

Childrens Grief Centre

# Annual Report 2019



**CHILDREN'S**  
GRIEF CENTRE

[www.childrensgriefcentre.ie](http://www.childrensgriefcentre.ie)



**CHILDREN'S**  
GRIEF CENTRE

# Welcome to our Annual Report 2019

Supporting children and young people affected  
loss through death, parental separation and divo

SECTION 1	
01   WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR	4
02   DIRECTORS WELCOME	5
03   MISSION OF THE CHILDRENS GRIEF CENTRE	6
04   ABOUT US	7
05   TESTIMONIALS	8 - 10
06   THE FIRST 10 YEARS	11
SECTION 2	
07   FUNDRAISING REPORT	12- 17
08   OUR DREAM BUILD	18
09   OLIVE FOLEY	19
10   RADIO AND TV SHOWS	20
11   NEWSPAPERS	21
12   CHILDREN AND LOSS CONFERENCE	22-23
SECTION 3	
13   SCHOOL WORKSHOP PROGRAMME	24
14   WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES	25
SECTION 4	
15   ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE IN 2019	26-27
16   GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND FUNDING	28 -29
17   FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	30 - 33
18   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	34



# WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

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I am acutely aware as we are preparing this report in the early part of 2020, that throughout Ireland many children and young people are suffering bereavement, losing beloved grandparents and parents to the Covid-19 pandemic. And our sense of helplessness, in the face of their grief and loss, is increased by the necessary closure of our on-site services. Nevertheless, we live in hope of better times and continue to plan for the reopening of our services at the earliest opportunity.

## **Looking back on 2019, the Children's Grief Centre continued to develop.**

- During the past year, 220 children and young people attended for a total of 1,080 individual sessions with their respective Support Workers.
- We secured funding from the HSE, Tusla and Limerick City & County Council for 1.5 full-time equivalent support worker posts.
- In June, to celebrate our 10th anniversary, we held a very well-attended Children and Loss Conference.
- Considerable progress has been made by Seamus O'Brien, our Treasurer, in transitioning the Centre towards Limited Company status.
- We continue to work towards full compliance with the Charities Governance Code.
- Our fundraising capacity has developed strongly on the back of our Director's media profile, the input of our outstanding Ambassador, Olive Foley, and the sterling work of our dynamic part-time Fundraising and Events Coordinator, Katrina Morgan.

## **We face a number of challenges**

- As we begin to outgrow the capacity of our present home in one wing of Westbourne Convent, we continue to seek an alternative location for new and more spacious premises. This, we hope, will enable us to expand our service and reduce the waiting times for children and their families.
- The estimates for a new building on a new site are in the region of €2 million.
- The transition to Limited Company status will raise the bar for our Committee members, who will become Directors of the new company. It will also entail leaving the protective shelter of the Mercy Sisters, without whom the Centre could not have survived to date.

## **We are determined to continue the development of our services, confident:**

- In our dedicated staff team: administrators, support workers, fund-raiser, schools outreach coordinator and housekeeper, ably led by the example and experience of our Director, Sr Helen Culhane RSM.
- In our extraordinary group of Volunteers, support workers, fund-raisers, and what-can-we-do-next-to-help, Jack-of-all-Trades supporters.
- In our wonderfully charismatic Ambassador, Olive Foley.
- In our Management Committee of all the talents.
- And, last but not least, in our children, young people and their families, for whom and with whom we know that failure is not an option.



# DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

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2019 has been a very special year for the Children's Grief Centre as we celebrated 10 years since our foundation. We marked the occasion by holding a conference on the 14<sup>th</sup> June. Daniel McConnell of the Irish Examiner, and Dr. Elizabeth Nixon, Trinity College, were the keynote speakers. The conference gave us the opportunity to acknowledge the significant level of support the Centre received throughout the years from our Board of Management and Volunteers. I extend our appreciation to the Sisters of Mercy from the South Central Province for their support in so many areas of the work of the Centre.

A special word of thanks to Sr. Peggy Collins. We would not have come this far without her vision, inspiration and guidance. We would not have been able to accomplish so much without this collective effort.

With only one full-time support worker and six-part time staff, a considerable amount of work was achieved by the Children's Grief Centre in 2019. I would like to thank our wonderful staff and volunteers who each day bring their talents and commitment to furthering our mission, which would not be possible without the support of our families and fundraising events. I thank Olive Foley our Ambassador for her dedication to supporting our work.

It's an exciting time for the Children's Grief Centre as we continue to grow and develop our service. The ongoing success of the Centre means that we have a waiting list of children and young people wanting to avail of the Centre's services. The next few years will present many opportunities for us to build upon the success and positive outcomes from our work over the last ten years.

We in the Children's Grief Centre will continue our work in providing support, reassurance, comfort and hope to the substantial number of children, young people and their parents who are suffering and grieving as a result of death, separation and divorce.



Helen Culhane  
Director

# MISSION OF THE CHILDREN'S GRIEF CENTRE

Our mission is to provide support for school-aged children and young people affected by loss through death, separation or divorce. We offer a safe and supportive place for children and young people and their families who are grieving. The service is provided by trained and experienced people.

## Our Aim

Children are given the opportunity to look at feelings associated with loss and learn that they are not alone. We aim to help children to overcome the obstacles that prevent them from leading full lives. In addition, the Children's Grief Centre strives to educate the community that grieving is an important part of life and is essential to an individual's ongoing growth and development.

## A Unique Service

The experiences of children and young people going through difficult life episodes is different to that of adults. This requires a different set of responses, such as those provided by our service.

## OUR VALUES

### Caring through Listening

We give children a space to talk, share, ask questions and explore their emotions.

### Safety

Our support service is a safe place that helps children feel calm, secure and welcomed.

### Non-judgemental

Our role is never to judge, sway opinion or arbitrate between parents. We are here solely for the children.

### Acceptance

We work with children across all backgrounds, cultures and religions.

### Teamwork

We have a team of professionals with a combination of skills and qualifications.

## ABOUT THE CHILDREN'S GRIEF CENTRE

The Children's Grief Centre was established in Limerick in 2009 by Sr. Helen Culhane. The mission of the Centre is to provide support to children and young people (aged 4 - 18 ), affected by loss through death, separation, or divorce. The Centre primarily serves the mid-west region (Limerick, Tipperary and Clare), but has also seen children from counties Dublin, Kildare, Cork and Galway.

The Centre provides a space and place for children to explore their experiences of loss associated with bereavement and parental separation. Sr. Helen, a full-time volunteer at the Centre, works as its Director alongside one full-time and one part-time paid support worker. Together with six other trained and experienced volunteer support workers, they provide one-to-one sessions for children and young people. All support workers are qualified and experienced in relevant disciplines (teaching, art/play therapy, psychotherapy and counselling).

Children and young people's expression of feelings is facilitated in a number of ways appropriate to their age, developmental stage and wishes. Listening is key, but much use is made of creative play, paint, music, workbooks, clay, games, and storybooks. On average, children attend for six sessions, although this varies, depending upon the complexity of the case and the individual needs of the child. The children are invited back for a follow-up three months after the final session.

In addition to direct work with children and families, the Centre provides, on request, workshops to schools and community groups in order to provide education and information about children's experience of grief and loss.

Our current premises, provided by the Sisters of Mercy, are located in a beautiful site on Ashbourne Avenue in Limerick city. But, given their space limitations, and the increasing numbers on our waiting list, it is now critical that we acquire larger premises so that we can continue to support the children and young people who need our services.

A fundraising drive is underway to raise funds to acquire and equip new premises. You can read more about events organised by our Fundraising and Events Co-ordinator, Katrina Morgan, along with other volunteer members of the Centre's Fundraising Committee, in this Report.

### Presentation to Sr. Peggy Collins



Katrina Morgan, CGC, Sr. Clare Gunning, Sr. Peggy Collins, Provincial Leader, Sr. Helen Culhane, Centre Director, Anne English, CGC, Theresa Kavanagh, CGC, Sr. Mary Margaret Costigan and Sr. Frances Minahan

# TESTIMONIALS

Children and their parents are invited to complete a brief questionnaire after the final session with the Support Worker. Here is a selection of their responses during 2019:

**When asked 'what did you find helpful?' children responded:**

- Help for my sadness and grief. (10 year old).
- Talking (12 year old).
- They let me talk about how I felt and didn't judge me for anything I said. They always gave me useful and helpful feedback that helped me feel better (17 year old).

**When asked 'did the sessions make any difference?' children responded:**

- I'm not as sad as I was and I learned how to handle my grief (11 year old).
- It helped me feel better about my dad and my own mental health improved. It's very comforting to come here knowing I can say how I feel and not be judged. Definitely they helped me feel more at peace with myself relating to my dad and has helped me have a better relationship with my friends, family and girlfriend (17 year old).

**When asked 'what did you find helpful?' parents responded:**

- [Support Worker] worked with me and my son to help improve our relationship and help us as a family deal with a major loss in our home. Texting to remind you there is an appointment is brilliant.
- I have noticed he chats to me more than what he done before we started. He seems a lot calmer and less uptight since we started.
- Tom had a place to go and talk about his feelings. He became a different person after a few sessions and was easier to talk to.
- The sessions were spaced out well. Every two weeks is ideal as it gave him a chance to process his thinking and feelings between sessions.
- He is more sociable, more talkative, and not as short tempered as he was. He was able to attend a family funeral during the week, which was something that he wouldn't have done before

**They let me talk about how I felt and didn't judge me for anything I said. They always gave me useful and helpful feedback that helped me feel better**

**(17 year old)**



#### LETTER FROM A PARENT TO THE CHILDREN'S GRIEF CENTRE

We are very grateful to everyone at the Children's Grief Centre for all the kindness, compassion and support that was shown to us when one of our sons was finding it difficult to cope with adjusting to the changes in our family life during our separation. It was a great comfort to have such a warm and friendly space to visit regularly and to feel safe in talking about anything that was bothering him.

From the first time he met [support worker] he really enjoyed having the full attention of someone he knew was there to listen to him, whilst equally enjoying friendly chats and lots of time to play and create with the toys, and the sensory and art materials provided. Over our visits to the Centre it felt like a very safe time out from an otherwise uncertain and hectic world. Equally for me it was always a pleasure to visit. There was never any judgement, despite my own regret that our separation had caused our son distress.

All the staff welcomed us warmly and the whole Centre offers a comforting place to spend more time. The sessions really seem to have benefitted him and helped him to feel more positive about how life is going for us and how to manage when things feel difficult. This Centre is unique in its warmth and welcome for children and is an invaluable service for the many families who have benefitted from the fantastic support from this caring team.

Thank you all.  
Parent





### MY EXPERIENCE AS A VOLUNTEER SUPPORT WORKER IN THE CHILDREN'S GRIEF CENTRE

At the tender age of ten I became an orphan. Back then the adage "Children were seen not heard" was the order of the day. My parents' death was not mentioned and that was that. My siblings and I trundled along but not without some seriously confusing, bewildering and difficult times. I trained and worked as a nurse and in later years as a psychotherapist. I was acutely aware and fascinated by the work Sr Helen was doing in the Children's Grief Centre and when I retired, I was delighted to be accepted as a volunteer.

Environment is everything. When a child is bereaved by the death of a loved one, or by their parents' separation and divorce, it is devastating. Shock, fear, anger, confusion, bewilderment and unutterable sadness. To have an environment where these feelings are given space to be expressed is just ESSENTIAL.

Through the medium of play, art, music and storytelling the children gradually find the resources within themselves to cope with their new reality, and they do. I have seen it many times. Undivided one to one attention. This is what the Children's Grief Centre provides to each child. Every single member of the team is totally focused on the children. Without exception, they are the most generous warm and loving team. The children feel it the minute they come in the door. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". The Children's Grief Centre is a haven for the children and to work with them is one of the greatest privileges of my life.

Ita Hannan  
Volunteer Support Worker

**Volunteers make an immense and invaluable contribution to the operation of the Children's Grief Centre by supporting children/young people on a one to one basis, or helping our administration staff, or offering professional knowledge and serving on our Board of Management**



## THE CHILDREN'S GRIEF CENTRE

# THE FIRST 10 YEARS: 2009-2019

The Foundation of the Centre, formerly known as the Children's Grief Project, by Sr. Helen Culhane with the support of the Sisters of Mercy in two rooms at Mount St. Vincent, located on O'Connell Avenue in Limerick

## 2009

As the number of children referred to the Project continues to grow, the need to recruit volunteers became evident. A number of volunteer support workers with relevant qualifications & experience joined the Project undertaking direct work with individual children for specified hours per week under Helen's direction.

## 2010

116 children were referred to the Project in 2011, of whom 96 came from Limerick, 13 from Tipperary and 7 from Clare. Sr. Maura Flanagan RSM and Cathy Brennan began working at the Project as volunteer administrators.

## 2011

More than 130 children attended over 900 sessions. An attractive website and a Facebook page was developed. Work on a constitution began and a Board of Management was formed.

## 2012

107 Children were worked with in over 450 hours by the Project leader & Support Workers. A new part time secretary, Gemma Kilcoyne started & in September the Project moved to its new premises in Westbourne Convent. The first meeting of the newly appointed board of Management was held & The Project was also formerly registered as a charity in September.

## 2013

150 new referrals were made to the Project in 2014, an increase of 50% on 2013. Training began for Board members on the Governance Code and Data Protection legislation. Support Workers attended training in Safeguarding. A new fundraising committee was established which included Majella O'Connell, Betty Walsh & Michelle Walsh.

## 2014

Over 140 children were referred for support. The Project leader continued to provide educational outreach and workshops to schools & community agencies. Experienced administrator, Ann Keane was employed part time and our housekeeper, Geraldine Hannan also joined the Project.

## 2015

The Project Leader re-titled as the Director and the volunteer support workers delivered 597 one-to-one contact hours with 180 children. Fiona Brosnan joined the Fundraising Committee and developed an attractive information pack. Caroline Keane, Vicki Lynch, Fiona Brosnan & Anne Comerford joined the Board of Management. The Project was re-named the Children's Grief Centre. Anne English was appointed as part-time administrator.

## 2016

188 children received support, the majority (138) being from Limerick City & County. The Centre embarked on a strategic planning process culminating in the production of a 2018-2023 Strategic Plan written by Stephen O'Rourke, a management consultant. The Centre received an award of €25,000 from Social Innovation Fund, Ireland.

## 2017

3 new staff members were appointed. Helen McLnerney as administrator, Theresa Kavanagh as a full-time support worker and Katrina Morgan as a part-time Events & Fundraising Coordinator. With funding from the Social Innovation Fund, we were able to produce a Business Plan 2018-2022. 2018 also saw Olive Foley, widow of the late Anthony Foley, honoured the Centre by agreeing to become its first Ambassador.

## 2018

2019 saw a marked increase in referrals of children from all over the mid-west area. To assist in meeting the growing demand on our services, Ciara Ni Nuallain was recruited as a part-time Support Worker. The Children's Grief Centre was 10 years old in 2019. To mark the occasion, a very well-attended Children and Loss Conference was held in the Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) on 14<sup>th</sup> June.

## 2019



# FUNDRAISING REPORT

## WITH YOUR HELP WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO MUCH



2019 was a very successful year in fundraising for the Children's Grief Centre and this was only made possible by the generosity of our key stakeholders, private donors, corporate partners, individuals who took part in our events and those who organised events on our behalf. Your generosity directly contributed towards the continuation of our service and to our future expansion plans. We are an essential service that has a proven and long lasting impact on the lives of children, young people and their families and the local and wider community.

Our full-time and part-time Support Worker are gratefully funded by Tusla - The Child & Family Agency, the HSE and Limerick City and County Council under the Social Intervention Fund. We would also like to acknowledge the support of the DCYA and CYPSC for their support of our Children and Loss Conference in 2019. Thanks to the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters and the Irish Youth Foundation for their continued support of our work.



CONGREGATION OF THE  
SISTERS OF MERCY



Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae Luimnigh  
Limerick City  
& County Council



IRISH YOUTH  
FOUNDATION



CONRAD N. HILTON  
FUND FOR SISTERS



An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Ónólaí Óige  
Department of  
Children and Youth Affairs



# FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Thanks to the management, staff and fundraising committee at Brown Thomas who supported us with so many events. The 'Gifting Bear' initiative saw local children donate their teddies for a special window display and the teddies were kindly donated to the Centre.

## Brown Thomas Limerick Charity Partner 2019



## Rigney's Farm Cycle



Thanks to Caroline and Joe Rigney for the wonderful welcome and for organising such a successful event. Special thanks to Team Adare Cycling Club and to all the participants.

## Salesian Cycle Challenge



The 2nd Annual Salesian Cycle took place in April 2019. Staff, students, parents and many volunteers from Salesian Secondary College in Pallaskenry worked together to raise funds for the Children's Grief Centre. Thanks to 'The Hub' for their support and to all the sponsors who so kindly donated to this event.

## Limerick Lions Club



A special event in our fundraising calendar, the annual 'Seven Bridges' – Gerry McKeown Memorial Walk was enjoyed by many of our staff, volunteers and friends of the centre. Thanks to the Limerick Lions Club for inviting us to be part of this great day out.

## Christmas Fair



Thanks to Sr. Mary Ahern who organised a wonderful Christmas Fair to raise funds for the Children's Grief Centre. We appreciate all of the hard work and time that went into planning this event.

# FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS



## Run for Liam & Regeneron Great Limerick Run

Run for Liam saw over 500 participants run and walk to raise funds for the Children's Grief Centre in memory of Liam Ryan who sadly died in August 2018. Our thanks to the Ryan and Shine family for giving hope to so many other families and for raising awareness of our service. Thanks to the great number of family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues who supported their fundraising efforts. Your gift to us will change lives. Special thanks also to Stephanie and Pat O'Loughlin and Diane Banville who took part in the GLR to raise funds for their loved ones who have sadly died.

## Pre-Qualifier - JP McManus Pro-Am 2021

On September 13<sup>th</sup> 200 golfers took part in our Pre-Qualifier for the JP McManus Pro-Am. A wonderful day in the sunshine of the beautiful Adare Manor Golf Club, thanks to all the participants and sponsors of this event. Special thanks to Mary Fagan who worked so hard to make this event a success. Best of luck to the winning players who go forward to the Grand Qualifier in 2021, Jamie Simmons, Jack Counihan and Ger Beatty.





# FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS



## May Ball in aid of Children's Grief Centre

Our wonderful Ambassador, Olive Foley organised the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual May Ball to raise funds for the Centre. The ball took place at the Lakeside Hotel in Killaloe and was supported very generously by the local community. Thanks to all the companies and artists who gave so kindly to help make this event a success.



## 'Abseil with Angela'

Angela Collins O'Mahony, Ireland's first female steeplejack took on the challenge of abseiling down Thomond Park to raise funds for the Children's Grief Centre and the Redemptorists Christmas Hamper Appeal. This joint fundraising venture was enjoyed and supported by over 100 generous individuals who braved the cold and heights to support our work. Thanks to Angela, Susan and all at Collins Steeplejacks for sponsoring this wonderful event.



## Mary Cremin Memorial Fashion Show

Friends and family of the late Mary Cremins organised a Gala Fashion Show in memory of Mary and to raise funds for the Children's Grief Centre. Special thanks to Mary's husband Morris and son Patrick for choosing the centre as the beneficiary of this event. Thanks to the organising committee who ensured a fantastic night for all who attended.



# LIVE 95'S HELPING LIMERICK CHILDREN CHARITY DRIVE 2019

The Children's Grief Centre was delighted to be part of the exciting initiative Live 95 Helping Limerick Children in 2019. This raised funds and increased awareness around Limerick City & County for the charities involved which included CARI and Cliona's Foundation.

After a series of events and promotional activities the Live 95 team presented us with a substantial cheque of €32,245 which will contribute towards our *New Build Fund*. We thank all those involved for their generosity and kindness and for the opportunity to be part of this special fundraising project. Thanks to all the sponsors who gave so kindly to each and every event, and to all those who attended these events.





# THANK YOU

2019 demonstrated yet again, the wonderful support the Children's Grief Centre receives from so many. This support is not only appreciated by the charity but the families who benefited from our service throughout the year. In 2019, we raised €375,918. This incredible support allows us to operate the Children's Grief Centre and assists us greatly as we look to fund the development of a purpose-built Children's Grief Centre.



## SPONSORS & DONORS

**We would like to give a very special mention to our main corporate supporters in 2019 for their incredible generosity and commitment.**

**Dell EMC | Beckman Coulter | JP McManus Charitable Foundation | Men's Club at Adare Manor with the support of Gabriel Cosgrove**

**Thanks to all the sponsors who gave so kindly to each and every event and to all those who attended them.**

Alex Hoffler | Anne Dwyer | Askeaton Residents Association | Barbara's Bootcamps | Benevity – Apple Inc. | Bobby Byrnes | Bon Secours Limerick | Brian Draper Vintage Car Club | Carcom | Chemstore | Ciara & Mike Holland | Clarina Mother & Toddler Group | Cllr Eleanora Hogan | Clonlara Creche | Colaiste Na Trocaire | Cook Medical | Crenelle Consulting | Dandestean Ltd. | Deloitte

|Diocese of Limerick | East Clare Gaels| East Clare Ladies Golf Club| El Electronics| Elaine Gleeson | EPS | Euronet | Figaro's Barbers | Fleming Medical | Gaelscoil Aonach Urmhumhan | Gaelcolaiste Luimnigh | Gaelcolaiste Laurel Hill| Hacketts |I Love Limerick | Irish Wire Products| Kate Yeung & Family| Kay's Hair Salon | Killaloe River Cruises | Killoughteen NS | Laura Byrne - VHI Marathon |LCETB |Leatrans

|Leon Andersen | Limerick Bar Association| Limerick Gospel Choir |Limerick Leader | Limerick Patchwork Society |Limerick Post | Limerick Shannon Rotary Club | Little Company of Mary | Lucas Finn Consulting Ltd. | Lucy McInnes | Luigi's Restaurant | McDermott's Garage | Mercy Congregation South Central Province | Mike Carmody - Shanagolden Memorial Walk | Myles Breen Bar | Newcastlewest Sports & Social Club | Northern Trust | Pike Rovers RFC – Mike Murphy Memorial Tournament | Plaza Cafe | Punch Consulting Ltd | Radisson Blu Hotel | Redemptorists | Rexel Industrial Solutions | Ripplecom | Robert Hourigan| Roisin Cahalan & Family | Savoy Hotel | Seanchóill Sports Complex | Sr. Mary Ahern - Christmas Fair | St. Augustine's Church | St. Fintan's Boys NS | St. Nessans NS | Stephanie O'Loughlin & Family - GLR| Stephen Kinsella| Supervalu |Techno Path Manufacturing Ltd. | Tesco Ireland | The Fruit People



## OUR DREAM BUILD

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Pursuing a dream is hard work. From humble beginnings, the Children's Grief Centre has grown steadily over the past ten years. This was achieved by the diligence, resolve, enthusiasm, dedication and professionalism of all those who have worked and continue to work in the Centre.

The Children's Grief Centre is now at the stage of looking to implement a more permanent and sustainable premises for the future. As well as improving the physical size of the building, new plans will create a more stimulating environment for children and young people. The new Centre will accommodate an art room, a volcano room and a splatter paint room.

Our Dream Build is based on a Bereavement Support Service in Oregon called the Doughy Centre. Helen (our Director) visited the Centre in July 2019. Plans for a purpose-built Centre have been drawn up, with estimated costs in the region of two million euros. 2019 marked the start of phase one of a planned new campaign to raise funds for our new premises. Our new building will allow us to grow and expand and continue to provide support to children, young people, parents, organisations and communities affected by loss.

We are extremely thankful to our fundraising committee, our corporate and business supporters, the Sisters of Mercy from the South Central Province, funders, members of the public, schools, colleges, community groups and volunteers who have all contributed towards our dream build. This dream would not be possible without the involvement and goodwill of the many people who have shared the journey with us. We look forward enthusiastically to the next ten years!

**Theresa Kavanagh**  
Support Worker



OLIVE FOLEY

CHILDREN’S GRIEF CENTRE AMBASSADOR



Olive Foley

*ensure that more and more children get the same light shone on them during their darkest hours.*



When invited to be Ambassador for the Children’s Grief Centre by Sr. Helen I was honoured to be able to represent the charity. The Children’s Grief Centre is very close to my heart. After losing my husband suddenly in October 2016, giving my children the best support possible at this time was an absolute priority. I was put in touch with Sr. Helen at the Children’s Grief Centre and from the very first time I brought my two boys in, I experienced empathy, understanding and compassion.

The Children’s Grief Centre has helped my children and those of countless other families deal with and process the sudden loss of a loved one or the break-up of their parents. It is my privilege and honour to come on board as an Ambassador, to do whatever I can to support this amazing Centre.

In my role as an Ambassador, I hope to help raise awareness of the incredible work done by Sr. Helen and her team.



Olive Foley, Children’s Grief Centre Ambassador appearing with the Centre Director, Helen Culhane on Maura & Daithí’s RTÉ Today TV show to talk about the Centre’s support services and the upcoming Children & Loss Conference 2019



# HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

## RADIO & TV SHOWS



### MARCH

Helen Culhane, Centre Director was interviewed by the late Marian Finucane on RTÉ Radio 1 show to talk about her journey through life up to and including the foundation of the Children's Grief Centre.



### MAY

Helen Culhane appeared with Olive Foley, Ambassador to the Children's Grief Centre on RTÉ Today's TV show to talk about the Centre's support services and the upcoming Children & Loss Conference 2019.



### ALSO IN MAY

Helen was interviewed by Clare FM's Gavin Grace to discuss her inspiration for setting up the Children's Grief Centre in 2009. Helen also talked about the Centre's upcoming Children and Loss Conference 2019 to take place at LIT's Millennium Theatre in June as part of its 10 year anniversary celebration.



### JUNE

RTÉ Radio One Drivetime reporter, Grainne McPolin reported from the Children & Loss Conference 2019 at LIT's Millennium Theatre in Limerick on the issue of separation and divorce and it's impact on children. Grainne interviewed parents and professionals who attended the conference and also spoke to Daniel McConnell, Irish Examiner's Political Editor, a keynote speaker at the conference



### THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Helen Culhane and other members of the team were interviewed on numerous occasions by Limerick's premium radio broadcaster, Limerick's Live 95's Joe Nash. Joe has been a long-time supporter of the Centre and for this we are very grateful. Thank you Joe!





## NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

The publication in the Irish Examiner of Daniel McConnell's article titled 'Every child has a right to be heard' in February 2018 brought to light the impact on children & young people who have lost a parent either through death or as a result of their parent's separating. Daniel wrote the article after hearing Helen being interviewed by Sean O'Rourke on RTÉ radio 1 morning show. Daniel, a friend and supporter of the Centre agreed to be one of two keynote speaker's at the Centre's Children & Loss Conference in June this year.

An article titled 'Helping children to cope with separation and grief' by Sheila Wayman was published in the Irish Times on the 29th May. This article, which featured Sr. Helen Culhane talked about how the Centre offers support to children and their families through a difficult time in their lives following bereavement and loss.

The Children's Grief Centre has been supported by the Limerick Leader with articles appearing in both print and online by veteran reporter, Donal O'Regan over many years and 2019 was no different. We would like to thank Donal for his continuing support which has helped to highlight what we do and help raise funds for the Centre's New Build Campaign.



# CHILDREN AND LOSS CONFERENCE

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To celebrate our 10th anniversary we hosted our first conference titled 'Children and Loss' on Friday 14th June, 2019 in The Millennium Theatre, Limerick Institute of Technology.

The theme of the conference focused on supporting children through loss following parental separation, divorce or bereavement. Keynote speakers included Dr Liz Nixon, Trinity College and Daniel McConnell, Political Editor, Irish Examiner. Other contributors included Jennifer Moran Stritch, Director of Loss & Grief Research Group, LIT; Dr. Elke Hayes, Lecturer, Mary Immaculate College; alongside the Centre's Director, Helen Culhane, Rebecca Lloyd, Schools coordinator and Theresa Kavanagh, Support Worker. Niamh Hourigan, Sociologist & Vice President of Academic Affairs at Mary Immaculate College gave the closing speech and facilitated the open panel discussion on the day.

Attendees were offered the opportunity to explore the latest thinking and research on children's experience of loss through death, separation or divorce. This was facilitated by presentations from our two keynote speakers, Daniel McConnell & Dr. Elizabeth Nixon and through workshops by our expert panel members.

Olive Foley, the Centre's Ambassador performed the role of moderator at our conference and has played a huge role in platforming our mission and publicizing what we do. Her valuable support has played a huge part raising public awareness around children's experience of loss and grief for which we are very grateful.

The Children and Loss Conference 2019 was recognized for a Shannon Region Ambassador Award by the Shannon Region Conference & Sports Bureau in December at a gala ceremony at the prestigious Dromoland Castle in Co. Clare. The event held in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, recognizes the value of local ambassadors in attracting large conferences and events to the region. The Centre sincerely thanks Karen Brosnahan, General Manager of the Shannon Region Conference and Sports Bureau who nominated the Children's Grief Centre for this special award in recognition of efforts by the Centre to provide support to children who have experienced loss and grief. The conference was partly supported by funding from Tusla's Children and Young Person's Services Committee (CYPSC Limerick) and from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs' Quality & Capacity Building Initiative (QCBI Network Support Grants Scheme) which was very much appreciated.



# CONFERENCE DAY

## PHOTOS



Helen Culhane, Children's Grief Centre Director with Conference keynote speakers, Daniel McConnell, Political Editor, Irish Examiner and Dr Elizabeth Nixon, Assistant Professor, Trinity College Dublin.



Philip Mortell, Chair, Board of Management presenting an award to Centre Director, Helen Culhane in celebration of the Centre's 10 year anniversary



Rebecca Lloyd, CGC's Schools' Workshop Coordinator Olive Foley, CGC Ambassador with Dr Niamh Hourigan, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. Dr Hourigan gave the closing speech and facilitated the conference open panel discussion & audience questions.



The Centre's Fundraising & Events' Coordinator, Katrina Morgan with Centre volunteers, Michelle Walsh, Carol Fitz-Gough along with volunteers from Dell Ireland who helped out on the day.



Ita Hannan and Mary Browne, Children's Grief Centre support workers with friend and supporter, Sr Geraldine Lennon



Theresa Kavanagh, CGC Support Worker facilitated a workshop for parents on supporting children following separation and divorce. Also pictured is Elke Hayes, CGC Board member and workshop facilitator

# SCHOOLS WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

Our schools workshop programme was devised to offer support to teachers within the school environment around how best to support children who have experienced loss and grief in their lives. Evaluations carried out by the Centre reveal that despite a strong likelihood of children encountering loss and grief in their primary years, it is clear that many teachers feel poorly equipped and lack the training and motivation to feel confident in responding to dying, death, loss and bereavement in the school setting. Teachers spoke about children's loss-related experiences, including divorce, terminal illness, and death. They indicated that the great challenge for them is their ability to meet the needs of grieving children.

A pilot course which began in 2018 was developed by Rebecca Lloyd, our School's workshop Coordinator, using resources from The Children's Grief Centre, the Irish Childhood Bereavement Network (ICBN), the Children's Bereavement Network (CBN), Winston's Wish, and a review of literature on the subject. Workshops offered to groups of teachers in 2019 included basic concepts of children's grief and best practice for communicating with children experiencing loss. Teachers were encouraged to interact throughout the two-hour workshop with each other and with Rebecca. During 2019, a total of seven workshops were offered to schools in Counties Clare, Limerick and Offaly.

**FEEDBACK FROM TEACHERS SHOWED THAT OVER 90% OF TEACHERS FOUND THE TRAINING EXTREMELY USEFUL OR VERY USEFUL. MOST HELPFUL WAS LEARNING THE IMPORTANCE OF USING THE CORRECT LANGUAGE AROUND DEATH, AND THE DIFFERENT WAYS CHILDREN GRIEVE ACCORDING TO THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL AGE.**



Olive Foley, Ambassador and Rebecca Lloyd, Schools' Workshop Coordinator



# WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES 2019

The Children's Grief Centre offered a number of workshops during 2019. In keeping with the Centre's stated strategic goal of **developing and enhancing understanding and awareness in the wider community about the effects and impact of loss and grief on children and young people**. The workshops outlined below, form part of the Centre's education and awareness programme. These workshops featured themes around children's experience of grief and loss. They provided training and support sessions for professionals, parents or guardians of children and young people experiencing pain and suffering as a result of loss in their young lives.

We continued our relationship with Mary Immaculate College, participating in the B.A.Ed. in Primary Teaching Undergraduate Degree Programme. Helen Culhane gave a series of lectures to the students and organised site visits to the Centre, facilitating an on-site question and answer session.

## Workshops 2019

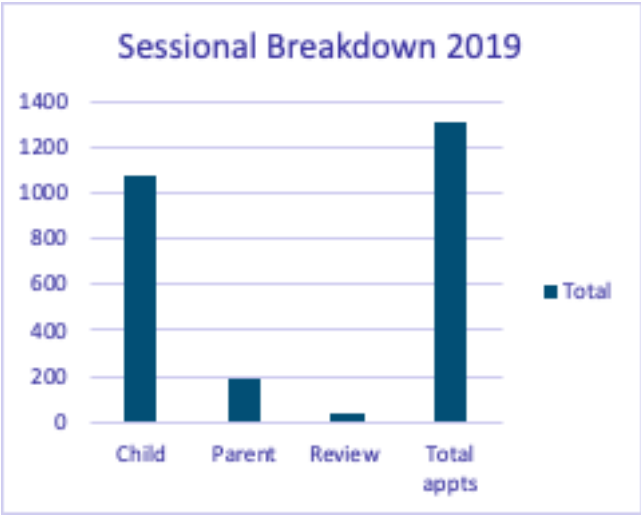
Irish Hospice Foundation, Professional Certificate in Children and Loss | PDST-Professional Development Service for Teachers | Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) | Silvermines Church, Tipperary | Killmallock Church | Mountmellick Community School | Limerick Prison | Children's Disability Network Services | Crescent College Comprehensive | Mary Immaculate Students | Milford Care Centre | Mary Immaculate College: International Conference on Play and Voice in Education | AMRI Conference | Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board | Healthcare Chaplains | University Hospital Limerick | Our Lady Queen of Peace, Janesboro.



# ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE IN 2019

■ The highlights of our performance during the year 2019 are summarized below.

- In 2019 we gave support to 220 children aged between 4 and 18 years. This one-to-one work involves an average of 6 sessions.
- We worked with the parents / guardians so that they had a better understanding of the impact which bereavement or separation /divorce had upon their children.
- There were 1,080 child appointments and 185 parent appointments, plus 42 review appointments for the year, giving a total of 1307 appointments.
- For each 1 hourly session offered to children/parents, staff and volunteers gave an additional administrative hour per session. This amounted to a total of 1307 hours worked by staff and volunteers.
- 71% of the families that attended were from limerick city and county; 15% from Co. Clare; 10% from Co. Tipperary; and the remaining 5% from counties, Cork, Galway, Offaly and Kildare.
- The vast majority of our children are direct referrals from parents/ guardians on the recommendation of a GP, CAMHS, (HSE child and adolescent mental health service) or their school.
- We organised 7 workshops for schools in the Mid-West region and beyond as part of our Schools’ Outreach programme.
- In part fulfilment of our strategic goal of raising the public’s awareness around children’s experience of loss and grief, we organised or participated in 17 workshops, seminars or conferences around the themes of loss, grief, separation and bereavement.
- The Centre organised its first conference titled Children & Loss Conference 2019 in June at the Limerick Institute of Technology’s Millennium Theatre.



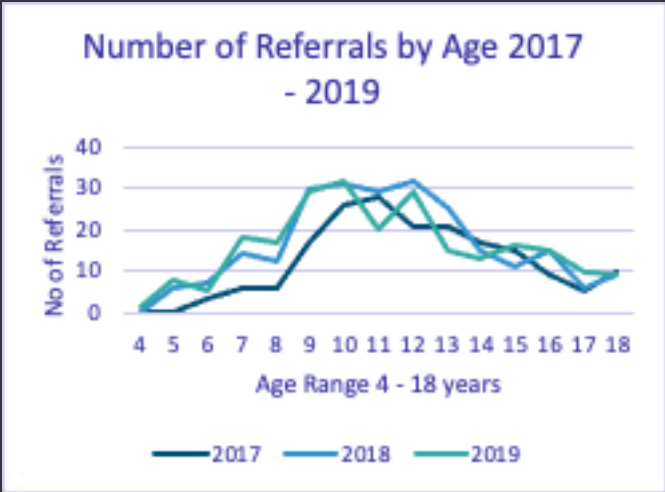
The number of sessions offered to families in 2019



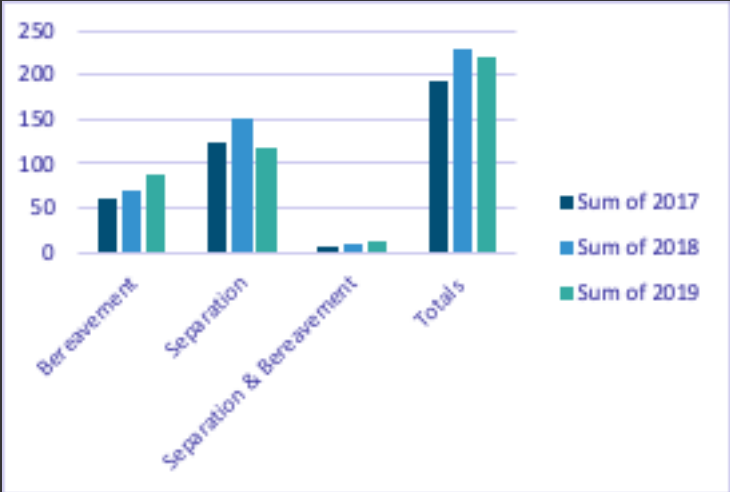
The number of appointments offered to families between 2017 and 2019

# ATTENDANCE BREAKDOWN 2019

Attendance Breakdown 2019		
Total Number of Children Supported		
1.	Total Number of Appointments	1307
	Hours To Children	1080
	Hours To Parents/Guardians	185
	Review Appointments	42
2.	Gender of Child (%)	Total No. of Referrals (as a %)
	Male	112 (50.9%)
	Female	108 (49.1%)
3.	Age of Children in Years	Age Category of Referred Children
	4-8yrs	45
	9-13yrs	115
	14-18yrs	60
4.	Reason for Attending	Referral Type (Expressed as a %)
	Bereavement	88 (40%)
	Separation	118 (53.64%)
	Ber & Sep/Other	14 (16.36%)
5.	Source of Referral	Referral Source (Expressed as a%)
	Parent	184 (83.64%)
	School/GP	36 (16.36%)
6.	Geographical Area of Referral	Total Referrals in 2019: New Clients in 2019
	Limerick	157 (71.36%) 94
	Tipperary	21 (9.55%) 14
	Clare	32 (14.55%) 20
	Other	10 (4.54%) 10
Totals		220 138



The number of children by age referred between 2017 – 2019



Reason for referral 2017 - 2019

## OUR GOVERNANCE **STRUCTURES AND FUNDING**





Board members, all of whom are non-executive, are drawn from diverse backgrounds and bring a broad range of experience and skills. All new board members, on appointment, are provided with detailed briefing documents on governance, financial and operational information and an opportunity to be briefed by the Centre's Director on the different aspects of our aims and goals.

The board meets five times a year and holds one Annual General Meeting which is attended by representatives of the Trustees. The Chair of the board meets frequently with the Director during the intervals between board meetings.

Currently the Children's Grief Centre operates as an un-incorporated not-for-profit registered charity. In 2019 the decision was taken by the board to begin

a process of transition to limited company status. This process, spearheaded by the Centre's Treasurer, Seamus O'Brien, will continue over the course of 2020.

## The Governance Code

The Charities Governance Code issued by the Charities Regulator under section 14(1)(i) of the Charities Act 2009 sets out the core standards and governing principles to which all charities must comply in Ireland. The Board of the Children's Grief Centre understands that high governance standards are key to maintaining public trust and confidence in the work that we do and are working towards full compliance of the Code by the end of 2020.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Board of Management present their annual report and the audited Financial Statements for the financial year which ended 31st December 2019.

Although not obliged to comply with the following: Statements of Recommended Practice (SORP) 2014 FRS 102 – Accounting and Reporting for Charities, or SORP 2014 FRS 102 – the Children's Grief Centre has implemented many of the recommendations in these Financial Statements where applicable.

### PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The main activities of the Children's Grief Centre are charitable and relate to the provision of one-to-one support services to children and young people aged between 4 – 18 years. The objectives of the Centre (Registered Charity No: 20083403) are charitable in nature. All income is applied solely towards the promotion of the charitable objectives of the organisation.

### RESULTS

The surplus for the financial year amounted to €203,678.

### CENTRE'S BUSINESS PLAN 2018 – 2022

The Children's Grief Centre has consistently demonstrated the ability to provide support sessions to children and young people each year and to continue to meet the growing need for our service. There is a need to address a growing waiting list and it is now clear that the acquisition of new premises is critical. The Centre is the only known provider in Ireland of one-to-one support service to children and young people experiencing loss through death, separation or divorce. We provide an early intervention support service for children and young people free at the point of delivery primarily in the Mid-West region. The Children's Grief Centre plans to increase the number of support sessions delivered weekly over the next three years in accordance with objectives outlined in the 2018 – 2022 Business Plan.

### THE SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR AMOUNTED TO €203,678.

### THE FINANCIAL YEAR UNDER REVIEW

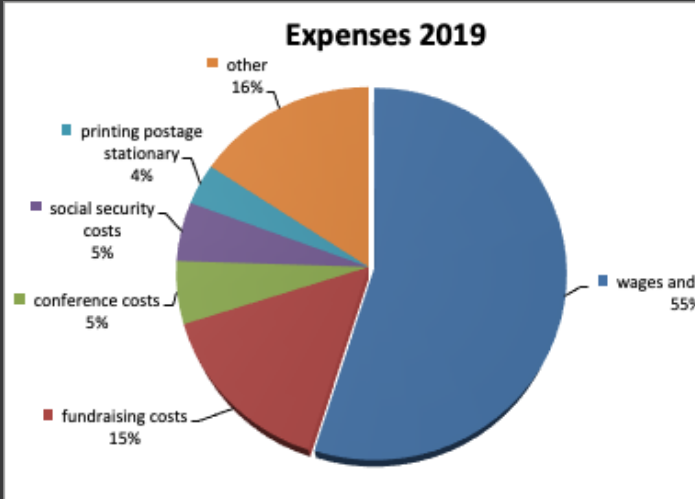
The enhanced capacity developed over the last number of years has enabled the Children's Grief Centre to support its stated goals of developing a sustainable funding base for the organisation and source additional funding from businesses, trust funds/charitable foundations and publicly funded bodies.

As in previous years, we have continued to deliver a strong operating and financial performance. The surplus for the financial year 2019 amounted to €203,678, compared to €114,118 in 2018. Revenue for 2019 of €375,918 was 84% higher than 2018, mainly due to an increase in donations in the current year of €158,991.

The key performance elements were as follows:

- Overall revenue increased by 84% to €375,918;
- Staff payroll expenditure increased by 131% to €103,424;
- Other administrative costs increased by 52% to €68,816;
- Overall income has increased by 84% against an increase of 91% in operational expenditure;
- This has resulted in an increase in the operating surplus of 78% to €203,678.

We are continuing to generate sufficient cash flow to meet operating costs and reserves from fundraising are ringfenced



specifically for the purpose of acquiring new premises or repurposing of an existing premises.

The Children's Grief Centre reserves at the year-end amounted to €385,148 made up of unrestricted general funds of €83,839 and the balance of €301,309 in restricted funds relating to our proposed New Build Campaign.

FUNDING THE CHILDREN'S GRIEF CENTRE

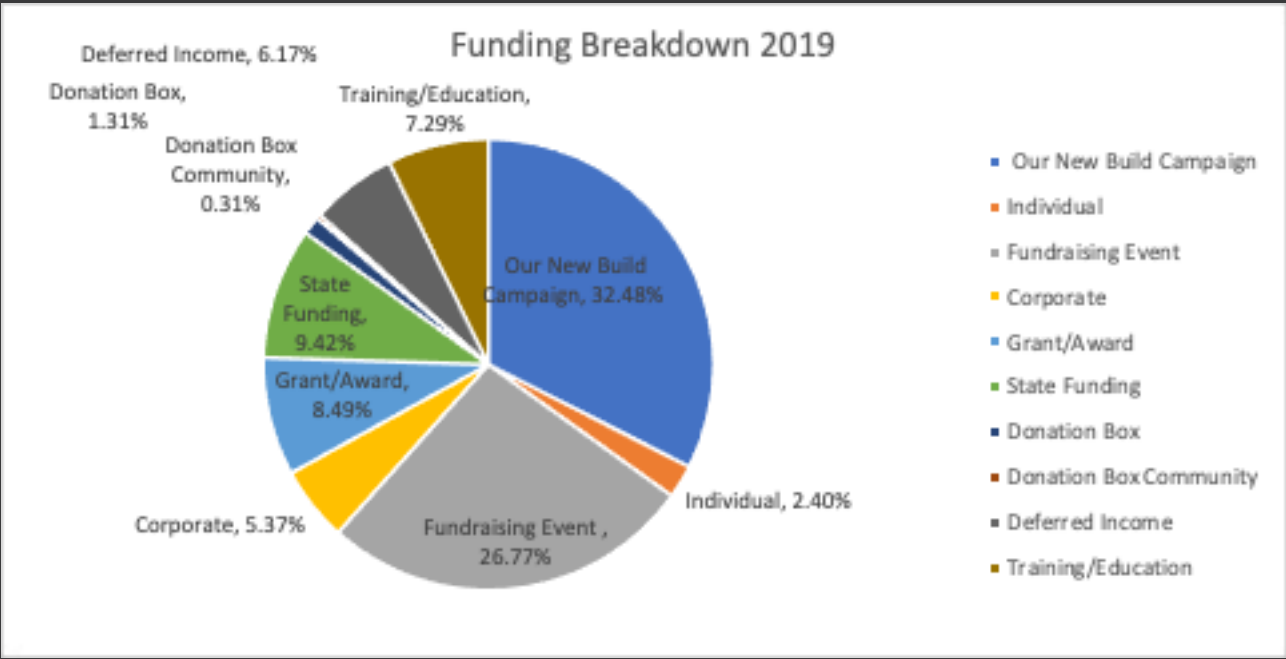
The Centre has been in operation for 10 years and during that time we have been able to fulfil our mission of providing a free support service to children and young people affected by loss. We are confident that we can sustain our service in the long-term not just financially but also in our adaptability, in our business planning and in our strategic planning.

The costs of delivering our service is met by a diversified income stream. The Centre is able to operate in-part as a result of the in-kind donations by the Mercy Congregation, including the use of our current premises and other facilities. The Centre's full-time support worker is funded by a joint grant from TUSLA, Child and Family Agency and the Health Service Executive, HSE. This roll-over funding continues to be a welcome support for the Centre. A part-time support worker position is funded by the

Limerick City & County Council under the Social Intervention Fund. Our service is also sustainable due to the generosity of our volunteers. Our Director provides her professional services to the Centre free of charge. Several volunteer support workers also generously give of their time, thereby helping to subvent the ongoing operation of the Centre. The Centre will continue to welcome volunteers who help to ensure our running costs remain as low as possible.

As awareness of the Children's Grief Centre has grown over the past number of years, so too has our income from fundraising events. We have seen a steady increase in the number of individuals and companies hosting events on our behalf. Each year the Centre organises several events which provide a steady revenue for the Centre.

We employ a part-time fundraiser, two part-time administrators and a part-time housekeeper. Funds received from our fundraising efforts, along with individual and corporate donations, are used in part to fund these positions, which are vital to the continuation of the quality service provided by the Centre. Income from fundraising and private grants and donations are also used to meet the running costs of the Centre. Restricted funding shown below is used only for the purposes for which it was granted.



TOTAL INCOME FROM GRANTS, AWARDS & FUNDRAISING FOR 2019 AMOUNTED TO €375,918



# CHILDRENS GRIEF CENTRE

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

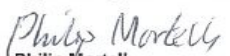
### Children's Grief Centre STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES


for the financial year ended 31 December 2019

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2019 €	Restricted Funds 2019 €	Total 2019 €	Unrestricted Funds 2018 €	Total 2018 €
<b>Income</b>						
Donations and legacies	3.1	282,331	-	282,331	123,340	123,340
Charitable activities						
- Grants from government	3.2	81,389	-	81,389	79,903	79,903
Other income	3.3	12,198	-	12,198	880	880
<b>Total income</b>		<b>375,918</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>375,918</b>	<b>204,123</b>	<b>204,123</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Charitable activities	4.1	172,240	-	172,240	90,005	90,005
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		<b>203,678</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>203,678</b>	<b>114,118</b>	<b>114,118</b>
Transfers between funds		(301,309)	301,309	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds for the financial year</b>		<b>(97,631)</b>	<b>301,309</b>	<b>203,678</b>	<b>114,118</b>	<b>114,118</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
Balances brought forward at 1 January 2019	12	181,470	-	181,470	67,352	67,352
<b>Balances carried forward at 31 December 2019</b>		<b>83,839</b>	<b>301,309</b>	<b>385,148</b>	<b>181,470</b>	<b>181,470</b>

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 10 April 2020 and signed on its behalf by:

  
Philip Mortell  
Chairperson

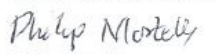
  
Seamus O' Brien  
Treasurer


### Children's Grief Centre BALANCE SHEET

as at 31 December 2019

	Notes	2019 €	2018 €
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	7	-	925
Cash at bank and in hand		398,432	203,755
		<b>398,432</b>	<b>204,680</b>
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	8	<b>(13,284)</b>	<b>(23,210)</b>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<b>385,148</b>	<b>181,470</b>
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>		<b>385,148</b>	<b>181,470</b>
<b>Funds</b>			
Restricted funds (building project)		301,309	-
General fund (unrestricted)		83,839	181,470
<b>Total funds</b>	12	<b>385,148</b>	<b>181,470</b>

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 10 April 2020 and signed on its behalf by:

  
Philip Mortell  
Chairperson

  
Seamus O' Brien  
Treasurer

**Children's Grief Centre****SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Operating Statement

for the financial year ended 31 December 2019

	2019 €	2018 €
<b>Income</b>		
Donations	282,331	123,340
Unrestricted and Designated Grants	81,389	79,903
Workshops and training	12,198	880
	<u>375,918</u>	<u>204,123</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Wages and salaries	94,554	40,876
Social security costs	8,870	3,724
Staff training	1,853	1,324
Support volunteer fees	5,573	18,995
Conference costs	9,401	-
Cleaning	1,013	-
Repairs and maintenance	2,835	2,332
Printing, postage and stationery	6,201	4,436
Telephone	1,375	1,235
Computer costs	3,621	5,809
Motor expenses	2,175	2,577
Website development costs	3,149	-
Fundraising costs	26,115	-
Auditor's remuneration	2,750	2,950
Bank charges	660	221
Canteen	48	1,838
Staff welfare	-	1,096
Art room expenses	1,422	-
General expenses	625	1,744
Subscriptions	-	308
Charitable donations	-	540
	<u>172,240</u>	<u>90,005</u>
<b>Net surplus for year</b>	<u>203,678</u>	<u>114,118</u>

Our full Audited Financial Statements for 2019 are available on our website  
[www.childrensgriefcentre.ie](http://www.childrensgriefcentre.ie)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Members of the Board

Anne Comerford, Parent Representative  
Caroline Keane  
Paula Gaire  
Michael Kelleher  
Ita O'Brien, Complaints' Officer  
Majella Foley-Friel  
Marie Stuart  
Philip Mortell, Chair  
Seamus O'Brien, Treasurer  
Therese Barry, Secretary  
Vicki Lynch – Resigned 19th September, 2019  
Anne Marie Ryan – Joined 9th January, 2019  
Elke Hayes – Joined 4th June, 2019

Auditors

Carey & Associates  
Newgarden, Lisnagry  
Limerick

OUR TEAM

Helen Culhane – Director  
Anne English - Administrator – part time  
Helen McNerney - Administrator – part time  
Katrina Morgan - Fundraising and Events Co-ordinator – part-time  
Theresa Kavanagh – Support Worker  
Ciara Ni Nuallain - Support Worker – part-time  
Rebecca Lloyd - Schools Outreach Co-ordinator  
Geraldine Hannan – Cleaner

VOLUNTEERS

Beryl Carswell, Support worker  
Breda O'Driscoll, Administrator  
Ita Hannan, Support Worker  
Mary Browne, Support Worker  
Carol Fitz-Gough, Support Worker  
Mary Power, Support Worker

*We would like to acknowledge the contribution of two of our former Support workers who for personal reasons are no longer working with us: Maggie Enright and Michele O'Flanagan.*

CHARITY INFORMATION

Charities Regulatory Authority Number: 20919 | Charitable Tax Exemption Number:  
20083403



In dreams we  
catch glimpses of  
a life  
larger than our  
own.

- Helen Keller



# ANNUAL 2019 REPORT

Supporting children and young people  
affected by loss through death, parental  
separation and divorce.

We would like to acknowledge the Community Foundation of Ireland  
for their support in publishing our Annual Report.

**Westbourne, Ashbourne Avenue,  
South Circular Road, Limerick**

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M: 087 985 1733

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Facebook: [@childrensgriefcentre](https://www.facebook.com/childrensgriefcentre)

Twitter: [@children\\_grief](https://twitter.com/children_grief)

Instagram: [@childrensgriefcentre](https://www.instagram.com/childrensgriefcentre)

[www.childrensgriefcentre.ie](http://www.childrensgriefcentre.ie)

## OUR AWARDS SO FAR!



Shannon Region  
Ambassador  
Special Award 2019



National Lottery's  
Good Causes  
Award  
winner 2018 in the  
Youth Category &  
the Overall Award



Pride of Place 2018  
winner in the  
Communities  
Reaching Out  
Category



Social Innovation  
Fund Ireland –  
Animate Healthy  
Community  
Award 2017



Sr. Helen Culhane,  
Children's  
Grief Centre  
Director receives  
the Limerick Person  
of the Year  
Award 2017



Pride of Ireland  
Award 2014