



CHILDREN'S GRIEF CENTRE

Annual Report 2024

DONATIONS

Our services are free. We are a registered charity and welcome donations.

APPOINTMENTS

Please contact the office during
the following times to make an appointment:

Monday - Friday:

9.30am - 1.30pm

2.00pm - 5.00pm

Children's Grief Centre CLG



Children's Grief Centre, Mount St Vincent, O'Connell Ave, Limerick.



info@childrensgriefcentre.ie



@childrensgriefcentre



@childrensgriefcentre



@children_grief



087-9851733



landline: 061-224627

CHY 22832 | RCN 20205877

“Making a Difference in the Lives of
Children and Young People Affected by Loss”

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Children we helped in 2024



Welcome Note from CEO

I am delighted to introduce myself to you as the new CEO of the Children’s Grief Centre CLG and look forward to working with everyone, in enhancing our service provision and to continue to meet the needs of children whose lives have been affected by loss. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Sr. Helen Culhane for her tireless work in founding the Children’s Grief Centre Service and developing the beautiful new premises we now occupy on O’Connell Avenue. On behalf of all the staff, volunteers and board I wish Sr. Helen the best in her retirement.

2024 saw the continued growth of the Children’s Grief Centre as the centre now offers between 80 – 85 weekly appointments. This increased level of service delivery was made possible through the employment of additional Support Workers in 2024 with funding for these roles secured through our numerous fundraising efforts and partners. Our waitlist reflects both the increasing awareness of our service within the community and the increasing demand for grief support. While our waitlist remain high there has been a significant reduction in wait times due to continued dedication and commitment of support staff.

This year we commenced our strategic planning process which focuses on your aims, objectives and strategic goals for the service over the next 5 years. Thank you to all involved and we look forward to publishing the final document in 2025.

As a result of connecting with communities, requests from parents and families we commenced a pilot school outreach service to 2 schools in Limerick City in 2024 whereby children who were bereaved as a result of death and/or parental separation could have access to our service in the school setting. The positive feedback from children, parents/guardians and school staff has been overwhelming and we hope to continue to offer this service next year.

Finally, a word of thanks to our staff, volunteers, board members and our Ambassador Olive Foley whose commitment and relentless work in ensuring children who have been bereaved have access to a service at a time in their life when it is most needed.

Le gach dea-ghu!l

Mairead O’Keeffe | CEO



Chairperson Foreword



I am delighted to present the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Children’s Grief Centre CLG for the year 2024.

As the Chair, I want to record the gratitude of the Centre to all the members of the Board, both past and currently serving, for their contribution and dedication to the Centre, since its inception in 2009.

During 2024 we said goodbye to Majella Murphy and I want to record our gratitude to Majella for her support and trojan work on the Board over the years.

We were delighted to welcome Sinead Noonan and Dr. Maureen Noctor to the Board.

In 2024, the demand for our services continued to increase and the number of support sessions together with the number of individual children supported has increased notably from previous years. This growth reflects our ongoing efforts to expand access, increase staffing, and reduce waiting times.

A major milestone in 2024 was the launch of our School Outreach Programme, which has already proven to be highly impactful. By bringing our support directly into school communities, we are breaking down barriers and ensuring that children who might otherwise be unable to access our service can receive the help they need in a familiar and supportive environment.

During 2024, the Children’s Grief Centre continued to strengthen its governance framework, compliance structures, and internal processes to ensure that the organisation continues to operate with integrity, transparency, and accountability. As our services have grown, so too has our responsibility to maintain the highest standards of practice in all areas of organisational management.

As Chairperson, I am immensely proud of our dedicated staff and volunteers, whose professionalism, empathy, and unwavering commitment bring our mission to life each day. I also extend heartfelt thanks to our Board of Directors, funders, donors, and community partners, whose belief in our vision makes this work possible.

It remains for me to thank our wonderful and inspiring Ambassador, Olive Foley and without whom the work of the Children’s Grief Centre could not continue.

Kind Regards

Derek Walsh | Chairperson

Meet the Support Team



Theresa Kavanagh
Senior Support Worker

My role as a support worker is not about fixing children and young people-it's about giving them a safe, respectful, non-judgemental space to help them understand and express their feelings about grief. Offering a listening ear is one of the most compassionate and supportive gifts we can offer to children and young people.

We listen, acknowledge their thoughts, emotions and experiences and educate and empower them with age-appropriate information and healthy coping strategies to help them navigate their grief.



Yvonne Hackett
Support Worker

When a child or young person loses someone they love, they grieve just as deeply as the adults around them, but they express their grief in a different way. In separated families, children and young people also need their feelings acknowledged and to be listened to without fear of judgement. In this way their needs can be met by ensuring their voice can be heard.

My role as a Support Worker with the Children's Grief Centre is to provide a safe space where children and young people feel able to talk about how they feel and build resilience over time. I find great fulfilment in the work knowing that I am supporting a young person on their journey through grief, loss and separation.



Katrina Reynolds
Support Worker

With over 30 years working with children and young people in a diverse range of settings. My role in the children's grief centre is one of providing one to one support to children affected by loss through bereavement, parental separation or divorce.

I see my role as, promoting the rights of the child, providing a safe space that is welcoming and gives the opportunity to look at feelings associated with grief and loss, and overcoming obstacles associated with loss.

It's a listening service enabling children to feel comfortable talking about their feelings and emotions, feel empowered and have a voice. Trusting relationships are formed through the medium of play, sensory materials, art and mindfulness.

Children and young people can begin to understand the grieving process and begin their journey of healing with positive outcomes, become more confident knowing that the door is always open to them if ever the need arises in the future.



Jackie Maxwell
Support Worker

I joined the Children's Grief Centre in July 2024. Over the last 20 years I have accumulated valuable hands-on experience in working with children and young people with varying and very complex challenges. This breadth of experience has equipped me with a deep understanding of the multiple complex difficulties that children experience and the impact of trauma as a result of these difficulties.

I have a BA in Applied Social Studies and is an IMMA accredited Creative Mindfulness Practitioner for children and teenagers. I have hands on-experience and am very passionate about utilising creative tools, materials and methods and directly engaging with children/young people.

"It is an absolute privilege to be able to provide a safe, calm listening space and to support grieving children to understand their emotions by giving them words to describe them and a safe space to feel and process them."

"Feelings and struggles that are given a voice, can be less overwhelming, less scary and less upsetting" Dr. D. Seigel.



Santhi Corcoran
Support Worker

I am a support worker and training officer in the Children's Grief Centre where I work with children and young people in addressing and acknowledging their grief due to bereavement, and separation and divorce. I aim to provide a welcoming and safe space for both parents and children and to give them the opportunity to express and speak of their grief. I believe children and young people's voice and rights are an important element to healing from grief and loss. My hope is to ensure children and young people I work with are provided with the tools and skills to cope with their grief which promotes their mental health and well-being positively.

My training role is to raise awareness and understanding of the experience and process of grief and loss with a wide range of professionals who work with children and young people. The training that I deliver in the Children's Grief Centre encompasses both theories, practice-based information and tips and tools to support children and young people who are going through grief and loss. I have a professional background and qualifications in Education, Psychology, Healthcare, Social Studies, Community Regeneration and Community Development. 'I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.' Maya Angelou

Fundraising

As we reflect on 2024, we recognise every single contribution that has played a meaningful role in strengthening our services and we are deeply grateful for the generous support we've received.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of individual donors, the enthusiasm and participation in community events, the support of our corporate partners, fundraising initiatives by local schools, and the valuable grants we were awarded, we were able to secure vital funding.

These funds have been instrumental in allowing us to grow our services, extend our reach, and deepen our impact on children and families who have been affected by loss.

Events:

International Women's Day
Great Limerick Run – Ciara Oliver Half Marathon fundraiser
Run Kilkee
Scouts Newcastle West in memory of Darragh Lawlor
Declan Ryan Memorial
Run For Liam 2024
Walk the Camino – Mary Tierney
Lough Derg 100
4 Peaks challenge Maeve Keogh
Strive 36.5 Run Eva & Conor
The Coopers Bar Pool Tournament
Jane & Mark's Wedding favours
Claire Halpin Yoga
Anthony Foley Golf Memorial Adare Manor
Rigney's Farm Walk
CGC Annual Fundraising Ball Killaloe
Cook Mini Marathon
Movember Fundraiser Thady Coughlan
Gleann Wren Group
Connect 4
Music for Mental Health
Limerick Greyhound Racing / Greyhound Racing Ireland
Doon Community Centre 5K Walk

Corporates:

BS&B
AMCS
Engine Lease Finance
Brown Thomas
Beckman Coulter – Volunteers
Regeneron – laptop donations
Penney's Christmas Appeal
Moore to the Moon Run
Pivotal Corporate
Millennium Business Solutions
Aercap
Eli Lily
Provincial Flooring Limerick

Schools, Colleges and Preschools:

College of FET, Mulgrave Street Campus
UL Student Affairs Coffee Morning
Model School
Salesians Secondary School
St. Brigid's NS
St. Mary's NS
Clonlara NS
Crescent Comprehensive TY
Naionra na nOg
Future Heros Pyjama Day

Religious Orders:

Sr Mary Ahern
Little Company of Mary
Fr. Duhig
Salesian Sisters
Convent of Mercy – The Mount

Funding / Grants:

AIB Community Fund
JP McManus
HSE
TUSLA
Limerick City & County Council
Ireland Funds





Strive for 36.5 - Eva & Conor



Scouts Fundraiser in memory of Darragh Lawlor



Thady Coughlan Movember Challenge



Regeneron Lap top Donation



International Women's Day



Mary Tierney and Friends Walk the Camino



Doon Community 5K Walk



Scouts Fundraiser in memory of Darragh Lawlor



Beckman Coulter Volunteers

Our Team

Staff

Mairead O’Keeffe	CEO	Full-Time
Theresa Kavanagh	Senior Support Worker	Part-Time
Katrina Reynolds	Support Worker	Part-Time
Yvonne Hackett	Support Worker	Part-Time
Jacqueline Maxwell	Support Worker	Part-Time
Santhi Corcoran	Support Worker	Part-Time
Mary Commins	Administrator	Part-Time
Helen McInerney	Administrator	Part-Time
Darrell Costelloe	Finance Officer	Part-Time
Carol Fitz-Gough	Fundraising and Events Co-Ordinator	Part-Time
Orla Ryan	Fundraising Assistant	Part-Time

Volunteers

Olive Foley	Ambassador
Mary Moran	Administrator
Beryl Carlswell	Support Worker
Geraldine Carey	Support Worker
Maire Casey	Fundraising
Ann Gilbourne	Gardening

Our Team

Child Feedback

- “Talking about my feelings and everything that happens makes me happier.”
- “I found having someone to help explain why I was feeling this way helpful. I found comfort in the warm welcome.”
- “I had a place for my feelings to go without being judged and helped me find some calm in the storm.”
- “Being in a comfortable environment using objects to describe emotions and feelings. Having an environment where you feel heard and respected knowing there’s full confidentiality.
- “How patient and kind everyone is and how they let you say it in their own time.”

Parent Feedback

- “Yes, ***** has found her smile again, she can talk about Dad without getting too sad or overwhelmed with emotion – we can now enjoy the memories. She understands that it’s good to talk about things and she can listen and understand nowadays. This is a fantastic service – doing amazing work”
- “She is more relaxed and doesn’t seem as angry and upset as she was and she openly tells her friends now that her Mum & Dad don’t live together anymore and that that’s ok too”
- “He is now speaking more openly about his grief and he knows his feelings are valid”
- “He is much better at verbalizing any issues or feelings he has. He doesn’t seem as scared of the idea of death.”
- “I notice she is, more open about her mother’s death and is speaking more about her and asking questions now.”

Governance

Children’s Grief Centre Board of Directors 2024

The Children’s Grief Centre CLG, founded in 2009, is a company incorporated under the Companies Act 2014 and is limited by guarantee. The Governance of The Children’s Grief Centre is conducted in accordance with its Constitution. The company is exempt from using the word "Limited" under Section 1180 of the Companies Act 2014.

The Children’s Grief Centre is governed and directed by members of the board which comprises of people with varied backgrounds and skill sets. Its function is to provide leadership, develop strategy, formulate policies, ensure good governance and financial controls. The board is made up of volunteers and are its trustees for the purposes of charity law.

The day-to-day operation of the charity is delegated by the board to the CEO Mairéad O’Keeffe. Mairéad was appointed to this role by the board in January 2024, members of the management team report to the CEO. The CEO is not a member of the board. At the end Dec 2024 the 12 staff were employed (1 full-time, 11 part-time) equating to a full-time staffing equivalent of 7.2 employees. Total salary costs for the year amounted to €329,589.

The board's commitment to governance is reflected in the emphasis on transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and in seeking value for money in all aspects of its work. The Children’s Grief Centre is fully compliant with the principles outlined in the Charity Regulators “Charities Governance Code”.

The board of The Children’s Grief Centre met on six occasions during 2024. Conflict of Interest is an agenda item for all Board Meetings and Board Members are asked to absent themselves in any item where they have an interest or potential conflict.

Composition of the Board and Board Appointments Process

Board Chairman: Mr Derek Walsh was appointed chairperson 27th Oct 2022
Company Secretary: Kevin Shine was appointed secretary 17th September 2024.

There were nine members of the Board of Trustees at the 31st Dec 2024. One third of the Directors appointed to the Board shall retire from office at the AGM and the Directors to retire in every year shall be those who have been longest in office since their last election. On appointment, all new board members attend an induction training session with the CEO. They receive an overview of the organisation as a whole and the various activities and services provided by it. They are briefed on their legal obligations under charity and company law and are provided with a copy of the company’s constitution. In addition, the role and responsibilities of a trustee are explained in detail. All board members must sign the Charities Code of Conduct declaration form confirming the trustees have read and agree to follow all Charity policies including: The “Conflict of Interest policy” to ensure the highest possible ethical standards are maintained. Trustees are also encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will assist the undertaking of their role.

Attendance at Board Meetings During 2024

There were 6 meetings of the Board during 2024.

Trustee Name		Date appointed/ (resigned)	Meetings Attended
Anne Comerford		20-Jan-20	5/6
Therese Barry		20-Jan-20	4/6
Elke Hayes		20-Jan-20	2/6
Caroline Keane		20-Jan-20	6/6
Derek Walsh (Chairperson)		14-Oct-20	6/6
Kevin Shine		11-May-21	4/6
Majella Murphy	Resigned 16/9/24	05-Oct-21	1/6
Paul Dennehy		05-Oct-21	5/6
Sinead Noonan	Joined 30/01/24	30-Jan-24	5/5
Maureen Noctor	Joined 13/03/24	13-Mar-24	4/4

Board Member Profiles are available on our website; <http://www.childrensgriefcentre.ie>

Board Remuneration and Pay Policy

Board members do not receive any remuneration in respect of their voluntary services to the charity.

Committees of the Board and Terms of Reference

There are four standing sub-committees of the board. All sub-committees have terms of reference which are reviewed and approved by the board. The chair of each sub-committee is appointed by the board. The following sub-committees are appointed by the Board to aid in the internal workings of The Children’s Grief Centre.

Finance Sub – Committee

The Finance Sub-Committee provides advice to the board and trustees on the financial health of the organisation and any remedial action necessary. It holds the finance staff accountable for discharge of their responsibilities, including compliance with external regulation. It will also undertake activities such as reviewing fundraising activities and reviewing banking arrangements.

Audit and Risk Sub-Committee

The Audit and Risk sub-committee review all matters affecting the finances of the organisation. This includes annual budgeting including capital expenditure, management accounts, the reserves policy, annual draft audited financial statements, special projects etc. The sub-committee engages with the independent external auditors on audit planning, audit and internal control issues and audit finalisation. The sub-committee monitors the effectiveness of the internal control systems. In addition, the Audit and Risk sub-committee coordinates the compilation and update of the risk register. It assesses the risks and makes recommendations to the board on strategies to minimise those risks. The board reviews the risk register and approves the ranking of the risks.

Fundraising Sub – Committee

This sub-committee is responsible for overseeing the fundraising activities of the organisation. It assesses the performance of the fundraising unit against predetermined targets.

HR Sub – Committee

To assist the Board and CEO in achieving its human resource obligations, thus ensuring that the Company can attract and retain a professional, motivated and competent workforce. The committee will review and make recommendations to the board for their review and approval on matters within their remit. To ensure the charity complies with the requirements of employment law and follows best practice in providing good working conditions for staff, including health and safety.

Performance & Impact

The Board of The Children’s Grief Centre is committed to building an organisation which is integrated, effective, outcome-driven, and accountable.

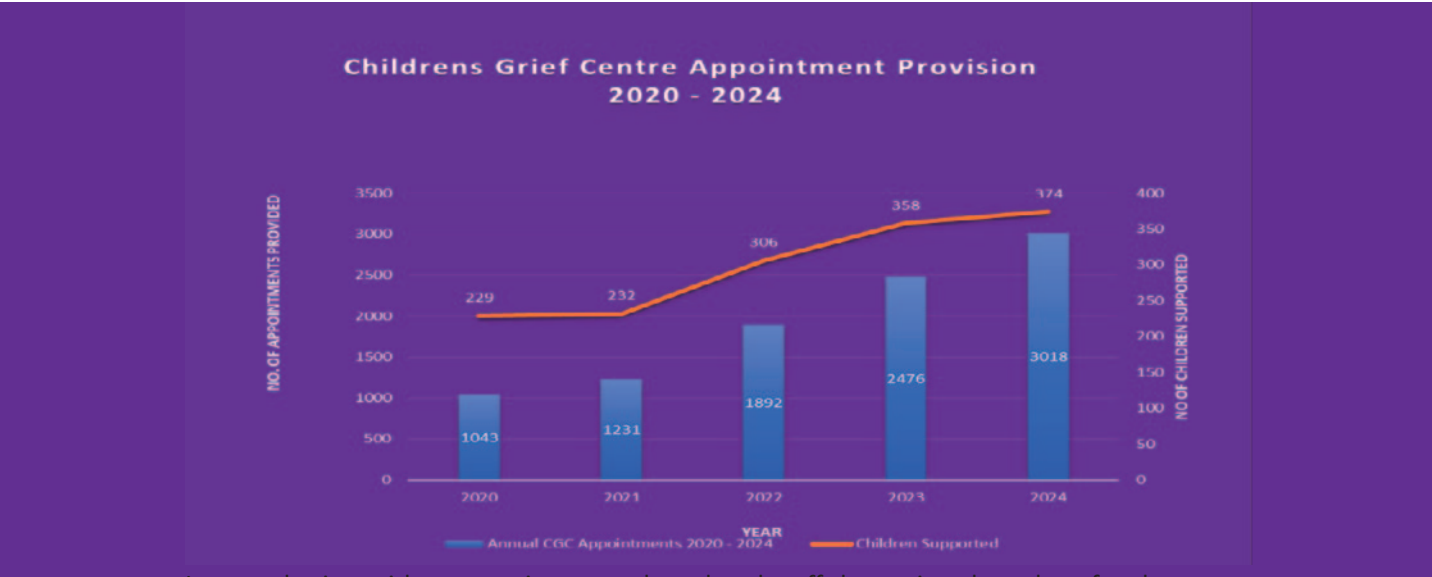
In 2024 we continued to build on the progress made in 2023 to ensure the continued expansion of services to grieving Children and their families.

12 Staff are currently employed by the centre 1 full-time and 11 part-time

The centre has reviewed its policies and procedures to ensure they are consistent with best practice and compliance with the requirements of the regulatory authorities.

The Children’s Grief Centre is fully compliant with the principles outlined in the Charity Regulators “Charities Governance Code”.

The centre supported 374 children in 2024 up from 358 in 2023 (increase of 4%) through the provision of 3018 support sessions. The number of Children attending our service since 2020 is graphed below along with the number of appointments offered.



In consultation with our service users, board and staff determine the values for the organisation by starting the process of a new Strategic plan for 2025 -2030

We have begun the process of developing our Strategy document for 2025 – 2030 whereby our staff and volunteers were consulted on their vision for the future of the centre. In a similar fashion the trustees have outlined their vision for the centre’s future and are in the process of appointing an external body to aid us in preparing a 5-year strategic plan which will set out the aspirations, objectives/ goals, governance and management arrangements for the coming years.

Increase the promotion of the work of The Children’s Grief Centre by advocating and highlighting the needs of the service users of the charity through representations, communication, P.R. and extended use of digital media.

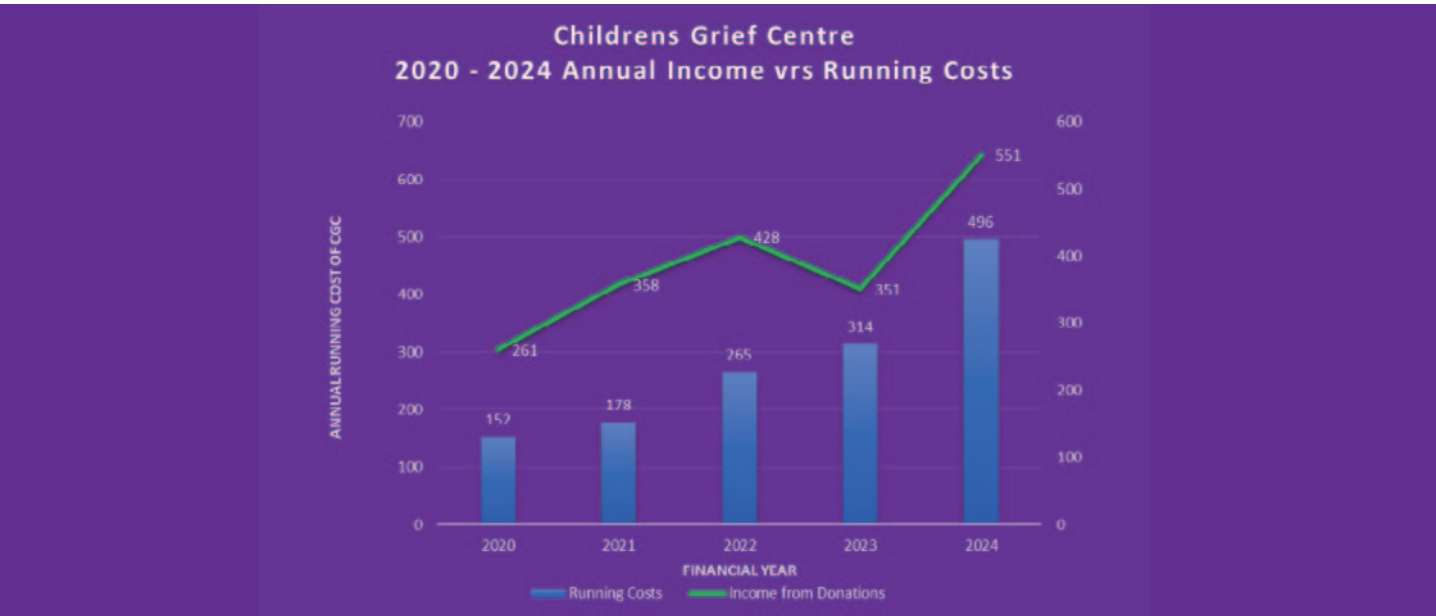
We continue to expand our use of social media in promoting our service.

We continue to raise awareness through our numerous fundraising activities (see Fundraising Section of this report).

The centre continues to provide educational outreach to schools and community agencies.

Intensify our efforts to obtain increased support from State funding and broadening and widening the funding base for the organisation.

2024 saw an increase in donations versus 2023. State support remained steady. Successful applications were made to Philanthropic organisations to secure medium-term funds covering the salaries of part-time support workers and the operating costs of the centre. Further short-term funding was secured to employ an additional 2 part-time support workers in 2024. 2024 Income totalled €551,729. (see Chart below detailing income received for the period from 2020 – 2024).



Continue with our high standards of transparency and governance as well as to maintain a financially stable organisation which is critical to delivering our Strategic Plan.

The Financial stability of the organisation is constantly under review and 2024 saw a review of the formal reserves policy to help the charity manage unforeseen financial difficulties and demonstrate its resilience. The reserves policy states that a reserve of €240k be maintained which equates to 6 months average expenditure. This reserve policy is reviewed by the board on an annual basis.

Financial Report (2024)

The Board of Directors present their Annual Report and the Audited Financial statements for The Financial Year Ended 31st December 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102". The Trustees report contains the information required to be provided in the Trustees' Annual report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines.

Financial Results

The surplus for the financial year amounted to €55,119. Total income for the 2024 was €551,658. This was a reduction of €455,636 in total income compared to 2023 when total income was €1,007,294, €648,000 of which was capital funding and €359,294 was operating income. Expenditure was €496,610 for the year an increase of €182,744 or 58% on 2023 expenditures of €313,866.

The increase in expenditure is explained by the appointment of a salaried CEO and the recruitment of additional support workers to meet the increasing demand for our grief support service.

Total Income	
2024 - €551,658	2023 - €1,007,294
Decrease of €455,636	
(Note : Once off funding received to pay Building Contractors €648m 2023 is included above)	

Funding

We continue to rely on a variety of income streams & in-kind donations to meet the costs of delivering our free support service.

The sourcing of sufficient funding for the centres day to day running costs and salaries remains one of the organisation's biggest challenges & risk factors. Our new premises with its additional support rooms allows us the opportunity to increase the number of support sessions available to grieving Children and reduce both the waiting list numbers and waiting times for those seeking support. To utilise some of this enhanced capacity, 2 additional part-time Support Workers have been employed following successful fundraising efforts in 2024.

The centre's full time support worker is jointly funded by Tusla Child and Family Agency and the Health Service Executive. Additional funding was also provided by the Limerick City & County Council to fund our part-time support worker position under the Social Intervention Fund.

Our volunteer support workers continued to give of their time and expertise greatly reducing the centre's running costs by allowing us to keep staff levels low.

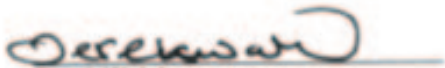
We employ the full-time equivalent of 7.3 staff. In addition to our full time CEO and 5 part time support workers the centre employs 2 part time administrators, 2 part time fundraisers, a part time finance officer and a part-time cleaner. Income received from fundraising events as well as individual and corporate donations are used in part to fund these positions, which are vital for the successful delivery of our service. Restricted funding is used only for the purpose for which it was granted.


Statement of Financial Activities

Children's Grief Centre CLG							
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES							
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)							
for the financial year ended 31 December 2024							
	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Restricted Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2024 €	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2023 €
Income							
Donations and legacies	3.1	350,999	77,916	428,915	248,003	707,037	955,040
Charitable activities							
- Grants from governments and other co-funders	3.2	30,104	92,639	122,743	-	52,009	52,009
Other trading activities	3.3	-	-	-	245	-	245
Investments	3.4	71	-	71	-	-	-
Total income		381,174	170,555	551,729	248,248	759,046	1,007,294
Expenditure							
Raising funds	4.1	11,430	-	11,430	6,487	-	6,487
Charitable activities	4.2	232,142	253,037	485,179	162,283	145,096	307,379
Total Expenditure		243,572	253,037	496,609	168,770	145,096	313,866
Net income/(expenditure)		137,602	(82,482)	55,120	79,478	613,950	693,428
Transfers between funds		135,113	(135,113)	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds for the financial year		272,715	(217,595)	55,120	79,478	613,950	693,428
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds beginning of the year	13	345,828	2,854,315	3,200,143	266,350	2,240,365	2,506,715
Total funds at the end of the year		618,543	2,636,720	3,255,263	345,828	2,854,315	3,200,143

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the financial year. All income and expenditure relate to continuing activities.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 22/1/2025 and signed on its behalf by:


Derek Walsh
Chairperson

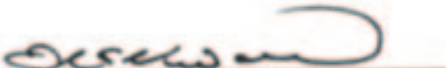

Kevin Shine
Trustee


Balance Sheet

Children's Grief Centre CLG			
BALANCE SHEET			
as at 31 December 2024			
	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets	8	2,638,373	2,701,329
Current Assets			
Cash at bank and in hand	9	666,772	561,145
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	10	(49,883)	(62,331)
Net Current Assets		616,889	498,814
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		3,255,262	3,200,143
Funds			
Restricted trust funds		2,636,719	2,854,315
General fund (unrestricted)		618,543	345,828
Total funds	13	3,255,262	3,200,143

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.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 22/1/2025 and signed on its behalf by:


Derek Walsh
Chairperson


Kevin Shine
Trustee

