited to deal with such complex needs.

Supporting the growing number of women and families staying in B&Bs and other private emergency accommodation is an on-going challenge, particularly those struggling without access to even basic facilities, including cooking and laundry facilities.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact the women and families we support. The financial strain of trying to meet basic needs is contributing to anxiety and depression amongst our service users. The costs of operating our services, including energy costs, remained high throughout the year, adding to the challenge of running our residential services.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Good Shepherd Cork is an independent Cork-based charity registered with the Charity Regulator, with a voluntary Board of Trustees.

We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of person-centred practice, good management and corporate governance. The Board of Trustees is made up of ten highly experienced non-executive and external members, recruited through trusted recommendations and/or BoardMatch for their knowledge and expertise, and are drawn from diverse backgrounds.

The Board members serve for terms of four years and the Chair is selected by the Board. The Board meets at least eight times a year, with a minimum quorum of three, with subcommittees appointed, as required. All Board members complete an induction programme and are made fully aware of the conflict-of-interest procedures. There are clear distinctions between the roles of the Board and the executive management team.

All our trustees are volunteers and do not receive any remuneration or expenses for their work with Good Shepherd Cork. The trustees who served on the Board during 2024 were:

Mr Brendan Lenihan (Chairperson), Ms Celine Fox, Ms Deirdre Carwood, Professor Deirdre Madden, Mr Jim Mulcahy, Sr Noreen O'Shea, Mr Paddy Caffrey, Ms Sinead Corcoran (Secretary to the Board), Ms Tina Quinn and Ms Brigette Mintern.

The CEO is usually in attendance at Board meetings but is not a member of the Board.

We are compliant with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) and the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations Fundraising from the Public and the Charities Governance Code.

Our annual accounts are audited by Moore and are published on our website. We work to best practice service-level agreements with our major statutory funders.

GOOD SHEPHERD CORK COMPANY DETAILS

Registered Office: Bruac, The Priory, Redemption Road, Cork T23 C579

Good Shepherd Cork Ltd, Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in Ireland. Company number: 82114.

Charity Number: CHY 13399.

Registered with the Charities Regulator: CRA Number 20041618.

Tel: 021 439 1188 Email: info@goodshepherdcork.ie

Web: www.goodshepherdcork.ie

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Overall income in 2024 was €5.32m (against €5.04m in 2023) with expenditure of €5.76m (€5.40m in 2023). The deficit, of €432,709, was largely driven by a depreciation charge of €466,318 mostly due to the Edel House re-development. In cash terms, we made a modest surplus of €33,600.

Income rose by 5.5% compared with 2023, whilst expenditure, excluding the impact of depreciation, increased by 6.5% in 2024 compared with 2023. Costs were again impacted by cost-of-living increases in the wider economy.

Fundraising income in 2024 was €143,670, a fall of 28% over 2023. However, grant income, from philanthropic donors, at €350,230, showed an increase of 18%. Combined, fundraising and grant income at €493,900 was in line with 2023.

Our services are heavily reliant on core funding from TUSLA, HSE, Cork City and County Councils, CETB and CUAN. We remain extremely grateful to these agencies for their on-going funding and support. However, we continue to be challenged by managing the rising costs of delivering quality services and responding to increasing compliance requirements, without a corresponding increase in core funds.

The generosity of the people and businesses of Cork towards the women, children and families supported by our services is, as ever, greatly appreciated by the Board and staff of GSC.

Income	Grants and contracts	Fundraising	Rent and other	Total 2024	Total 2023	Total 2022	Total 2021
Tusla	1,758,798			1,758,798	1,851,015	1,713,323	1,571,768
HSE	986,460			986,460	953,683	792,712	758,010
Cork City Council / County Council	1,109,594			1,109,594	1,055,321	939,944	843,886
CETB	175,129			175,129	163,732	145,748	140,211
YPSFS/UBU	54,916			54,916	53,786	51,717	50,211
CUAN / Department of Justice	342,656			342,656	43,249	21,751	
Rent / Contribution			239,882	239,882	220,719	211,790	185,415
Donations, other grants	350,230	143,670		493,900	496,337	526,525	580,613
Sundry income			160,130	160,130	199,493	146,528	191,823
Investments			2,056	2,056	413	50	73
Total	4,777,783	143,670	402,068	5,323,521	5,037,748	4,550,088	4,322,010

Expenditure	2024	2023	2022	2021
Staff costs	4,267,194	3,886,549	3,460,409	3,265,618
Depreciation and impairment	466,318	476,430	435,235	313,635
Insurance	73,887	65,641	58,277	55,683
Light and heat	134,409	164,863	70,350	79,459
Repairs and maintenance	169,892	194,496	146,551	155,354
Office expenses	-	-	106	4,686
Clinical supervision	9,846	9,264	-	-
Crafts and recreation	35,948	68,438	41,878	23,771
Printing, post, stationery	16,092	24,393	23,177	19,216
Telephone	29,964	27,422	28,392	29,781
Motor and travel	34,219	48,964	48,343	31,441
Client care	230,324	168,194	126,192	151,616
Household expenses	86,861	98,599	98,175	90,964
Sundry expenses	-	4,116	6,346	24,058
Security	8,279	13,668	31,980	62,633
Audit fees	13,546	9,363	8,806	8,610
Other support costs (incl. training, accountancy, and professional fees)	179,451	142,762	134,546	78,467
Total	5,756,230	5,403,162	4,718,763	4,394,992

Full audited accounts for 2024, and for previous years, are available on our website: www.goodshepherdccork.ie