

saoirse

SAOIRSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION CLG
(Saoirse Domestic Violence Services)

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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Garret Byrne

Chairman of the Board



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2021

After a year of upheaval, 2021 was instead a year of consolidation, particularly in the area of governance. The board was aware of the imminent deadline for the adoption of the Charities Regulator's Governance Code, so we decided to take some time to consider how we might improve our governance practices and procedures.

The first step was to begin the process of drawing up a new multi-year strategic plan. We have been working under an existing plan that had been due for replacement in 2018 but had instead been rolled over annually since then. At the time, we had felt that it was not possible to conduct long-term planning amid the uncertainty around the opening of the Rathcoole refuge, and subsequent efforts were stymied by Covid. The development of the new strategic plan, with input from representatives on behalf of the staff, management, and board, is now well underway, with final approval expected later in 2022.

The board also decided to update the company's constitution. We felt that the original Memorandum and Articles of Association were overly focused on the provision of accommodation and did not reflect the full range of domestic violence services that SDVS provides. Our main objects now make specific reference to the fact that we provide a comprehensive support, information, advocacy, outreach, childcare, accommodation and counselling service for women and children who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence or abuse. Also, for the first time, our objects include an overall aim of the eradication

of the incidence and effects of domestic violence in Ireland. This is the fundamental underpinning of everything we do. The new constitution has been approved by the Revenue Commissioners and is available to view on the Charities Regulator's website.

The board's governance subcommittee took on the daunting task of reviewing all of our governance structures, policies, and procedures in order to assess whether we could confirm that SDVS complies with the Charities Regulator's Governance Code. We identified some potential gaps in our structures and adopted best practices recommended by other charities. Over the course of a number of months, the subcommittee drafted and recommended to the board a suite of new governance documents, which were then approved by the board at its regular meetings. Eventually, after considerable hard work, the board determined that we could certify compliance with the Governance Code, and our declaration in that regard is available on the Charities Regulator's website.

The board continued to function very well throughout the year, even though it was not possible to conduct meetings in person. The Audit and Risk subcommittee and the Staffing subcommittee also met regularly, providing the organisation with essential guidance within their respective spheres of authority.

There have been some significant changes in the membership of the board over the year. Vikki Hughes and Aidan Lawler decided to step down in 2021, and we were joined by Olwyn Downey for her first meeting in December. I was very sorry to see Vikki and Aidan go, as they had provided such enormous help to us over the years.

My final piece of news is that this will be my last Chairperson's Report, as I will be retiring in early 2022 after 10 years on the board and nearly six years as chair. In one way, the organisation is almost unrecognisable from the one that I joined in 2012, in that we now operate two refuges and two safe houses, and the budget has nearly tripled, with commensurate increases in staff numbers. However, in a very real sense the core of the organisation is unchanged: the undying commitment of its dedicated staff, management and directors to the welfare of the women and children who use the service. My fellow Director, David Laird, will be taking over as Chairperson, with Rebecca Molloy, as Vice-Chair, and I have no doubt, but that SDVS will thrive in their capable hands.

Accordingly, and for the final time, I want to express my eternal gratitude to all of those people who have made it possible for SDVS to continue to provide its necessary service to women and children in dire need.



Allison Graham

CEO



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT 2021

The path of Saoirse Women's Refuge took many twists and turns and reached new horizons in 2021. The expansion of the service that was delivered in 2019-2020 took on better shape and bore the fruit of our labours as we moved into a new phase of change management and further growth in Saoirse. While still keeping all within our services safe, we managed the challenges of dealing with Covid-19 and picked up from where we were brought to a virtual standstill in 2020 along with the rest of the country.

Saoirse Women's Refuge was reborn as Saoirse Domestic Violence Services, with a new logo, brand and focus as we acknowledged the new era and space our services are now occupying. With three separate service sites, a staff of over 50 and the suite of support and accommodation services for women and children suffering domestic violence, we are proud of how much we have achieved over our 15 years in operation. Our new website and growing online presence through social media platforms were important developments in 2021 for our growing organisation, reaching out to more families requiring our services. We also want to thank our supporters who contacted to us through social media or more traditional platforms, with huge generosity towards fundraising, or volunteering their time and services, and helping us raise awareness of the crime of domestic violence on so many families across our society.

The numbers of women contacting our services continued to grow in 2021, through greater awareness raising and also through additional referrals from external agencies and professionals, as the shadow pandemic of domestic violence continued to impact the safety of families in their homes, but also the awareness of these issues by those referring to us. We secured funding to increase our services in some areas, including the further expansion of our Outreach service. As the statistics provided later in this report show, we still experience refuge accommodation demand far outstripping supply. The covid-19 pandemic continued to impact this in 2021, restricting admissions at times and also preventing move-on for families. The refurbishment of our Tallaght refuge in the latter part of 2021 was a long-awaited achievement of which we are immensely proud. To be able to provide a more comfortable, modern, and welcoming space for women and children at this traumatic time in their lives is essential. After 15 years the refuge was most definitely in need of a facelift!

Our endeavours to achieve the reopening of Rathmines refuge since our successful tender in late 2018 was unfortunately a less positive story, with a decision coming from Tusla in 2021 not to move ahead with its redevelopment at this time. This struck a serious blow to the already dire shortage of refuge spaces in the greater Dublin area and was a huge disappointment to our hopes for our future service delivery plans. We are awaiting the Tusla Accommodation Review after its expected publication passed. We expect the huge gap in refuge supply will be clearly highlighted in it, but also hope for committed funded action in 2022. We commenced our new 5-year Strategic Planning process in late 2021, with board, management and staff participation and are excited to publish this in 2022, with hope, vision, and commitment for all the women and children who come to our door.

I want to acknowledge the passion, energy, and commitment of our full team at SDVS, management and frontline staff teams, who give unstinting support and dedication to our service provision at all levels and thank them all sincerely. I hope that 2022 will give us more opportunities to get back to meeting face-to-face and building cohesively across sites and teams, and reflect. Thank you also to our Board of Directors who govern and guide SDVS and support me in my duties as CEO. Our Board went through some change processes themselves during the year, with ever increasing compliance and reporting responsibilities, including our achieved compliance with the Charity Regulator's Governance Code, and much work being done at sub-committee level too. Our Chairperson, Garret Byrne, announced he will be moving on from our Board and role of Chair in early 2022, so more changes are ahead as nothing ever stands still.



Our Services

Saoirse Women's Refuge officially opened its first location, Tallaght refuge, back in December 2006 providing short-term crisis refuge accommodation for up to six families, and a 24-hour helpline (01-4630000) offering support and a listening ear to women suffering both past and current abusive relationships. Fast forward to 2020 and the achievement of a key strategic goal to open a second refuge. Rathcoole refuge officially opened its doors in January 2020. As part of a major expansion of our services, we also extended our Outreach & Prevention services, our Childcare services, and number of employees to support the new Saoirse Domestic Violence Services (SDVS) we are today.

We operate a centralised 24-hour helpline covering both refuges, with direct admissions to each refuge, thereby ensuring maximum use of our 11-unit capacity. Our Refuge Manager, Trish Quinn, with the support of a dedicated Assistant Manager in each refuge, leads the refuge and support services we provide with care, compassion, and commitment to an ever-increasing number of families in fear, who have no other option but to flee their home and seek refuge.

Our Tallaght refuge provides a purpose-built playroom to support the resident children and their mothers, while our Rathcoole refuge has a play pod and outdoor play area. Qualified Childcare Workers based on both sites provide specialist support services for children experiencing domestic violence, dealing with each child's individual needs. Childcare Assistant Manager, Paula Garry, led and developed the Childcare services for our most special clients, the children of all ages living with domestic violence in all its forms.

Our Outreach & Prevention service continued to develop and grow, under the management of Nadine O'Brien, delivering a range of outreaching services in the community, clinics, etc., as well as Court Accompaniment. The service now has seven staff supporting families from West Wicklow to South West / South Inner-City Dublin with the addition of the Dublin 10 area during 2021. The prevention work lead by Nadine incorporates an increasing amount of awareness raising and domestic violence training.

Our Vision

Our vision is to reach and support an ever-increasing number of families in Irish society, who deserve respect, dignity, safety, and freedom from domestic abuse. Through our team of professional, caring and dedicated people our primary focus remains our commitment to continuous improvement in all aspects of our operations and the services we offer to our clients and the community.



Our Mission

To provide safe, supportive, and confidential services for women and children experiencing domestic violence. Our focus is on empowering the women who contact us by facilitating the space to explore their options, and work with them from the ethos that they know best for themselves and their children.

Our Values & Principles



We believe that ...

- Nobody deserves to be abused
- No person should ever have to experience the torture of being abused by a 'loved one'
- No one should be alone in carrying the burden of blame, shame and judgment perpetrated upon them
- Early educational interventions with young people entering intimate relationships are key to combating domestic violence in future generations and breaking the cycle of violence

We acknowledge that ...

- Domestic violence is a serious and life destroying crime for which the client is never responsible
- Is a cycle of abuse that only escalates with time
- Occurs in all walks of life – all classes, creeds, ages and races
- Is an unequal balance of power and control that an individual holds over another in any intimate or close family relationship – husband and wife, same sex partners or adult children and an elder parent
- Takes many forms including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial abuse and coercive control

We commit to ...

- Empowering our clients and facilitating them in having a voice
- Listening, hearing, believing, and respecting those who contact us for help whether they plan to leave an abusive relationship or seek support in staying safe in the relationship
- Working in a non-judgmental environment supporting clients – only they know the reality of their abuse
- Maintaining a confidential service for all our clients and ensuring that we always work according to Children First

Trish Quinn

Refuge Manager



REFUGE ACCOMMODATION & SERVICES REPORT 2021

2021 was a year of much change across our refuge services, in terms of ongoing covid-19 challenges, lack of move-on options for families, staffing, and to our services and facilities. Life in our refuge accommodation was still greatly impacted by covid-19 restrictions and public health protection measures for the first half of the year. With our Rathcoole refuge providing communal living, we continued to use Tallaght refuge as the quarantine accommodation site for families during their first weeks in refuge. This had a direct effect on the number of families being accommodated in Rathcoole refuge as we were unable to accommodate some requests for refuge when Tallaght was full, even though Rathcoole had spaces. This is a difficult position to accept when families were trying to flee abusive and dangerous home situations and we could not accommodate them.

By mid-summer we took the decision to ease these internal covid related restrictions and we started accepting families directly into Rathcoole refuge, while maintaining strict protective measures, using PPE, cleaning regimes and social distancing. After 18 months of reduced admissions, we were able to accommodate more families immediately. This change also coincided with the planned closure of Tallaght refuge for long awaited refurbishment works. After successfully sourcing funding and tendering for a builder, Tallaght refuge was closed from September– December for the essential works to bring the refuge back to a more comfortable and calming space for families in their most distressed and vulnerable states.

The closing of Tallaght refuge reduced our refuge capacity by 6 units but with careful planning we temporarily deployed the staff and support service to a local hotel, the Maldron Newlands Cross. The Airbnb initiative provided hotel accommodation for families in DV who cannot access refuge, financially supported the provision of 6 rooms in the Maldron for the period of Tallaght's closure, with support staff on site Monday-Friday. We want to

thank the Maldron Hotel Newlands Cross and Airbnb for making this happen. We also want to acknowledge the disruption that staff endured during this temporary move and their dedication to ensuring that as much support as possible was afforded to these families.

Requests for refuge and also calls to our 24-hour helpline remained high during 2021, with worryingly high numbers of families having no refuge to go to, either in SDVS or in other services due to the dire shortfall of refuge accommodation versus demand across Ireland. As a direct result of the pandemic and self-isolation measures, unfortunately we accommodated less women and children in refuge than in other years, even though the demand was higher.

There was management and staffing turnover, particularly notable as the country emerged from covid restrictions in

the second half of the year and the jobs market boomed. There was a change in Refuge Management with both our Assistant Managers, Orla Greaney and Lesley Hill moving on from SDVS. Sarah Moynihan was recruited as Assistant Manager Tallaght, and Cora McCann as Assistant Manager Rathcoole. We also experienced high staff turnover within our Contact Worker and Relief Worker roles which brought staffing challenges when providing double cover staffing 24/7 across two sites.

The HSE DRHE Homeless Covid Response Forum and SafetyNet, were an invaluable service to SDVS throughout the pandemic, not only providing us with information and support but also providing PPE and access to accommodation units for families needing isolation. Without all of their hard work, I don't think SDVS would have remained Covid free for over 18 months of the pandemic.

We look forward to services returning to more normality in 2022 and to being able to engage on a one-to-one basis with our colleagues, external agencies, and services and of course our clients, while we navigate their path to safety and recovery with them.



Nadine O'Brien

**Outreach &
Prevention Manager**

OUTREACH & PREVENTION MANAGER'S REPORT 2021



Like everyone else, our department had to learn to work in a different way this year with COVID-19 adding even more challenges. We were met with added pressures, knowing that increased numbers of women were being cyclically locked down with their abusers. This has been a hard year for everyone, but we also experienced a turning point moment. Awareness of Domestic Violence has never been higher publicly and politically. 2021 saw Ireland's first successful conviction of Coercive Control, the ongoing development by the Department of Justice of the Third National Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Strategy, an internal enquiry to 3,000 Domestic Violence cancelled calls by Gardai and a call to government for a dedicated Minister for our sector. As awareness of the issue grows, so too does the number of women who recognise their abuse in other survivors' stories. Driving change and developing innovative ways of working ensured that women and children received what they needed from our services in times of such uncertainty.

We actively increased our social media presence and digital platforms. We worked extremely hard to keep Domestic Violence in the headlines, reach survivors and shape public opinion which in turn brought about increased support, including financial, for our services. With the substantial support of influencers and followers, our online and media presence has successfully grown to also promote our preventive agenda. Social Media Campaigns such as the



STORIES

Chrysalis Collective with Sarah Rickard, Home-words-bound Zine with Barbara O'Meara and the Million Stars Campaign raised substantial awareness, funds and signposting of survivors to our services. Furthermore, this year we were delighted to be chosen as Technological University Dublin Students Union (TUDSU) 'Raising and Giving' RAG Charity 2021/22.

The need to respond quickly to promote safety and build support around DV survivors in 2021 was imperative. Therefore, together with Wicklow CYPSC, Wicklow Gardai, Bray refuge and Tusla we developed a Wicklow Domestic Violence Resource booklet poster and pen in an attempt to reach survivors in mostly rural communities who find it problematic to access support. The primary goal of the campaign was to improve the service delivery and information availability for those who are experiencing Domestic Violence in the county of Wicklow.

Furthermore, another collaboration (Solus) emerged between SDVS and Tusla, Prevention Partnership Family Support (PPFS). The keystone of this idea was to create a space for

SDVS and Tusla to work collaboratively and put their best thinking into possible supports for identified client families, whilst strengthening referral pathways to domestic violence supports.

A goal for the Outreach Department this year was to address the unmet needs of the Dublin 10 community who had been without a Domestic Violence service provision for some time. With additional funding and support from Tusla we hired a full time Outreach worker providing a DV Outreach service to the Dublin 10 area. Alongside the support services offered to families resident in the community, we have set up satellite clinics, built community links particularly with Addiction support services, delivered Domestic violence groups in the community and provided Domestic Violence training to professionals in the area.

With the increase in the number of survivors seeking our help and the consequent increase in our staff numbers it became apparent that we needed to create a role of Outreach Team Lead, thus we welcomed Alex O'Halloran on board as our new Outreach Team leader in 2021.

Paula Garry

**Childcare Assistant
Manager**



CHILDCARE SERVICE REPORT 2021

What a year it has been across our services! We entered the new year in a second lockdown, but we had much learning from our first experiences of lockdown. We had learnt the importance of pulling together as a team to ensure our child clients were catered for to the highest standard as we knew how badly covid 19 had affected the mental health of our youngest clients. The childcare team ensured that children were seen across all our services in a holistic way, not only acknowledging the children's experiences of domestic violence, but also recognising the impacts that school closures and much uncertainty in the world had had on them.

We were delighted to have our play pod fully functional in Rathcoole and our playroom in Tallaght was able to reopen with strict covid guidelines in place, ensuring safe and creative fun-filled places for our child clients. In total across the two services, we worked with 55 children who as always taught us so much about their experiences and also taught us resilience and courage and bravery. We are always so grateful to the children and their mothers for trusting us with their stories. Although the work is difficult and no child should experience what some of our children have gone through, the children always bring so much fun and laughter to our buildings. We celebrated many festivals including international women's day where the children did a lovely activity of people who inspire them. Their inspiring people

ranged from their mams to Billie Eilish! We also ate lots of chocolate, both residents and staff always know where the best treats are kept.

Although the childcare staff are specific to refuge, we also had terrific opportunity this year to work with our outreach team and to reach many of the families living in the community through phone support for parenting around domestic violence. Christmas is always a really busy time in refuge, but the needs of children in our community was also extremely evident this year. We heard many more stories of children living in food poverty this year alongside domestic violence. It was an amazing piece of work to see 98 children from our outreach team delivered presents at Christmas thanks to the very generous donations we received and also the hard work of the childcare and outreach teams. Thinking of Christmas, we were also delighted to have the Santa van this year, with Santa even sending messages to some of our children in different countries!

There was much work done throughout the year in highlighting the voice of children living in domestic violence and SDVS was delighted to be part of the 'empower kids' group, hearing children's voices loudly and finding platforms for other professionals to also hear these voices, and hopefully making changes for children at

a national level. The childcare team also tries to champion this piece of preventive work and awareness raising through our school talks. The 16-day campaign gives us the opportunity to really highlight children in our services. This year we spoke to 80 school children during this time who then helped us to design fairy doors to represent each child in refuge. Resident children at the time also designed their own doors. We were able to display these during the 16 days and highlight the long-term impacts domestic violence can have on a child's development. These beautiful doors represented, like fairies, the often-unseen side of domestic violence and the right of each child to a safe and stable place to stay.

Although it was a year of change, living through a pandemic and the closure of Tallaght refuge for renovation, I was very much struck by the passion and enthusiasm of the childcare team always wanting what's best for the children and the creative way in which children are supported. The arrival of our caterpillars really highlighted this, teaching children about change and patience, kindness and understanding. We can never underestimate the power of positive interactions with child clients in our service and the transformative power of play. A past resident once told me this quote and I carry it with me and through our work. "The butterfly counts not months but moments, and has time enough."



Our Board

The voluntary Board of Management of Saoirse Housing Association CLG is made up of a mixture of statutory, local community group representatives and professionals from the private sector, representing a wide array of backgrounds, experience, and expertise, bringing a rich mix of skills to their governance role. The Board meets every 6 weeks and also consists of Staffing, Audit & Finance and Governance sub-committees.

In 2021 the Board comprised of:

Garret Byrne	(Barrister – Chairperson)
David Laird	(Management Consultant - Director)
Mark Brennan	(Barnardos - Director)
Daren O’Neill	(Tallaght West Credit Union - Director)
Sandra Byrne	(Kildare Wicklow Youth Services – Director)
Rebecca Molloy	(WorkHuman - Director)
Aidan Lawler	(Barrister / Accountant - Director)
Olwyn Downey	(HR Director – Director)
Kirsten Byrne	(Senior Social Worker Tusla - Board Member)

We operate a high standard of corporate governance including,

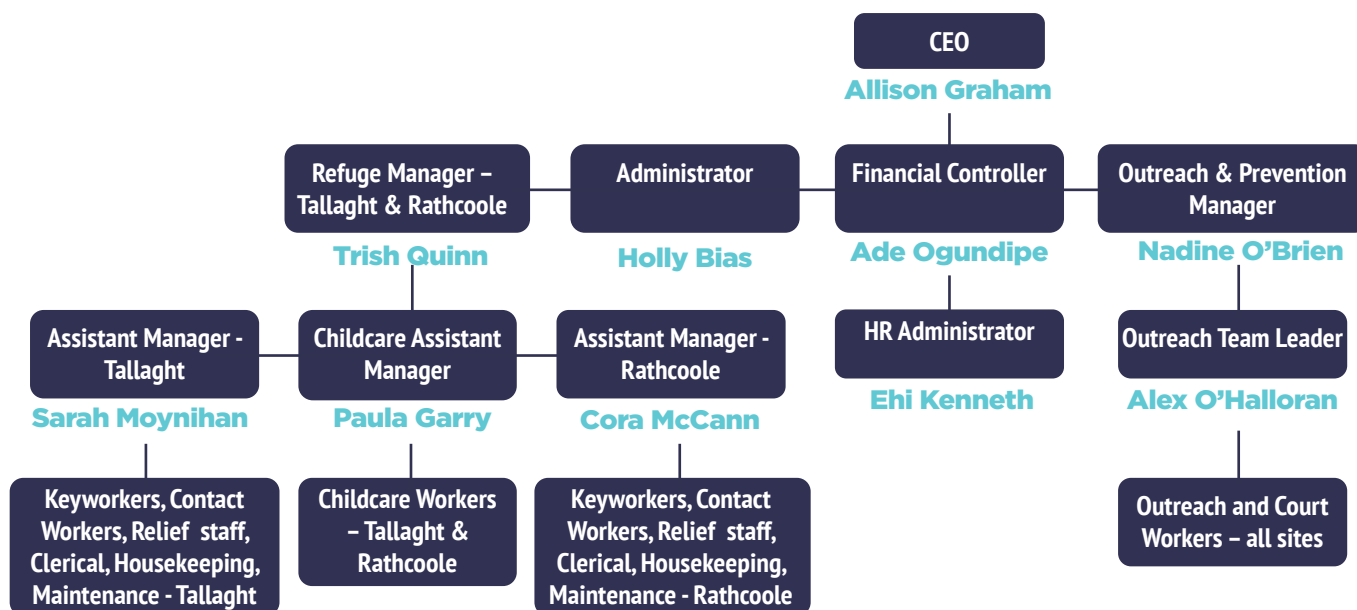
- Fully compliant with the Charities Regulatory Authority Governance Code
- An independent Board of Directors from a range of professional backgrounds
- Our Board members are not remunerated for their time and work for SDVS
- The Board consists of Staffing, Audit & Finance and Governance sub-committees
- The Board meets every 6 weeks and produces minutes of every meeting
- Our CEO reports at board meetings, but is not a member of the Board
- External auditors conduct annual audited financial statements and report on findings to the Board
- Transparency for our funders and supporters regarding funds raised and spent

Our Team

We have a team of approximately 50 staff and management working across our three service sites, including Refuge and Helpline Support, Outreach, Court Accompaniment and Childcare. Our staff team also includes Administration, Housekeeping and Maintenance staff.

Our management team grew over the development period in response to the changing needs of the growing organisation, to become the new expanded structure of:

CEO	Allison Graham
Refuge Manager	Trish Quinn
Outreach & Prevention Manager	Nadine O'Brien
Financial Controller	Ade Ogundipe
Refuge Assistant Manager Tallaght	Sarah Moynihan
Refuge Assistant Manager Rathcoole	Cora McCann
Childcare Assistant Manager	Paula Garry
Outreach Team Leader	Alex O'Halloran



Keyworkers are assigned to each new resident family on admission, and they work Monday - Friday providing advocacy, accompaniment and referral supports to clients. Their case management with clients offers a range of supports in line with the needs of the clients and we aim to meet these ever-changing needs. Our Refuge Support Workers provide invaluable support alongside Keyworkers to resident clients, helpline callers and day callers across a 24/7 rota, allowing us to maintain 24-hour refuge support and admissions for families who need us whenever they need us.

Our Childcare Workers support the families through case management of the children's needs during their time in refuge in consultation with their mothers, thus enabling the children to have a voice around their experiences. They provide group play and one-to-one sessions in the playroom Monday to Friday for the children ranging in ages from infancy to late teens. They also support child clients of Outreach families in our Safe Houses and are working towards the development of service provision to the child clients of community Outreach families.

Our Outreach and Court Accompaniment team moved back to more face-to-face support sessions with clients, as covid restrictions eased during the year, which was widely welcomed by all. The Outreach team provide supports and case management to residents of our Safe Houses also. They have a significant role in networking, advocating, making links and also awareness raising as part of their prevention work.

Our relief teams provide emergency and staff leave cover for full time staff on our 24-hour and childcare services. They are often called on at short notice and are long term contributors to running our services. The support we provide every day to families in crisis is only possible with such commitment and passion.

Our HR Administrator, Receptionist, and newly appointed Administrator role, provide essential administrative support to our management team and services in general, to keep all the wheels moving. Our Housekeeping and Maintenance staff are also a core part of our service provision team, and work across all our sites.

What 2021 Brought

The following data collection provides some insight into service provision by SDVS in 2021 and highlights some changing patterns in our service use that helps us to meet demand and also adapt and improve the services we provide on an ongoing basis in line with our clients' needs and our strategic goals. With Tallaght Refuge shut from Sept-Dec 2021 due to building works we also utilised Airbnb Hotel accommodation during that period.

No. of women in refuge	75
No. of children in refuge	74
Total refuge / hotel residents	149
No. of women in Safe Houses	8
No. of children in Safe Houses	12
No. of Outreach clients	398
No. of children with Outreach clients	671 (services were not provided to all)
No. of helpline calls answered	2616
No. could not accommodate as refuge full	294 families
Average length of stay in refuge / hotel	41 days (from 1 day to several months)

The numbers of families in refuge (75), was down slightly from (80) in 2020. While we had more capacity with Rathcoole Refuge, the overall number of families accommodated in refuge was down due to families having to isolate in Tallaght Refuge first. The number of refuge admissions was therefore adversely affected. We took the decision in August 2021 to ease covid admission restrictions, thus allowing families to be accepted in Rathcoole Refuge without the 14-day quarantine in Tallaght refuge, also accepting larger families and non-vaccinated women.

The number of children (74), was for the first time lower than the number of women in refuge, which we attribute to a number of reasons, including an increased number of women without children presenting, a reduced number of larger families presenting or us being able to accommodate, and also women worried about staying in refuge with children due to covid infection risk, opting sometimes to leave them with extended family.

The average length of stay in refuge was 41 days, which is another substantial increase on 33 days in 2020 (21

in 2019). This was due mainly to covid measures, self-isolating, lockdowns restrictions, no move-on options, etc., which directly impacted on the number of families we accommodated in 2020.

We accommodated 8 women and 12 children in our two Safe Houses during 2021, with 2 coming via our refuge and 6 coming through outreach referrals. Due to the extremely challenging situation with finding longer term accommodation, due to housing shortage, increasing rents as well as covid restrictions, residents of our safe houses and refuges are often staying much longer as they have nowhere safe to go.

The ever-high number of requests for refuge continued with 294 requests for refuge not accommodated because we were full to available capacity.

This equates to us not being able to accommodate 74% of requests for refuge as the refuge was full / had no available capacity due to covid restrictions on admissions.

24 Hour Helpline

Helpline Calls Breakdown

2616 answered

Accommodation	29%
Client Care	12%
Information	17%
Support	14%
Outreach	13%
Administration	7%
Other	8%

(incl. Silent calls, hang ups, not appropriate service, hoax calls, unknown).

The number of helpline calls answered was lower than the highs recorded in 2019 and 2020. The 2021 figure is comparable to pre-2019.

The breakdown of helpline calls across the 24-hour service was, 41% morning, 47% afternoon and evening, 12% nights. This remains similar to previous years but with calls during the night slightly up.

Outreach

Outreach and Court Accompaniment referrals increased on 2020, with 398 individual clients (314 in 2020), partly due to the addition of the new Dublin 10 outreach service. These range from a single face-to-face support session to several months of regular contact support. 127 individual women were supported with court accompaniment. There were 671 children connected to the 398 women supported through outreach. While we don't currently have the capacity or resources to offer supports to all these child clients, we are supporting them indirectly through their mothers and also, we have offered some child specific supports where possible, through our refuge childcare team.



Day Caller

Unfortunately, due to covid restrictions and the health and safety measures in refuge limiting access to the buildings, this service remained suspended during 2021.



More Trends and Patterns (refuge clients)

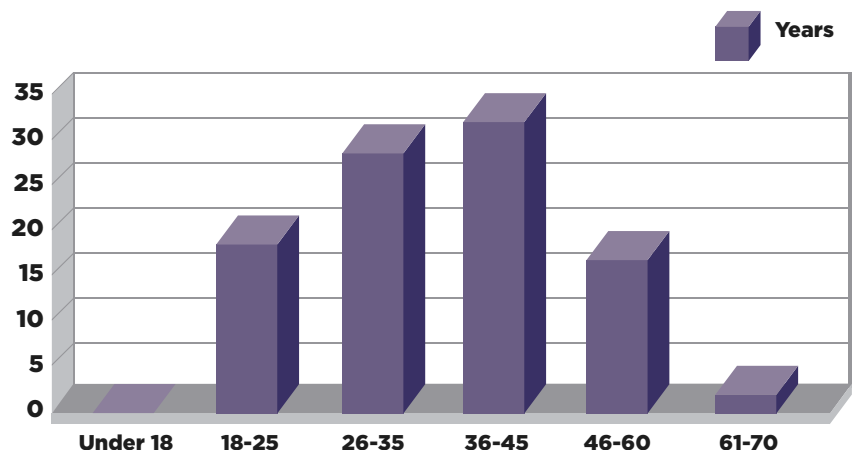
- Self-referral admissions to refuge were 40% in 2021. Referrals from other refuges and domestic violence services 15%, Social Workers 7%, and Garda 15%. Outreach was 10% and any other categories 13%. Most notably, self-referrals were reduced, and Garda referrals were up.
- Only 12% of residents were repeat clients who had stayed at least once in Saoirse previously. This figure is usually 30-40% so the dramatic decrease may be attributable to Tallaght refuge being closed for 4 months and repeat clients not wanting to stay in hotel accommodation or a new refuge that they don't know. This statistic also equates to a lot more first-time contacts to the refuge.
- The majority of clients (75%) residing in Saoirse in 2021

were from Dublin. 13% were from Kildare, and 12% from other counties.

- 12% of refuge resident families were members of the travelling community, which continues a trend in the decrease of the number of traveller women accessing our refuges.
- Saoirse provides crisis accommodation to an ever-increasing culturally and ethnically diverse client base. 47% of families accommodated in refuge were of non-Irish nationality.
- The average stay for non-Irish clients was 56 days – higher than the general average refuge stay of 41 days.

Age Range

At 33%, the largest cohort of adult residents was in the 36-45-year age range. This is followed closely by the 26-35-year range at 29%- and 18-25-years range at 19%.

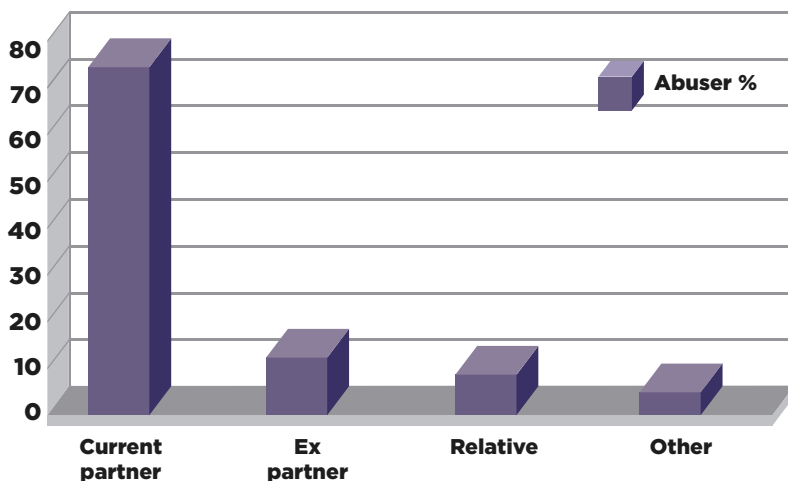


Abuse Type

In 89% of cases, two or more types of abuse were named, including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and financial.



Relationship to Alleged Abuser



75% of clients suffered abuse from a current spouse/partner/boyfriend. Those clients being abused by an ex accounted for 12% of refuge residents, which is down considerably from previous years. 8% reported being abused by other family members, for example, parent or adult son/daughter.

Where residents Moved to from Refuge

Went home to relationship (with or without a court order)	27%
Went to stay with family/friends	13%
Transitional Housing / Safe House	11%
Unknown as did not return to refuge	13%
Private Rented accommodation	8%
Homeless services	3%
Hotel Air BnB	8%
Other, incl. another refuge, hospital, etc.	9%
Were asked to leave service	8%

Some of the above outcomes differ considerably from 2020, for example, 27% went home to relationship compared to 13% in 2020, and the number going to transitional housing or safe house was only 11% compared to 25% in 2020.

SAOIRSE 2021 IN FOCUS

We continue to find our way in dealing with and living with covid, and the impact on services and staff. The past 2 years have been very challenging times, in particular for our frontline staff and management, and we hope for brighter days ahead. 2021 was an important year with lots of new projects and initiatives as well as welcoming new members of our team joining during the year.

We achieved our full staffing complement in 2021 after filling some roles that were delayed due to covid. 2021 was a year therefore for building on the change the organisation is still transitioning through, building teams and structures, and also taking time to take stock of how far we have come since we opened originally in 2006. Our new name, logo, branding, and website brought focus to who we are and where we want to go as an organisation in the future. Some projects undertaken in 2021 included:

- Tallaght Refuge refurbishment after 15 years in our building.
- 16 days of Action Against Violence – Million Stars campaign
- DAC training with An Gardaí Síochána
- Governance Code compliance
- Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice speaking opportunity
- Initiative with Bank of Ireland Rathcoole to open the first bank account for a client with a PO address
- Solas partnership forum with Tusla PPFN

The generosity of the general public in supporting services with fundraising and donations was much appreciated, thank

you. We also want to acknowledge the group and agency grants received in 2021, including the Alexander College Foundation, WorkHuman, Diamond Furniture, Vodafone, Adelaide Health Foundation, TU Dublin, HSE National Lottery Funding and philanthropic funds administered by Safe Ireland and Women's Aid. Tusla, Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence department continued as our core funder for staffing and running costs, under the guidance of Joan Mullan, National Manager DSBGV Programme. We await the publication of the Tusla DV Accommodation Review with much anticipation and hopes for committed action at government level on its delivery.

2022 will see a new chapter starting for SDVS as we complete the development of our new 5-year Strategic Plan 2022-2026 and focus our sights on possible new service developments while also continuing to deliver the quality service we already provide 365 days a year. We aim to further develop our online presence with particular emphasis on reaching and supporting women through these platforms as well as the traditional helpline.

We will continue, in parallel with other organisations, to raise the issue of domestic abuse in Irish Society, and to break the silence for those who experience it every day. We hope for a brighter day for more families who are suffering at the hands of domestic violence.



IN MEMORY

Pam O'Connor

Pam was the founder of Saoirse Women's Refuge Tallaght – something she was so immensely proud of after spending many years battling tirelessly for a domestic violence service in the Tallaght area. We are so proud of Pam. She was a bright shining light as she fought for women and children to have safety and support, and she never took no for an answer. Pam was our Chairperson for many years and led the board with unstinting determination and energy - again selflessly and all on a voluntary basis. She was a straight talker and genuine person, so you always knew where you were with Pam.

Saoirse was her baby, as she liked to call it, and it would never have happened without her passion, diligence, and sheer hard work. Over the 16 years since Saoirse opened its doors, we have helped thousands of women and children, because of Pam's vision. She was delighted to attend our official opening of Rathcoole refuge in late 2019 and was so proud of how far the service had come.

She was one in a million - a real gem. May her free spirit continue to adventure.



Pam O'Connor (Founder) with Allison Graham (CEO) at opening of Rathcoole Refuge November 2019

Trudy Dowdall

Trudy joined our original team at Saoirse in 2006, as we prepared to open our Tallaght Refuge for the first time. She supported many women in her role as Keyworker, before being promoted to the role of Assistant Manager. Trudy brought a wealth of experience, compassion and empathy to Saoirse and she supported every woman's individual needs and life story with absolute care and respect. She would sit with the women staying in our refuge, day or night, to offer kind words and a listening ear, and some hope.

Trudy was a tremendous advocate for women suffering domestic abuse, empowering them to reclaim their power and decisions, while also respecting their choices. Every woman that she supported and keyworked, were richer for the care that Trudy gave them.

She had many friends that she worked with at Saoirse, who also learned so much from working alongside her. Although Trudy moved on from Saoirse some years ago, her passing saddened those who fondly remember her. May she Rest in Peace.

Saoirse Housing Association CLG INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

for the financial year ended 31 December 2021

	2021	2020
Income	2,452,715	2,152,560
Expenditure	(2,355,345)	(1,962,919)
Surplus before interest	97,370	189,641
Interest receivable and similar income	2,133	11
Interest payable and similar expenses	(7,058)	(11,334)
Surplus for the financial year	92,445	178,318
Total comprehensive income	92,445	178,318

Saoirse Housing Association CLG BALANCE SHEET

as at 31 December 2021

	2021	2020
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	998,931	1,008,279
Current Assets		
Debtors	29,862	30,320
	884,936	910,012
Cash and cash equivalents	855,074	879,692
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(368,812)	(478,015)
Net Current Assets	516,124	431,997
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	1,515,055	1,440,276
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(925,689)	(943,355)
Net Assets	589,366	496,921
Reserves		
Income and expenditure account	589,366	496,921
Members' Funds	589,366	496,921

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", applying Section 1A of that Standard.

*Full Financial Statements for the Financial year end 31/12/2021 can be found on CRO.ie.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT **to the Members of Saoirse Housing Association CLG**

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Saoirse Housing Association CLG (‘the company’) for the financial year ended 31 December 2021 which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Changes in Equity and notes to the financial statements, including the summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 2. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish Law and FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland”, issued in the United Kingdom by the Financial Reporting Council, applying Section 1A of that Standard.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31 December 2021 and of its surplus for the financial year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland”, applying Section 1A of that Standard; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are described below in the Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard for Auditors (Ireland) issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and the Provisions Available for Audits of Small Entities, in the circumstances set out in note 3 to the financial statements, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors’ use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the company’s ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Noel J Delaney

for and on behalf of

KENNY, WHELAN & COMPANY LIMITED

Certified Public Accountants and Statutory Auditors

191/193 Lower Kimmage Road

Dublin 6W

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Saoirse Housing Association CLG trading as Saoirse Domestic Violence Services, is a registered charity (Charity Reg. No. 20058296); Companies Registration Office number 390548; Revenue CHY number 16281.



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency