

AOIBHNEAS CLG

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Aoibhneas
Domestic Abuse Support
for Women and Children
Safety. Recovery. Freedom.



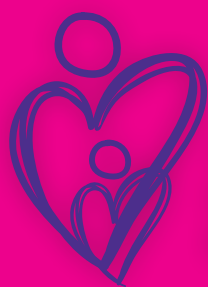
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/aoibhneaswomenandchildrensrefuge



Aoibhneas

**Domestic Abuse Support
for Women and Children**

Safety. Recovery. Freedom.



A huge heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you. Each staff member made me feel secure and supported. All my emotional needs and questions were met. A huge thank you to Robbie especially, my first point of contact, he cared so much and always checked in on me, available any moment to listen and put things into perspective for me. He is an amazing earth Angel with so much knowledge. Thank you, Robbie. Raluca, Caroline, Grace, and Fiona whom I got to spend most of my time with here. They were here to comfort me at my lowest and encourage me to keep going. Raluca is an amazing, beautiful soul who has taught me so much and got me to see my situation in such a different light, including my understanding of domestic violence. If ever (and hopefully I won't!) need it, I've been assured the door is always open and the team are only a telephone call away.

Thank you for allowing me to stay in the amazing place you have here, it truly is a safe, loving, supportive refuge with all you will ever need. I'm eternally grateful for the headspace I have been given in this safe haven.

I'm sad to be leaving but I am going to do as much as I can to support similar women walking through the door.

Thank you and lots of love. I'm grateful to you all.



Healthy
Fingal

TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

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Aoibhneas CLG
Trading as Aoibhneas Domestic Abuse Support
for Women and Children
Registered Charity Number 8955
Company Registration Number 131675

Registered office
Hayden Brown
Grafton Buildings
Grafton Street
Dublin 2

Business address
PO BOX 5504
Dublin 17

Organisation mission, vision and purpose

MISSION

We at Aoibhneas aim to **empower women and children** to live in **freedom** and **safety** from domestic abuse through a healing process that nurtures and enables **positive growth and societal change**.

VISION

To centre stage women and children who are or have been affected by domestic abuse in the provision of a **complete continuum of care** arrangement within a **service of excellence**.

A complete continuum of care arrangement provides for the access of women and children to supports at **earliest intervention** through provision of prevention and awareness raising programmes, community-based support, refuge accommodation, transitional accommodation and post refuge/ transitional support.

PURPOSE

To provide **short term crisis accommodation** to women and children who are forced to leave their homes due to domestic abuse.

To promote the **welfare and safety** of women and children that access crisis accommodation through our refuge service.

To promote the welfare of the family by **identifying and responding** to the needs of women and children.

To provide women and children who access Refuge, Outreach, Drop in, Court Preparation and Accompaniment and Helpline with **practical and emotional support**.

To provide a **violence free environment** for women and children using our services.

To **link, engage with and signpost** to agencies who provide specialist services and to facilitate women and children's access to these services.

To provide a **continuum of care across all our services** to women and children.

VALUES

'ONE FAMILY ONE TEAM'

DIGNITY

RESPECT

COMPASSION

EMPATHY

INCLUSION

TRUST

UNITY AND PARTNERSHIP


CO-OPERATIONAL SERVICE EXCELLENCE

EFFICIENCY

INNOVATION

VALUE FOR MONEY

EMBRACE AND DRIVE CHANGE



I came away understanding, that I need to be in a healthy relationship and not a toxic one. Stay focused, do what's important and prioritise you, because life is too short to waste it on someone that doesn't appreciate you, doesn't value you and doesn't make you happy.

At Aoibhneas everyone was helpful, friendly, and very understanding.

Thanks everyone.



Anna's Story

Anna rang the Aoibhneas 24-hour helpline during the May Bank Holiday. Anna and her 6-year old daughter Chloe were offered crisis accommodation through Airbnb while waiting for a vacancy to become available in refuge.

After accessing refuge Anna disclosed experiences of domestic abuse throughout her childhood. These early childhood experiences of domestic abuse from her perpetrator, identified as a family member resulted in Anna being placed in emergency care.

Anna disclosed that her abuser and extended members of her family had made threats to end her life and her daughter's life. Anna sought Garda assistance after a violent assault and receiving threats to end her and her daughter's life. As a result of Anna seeking Garda assistance, her abuser obtained a Protection Order against her, demanding she drop the complaint she made to An Garda Síochana. During her stay in refuge, Anna's daughter Chloe disclosed allegations of sexual abuse to her support worker against Anna's perpetrator, this resulted in a specialist referral to An Garda Síochana and Tusla, Child and Family Agency.

While Anna was resident in refuge, she became ill, her illness was believed to have been a stress response to her situation, exacerbated by Chloe's disclosures of abuse. Anna's illness resulted in her admission to hospital. Due to Anna's inability to care for Chloe, and her inability to identify a trusted person to take care of Chloe, Chloe was taken into emergency foster care. Following medical intervention, Anna returned to refuge, Chloe remained in emergency care where visits were facilitated in refuge with Anna.

Anna has lived with familial abuse since childhood, and she faced seeing the same happen to her daughter. Aoibhneas supported Anna with access to respite as she recovered from her illness, while at the same time supporting her to maintain regular contact with her daughter and proactively engage with the family's Social Worker. In addition, Aoibhneas provided Anna access to psychoeducational, holistic therapeutic and parenting supports.

Experiences like Anna's highlight the impact of generational domestic abuse and one's ability to heal and recover.



A Note From Our Chairperson

On behalf of the Board of Aoibhneas, it is with great pride that I present our 2021 Annual Report. Our report provides a snapshot of the work undertaken throughout the year and our annual accounts for the period.

We entered the year in lockdown as we continued to feel the impact of COVID-19. However, the lifting of restrictions towards the end of February meant that we were able to provide increased interventions to women and children in refuge and through our outreach and community service. The pandemic continued to have a severe impact and demand on our services was acutely felt by all.

In 2021 we delivered a **30%** increase in crisis accommodation provision, a **105%** increase in interventions to women, a **324%** increase in child interventions and a **9%** increase in support through our helpline, versus delivery in 2020. Our court preparation and accompaniment support service helped **168** women in 2021, a **336%** increase on the 2020 figure. This is a key service for us as we work to ensure women get access to professional advice, with the court system quite often an extremely daunting experience. These numbers give an insight into the level of support sought by women and children in the period and the incredible response from our staff team.

In February, Safe Ireland launched their second tracking the shadow pandemic report which found that 808 requests for refuge space across the country could not be met. We continue to advocate for an increase in refuge spaces in line with the Istanbul Convention and are eager to work with key stakeholders to be a part of the solution.

Early in the year myself and our CEO Emma Reidy met with Minister Roderic O’Gorman TD, where we raised ongoing concerns facing the organisation, with a particular focus on

staffing. It was a great opportunity to discuss Aoibhneas contribution to the sector and our ongoing ambitions.

In March we met with Minister Helen McEntee TD, as we introduced her to our work and brought her through some of the key issues impacting the organisation. The Minister was keen to hear the barriers both Aoibhneas and women we work with are facing. We have continued to work closely with the Department of Justice since then and we were delighted with the announcement that a new standalone State agency will be responsible for Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (‘DSGBV’), overseen by the Minister for Justice, ensuring that justice is aligned to gender-based violence and the rights of women and children. The publication of the Third National Strategy on DSGBV was a welcome one and the focus of Zero Tolerance is something we strongly advocate for in Aoibhneas.

A key highlight during the year was a Board training day that we delivered in March in conjunction with the staff team. The training day gave new Board members an excellent insight into what the staff team undertake on a daily basis and allowed us the space to reflect on the needs of the organisation moving forward and how we approach our thinking with both the organisation and wider sector in mind.

The launch of our freephone helpline in October was a particular proud moment for the team, enabling us to ensure women and children in need are always able to reach us. We were delighted to have Lord Mayor Alison Gililand with us to officially launch the helpline, Alison has long been and continues to be a supporter of Aoibhneas and our work.

Overall, 2021 saw incredible support from donors. Notably the 4x4x48 challenge saw hundreds of people across the country, and further afield, take part in a challenge to raise money and awareness for the organisation. Additionally, it was fantastic to see UCD Med Soc choose Aoibhneas as their charity of choice for the year. Partnerships and

fundraising drives like this are vital in raising awareness and much needed funds and as an organisation it is humbling to see.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to the organisation in any way throughout 2021. Your contributions truly are life-changing for the women and children we engage with. To our core funder Tusla Child & Family Agency, thank you for your continued support for Aoibhneas and the work that we do.

A particular thank you to the Board in the work they undertook in 2021, in what was another busy year. It is a pleasure to work with you all in a challenging but very rewarding environment.

As always, a huge thank you to the staff team, who continue to go above and beyond for women and children in their time of vulnerability and fear. The work you do on a daily basis never ceases to amaze me. It has been a pleasure to work closely with Emma Reidy and Cristina Santamaria during the year, their ambition and enthusiasm for their work is ever-present.

To the women and children who entrust us in their time of need, thank you and we can only hope we live up to your expectations.

As we look ahead, in an uncertain time, we are engaging with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. Key to that will be securing additional funding to support staffing and other increasing headline costs such as energy.

We have just completed an ambitious 5 Year Strategic Plan, aligned with the four pillars of the Third National Strategy on DSGBV - Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Policy Co-ordination, which will see Aoibhneas continue to lead in the delivery of key supports across the sector and we hope to work in conjunction with the Department of Justice in developing what is required and at a minimum to deliver on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

The months ahead will not be easy, as we face a cost of living and energy crisis which is only likely to put more pressure on the most vulnerable in our society. However, if the last few years have taught me anything it is that we have a truly committed team with ambition and dedication at its core. That combined with the roll out of the Third National Strategy on DSGBV will ensure we continue to deliver for women and children and for a safer, more equal society.

As I step down from the Board at the upcoming AGM, I feel immense pride, knowing that Aoibhneas will go on to achieve great things and continue to be a leader and driving force in the sector. I would like to thank everyone I have worked with over the past 6 years. Aoibhneas is one of the most ambitious organisations I have had the pleasure of being involved with and I am delighted to have played some small part in that over the last few years. It has been a truly fulfilling experience.

There is no doubt that the organisation can continue to deliver for the sector and for vulnerable women and children once it is enabled to do so with the provision of appropriate resources and funding.



Melanie Farrell, Chairperson

Chief Executive Officer's Welcome

Our can do and must do attitude has carried us through some of the most challenging days we have faced as an organisation. When COVID-19 reached our shores in March 2020, we experienced a surge in demand for our service and with that we faced unprecedented pressures which necessitated both the adaptation of service interventions and transformation of our service delivery to reflect a new way of providing women and children experiencing domestic abuse safe access to crisis accommodation and recovery supports.

I am very proud of the work of Aoibhneas, including our remarkable staff team and Board and for all Aoibhneas has been able to withstand and achieve since 2020.

Covid-19 has had a profound impact upon the lives of the women and children at a time when many agencies and organisations were forced to scale down or even temporarily close. Aoibhneas was the only source of support many of our clients could turn to during these difficult times and not only did our doors remain open, our service expanded to meet increased demand and presenting need through access to a hybrid mix of telephone, virtual and face to face supports.

Our front line staff team have worked tirelessly to maintain supports offered through refuge, community and outreach, and Helpline to ensure clients and callers felt supported. By the staff team and Board demonstrating collective agility and resilience to stand in solidarity representing and serving the needs of women and children they brought meaning and significance to our team motto One Family One Team.

I want to thank each member of our incredible team, because of everyone's individual effort, our collective contribution ensured the safety of women and children.

The team deserve unreserved thanks and admiration for their ability to prioritise clients and service, knowing the risks that this could present to themselves and their own loved ones.

A key achievement for Aoibhneas in 2021 was our ability to directly support **1,265** women and children experiencing domestic abuse, through the delivery of **43,848** interventions to women and **8,869** interventions to children. Further to that we supported **9,878** callers through our 24-hour Helpline. Our ability to reach and safeguard families experiencing domestic abuse remains our number one priority.

We accommodated through our refuge centre and Airbnb **366** women and children in crisis and experiencing domestic abuse. We continue to come up against a lack of medium-term housing options post refuge, and 2021 saw us progress our plans to develop a step-down accommodation solution for families. We are working with Dublin City Council on the development of 15 housing units which will increase our ability to respond to the medium-term accommodation needs of our families.

In 2021 we provided direct support to **733** children across refuge and community, highlighting the need for increased specialist support for children to address not only their experiences of domestic abuse but their experiences of COVID-19 and the level of entrapment and escalation both experienced and witnessed in homes since the onset of COVID-19.

In 2021 we progressed our plans to develop a dedicated therapeutic space for children. This will be an important development as we continue to respond to the recovery needs of children, who are very often the invisible casualties of domestic abuse. We will rely on the continued support of donors to progress the development of this much needed centre for children, a first of its kind in Ireland.

Creativity, innovation, resilience, and engagement is central to our work, it's for this reason I am particularly proud to see us open new community offices in Smithfield and Swords, launch a 24-Hour freephone helpline, launch a volunteer programme and deliver organisation wide training in Trauma Informed Care and Courageous Conversations in 2021. Developments like these illustrate how central we place women and children in shaping our practice and service provision.

While our year-end financial results show stability, this will be an ongoing challenge in the context of the ever-increasing level of demand for our service and our increased reliance on fundraising and donor income to meet mounting operational costs.

While the financial implications of COVID-19 have been immense, when we consider the layered work we undertake with families, our adapted post COVID-19 services will require ongoing capital and operational funding. We face particular uncertainty in the wake of the cost-of-living and energy crisis, and we require dedicated and specified funding from our core funder Tusla, Child and Family Agency to meet increasing operational costs.

The cost of living and energy crisis will have a disproportionate impact on our most vulnerable clients, with already a notable increase in the number of families identified in poverty and seeking immediate financial relief from us. Noted also is the impact of the cost of living crisis on staff and how by being unable to pay increments or benchmark pay rates to rates observed in the Social Care Sector we are prevented from alleviating some of their financial hardship. We continue to advocate to our Core Funder Tusla, Child and Family Agency for the allocation of funding to support staff employed in this specialism.

Our aim is to use this extraordinary time that we continue to live through to transform the way Ireland responds to women and children living with domestic abuse. We face ever increasing demands in all areas of service and we remain determined to continue to seek



1,265

**Women and
Children
Accessed Direct
Support**

significant change in public and political awareness, attitudes, and interest with the issue we work on a day-to-day basis.

We will soon launch our 5 Year Strategic Plan, this plan is aligned to the Third National Strategy on Domestic Sexual Gender Based Violence under the pillars Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Policy. We endeavour to work closely with the Department of Justice and Tusla, Child and Family Agency to deliver key prevention and intervention-based support to women and children victims of domestic abuse in line with the National Strategy

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our statutory funders-Tusla, Child and Family Agency and Department of Justice, donors and every individual who gave or fundraised for us to enable us to remain fully operational, innovative, and responsive.

Lastly to our colleagues in services all over the country I thank you for your partnership and collaboration through our network Safe Ireland we achieved great things!



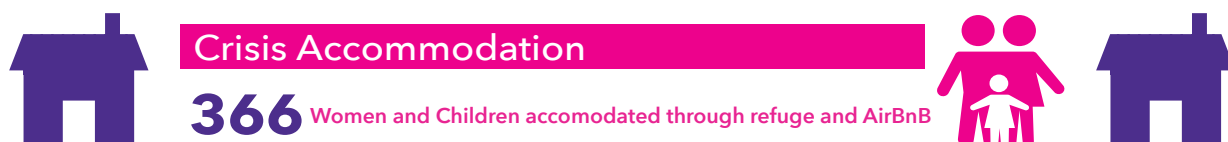
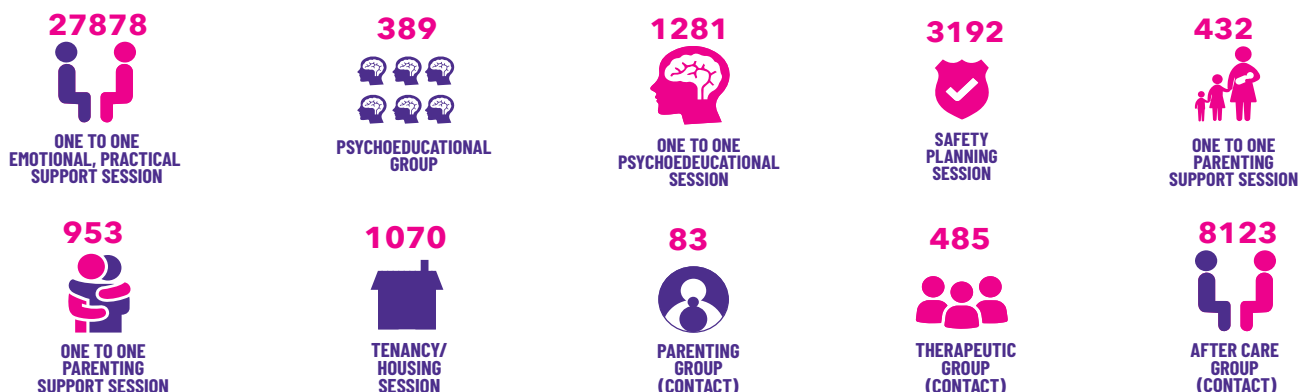
Emma Reidy, Chief Executive Officer

2021 At a Glance

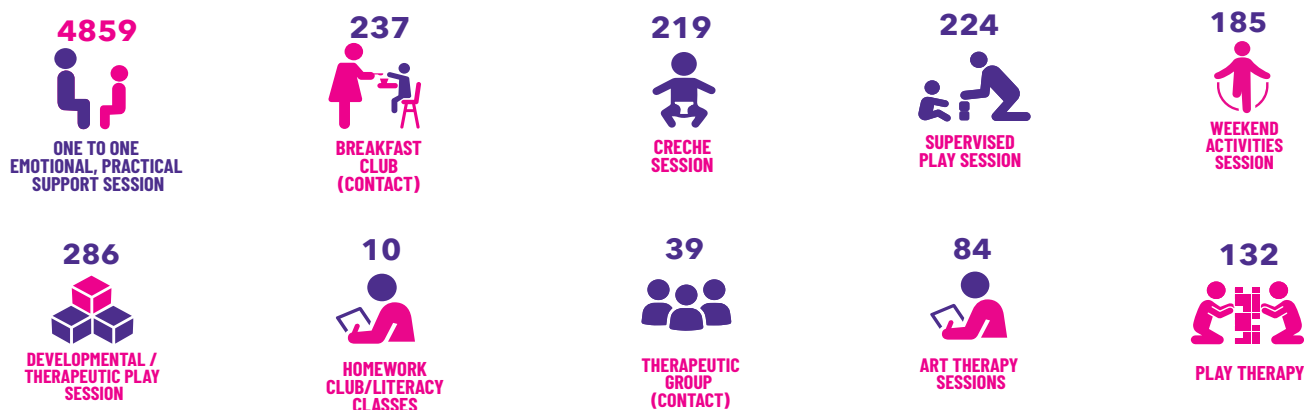
Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the direct impact public health restrictions had on service provision, in 2021 Aoibhneas provided frontline and direct support to 1,265 women and children

Frontline support was delivered in the following areas:

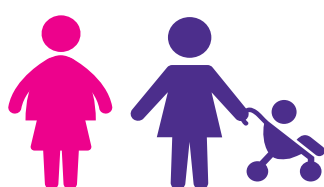
Total Interventions Women 43,848



Total Interventions Children 8,869



External Accompaniment



423

Accompaniment provided to Women and Children (includes accompaniment to court, legal support, Garda, SATU, medical services, social work etc.)

1891

Referral to External Organisations on behalf of Women and Children Service Users (includes social welfare, counselling, mental health services, Garda, legal, education, immigration services, childcare services, school, CAMHS, family support, social work etc.)

9,878
Callers
to our Helpline

Service Delivery during COVID-19

Following the onset of COVID-19 in 2020 substantive change to the composition of our service ensued, including our need to access external accommodation in addition to our refuge to meet the presenting crisis needs of women and children fleeing their home due to their heightened experiences of domestic abuse. The pandemic presented many challenges but as an essential service provider we worked hard to adapt our service to ensure staff and service users were protected from the outset and that we could remain open to those in need, to do this we implemented and maintained all relevant guidelines set out by the Health Service Executive ("HSE") and the Health and Safety Authority ("HSA").

Given the exceptional circumstances we were operating under as a frontline service, our outputs reflect the considerable support provided to women and children victims and survivors of abuse.

During 2021, we provided direct support to **1,265** women and children including the delivery of **43,848** interventions to women and **8,859** interventions to children. Additionally, we responded to **9,878** helpline calls, a **9% increase** in calls on the same period in 2020.

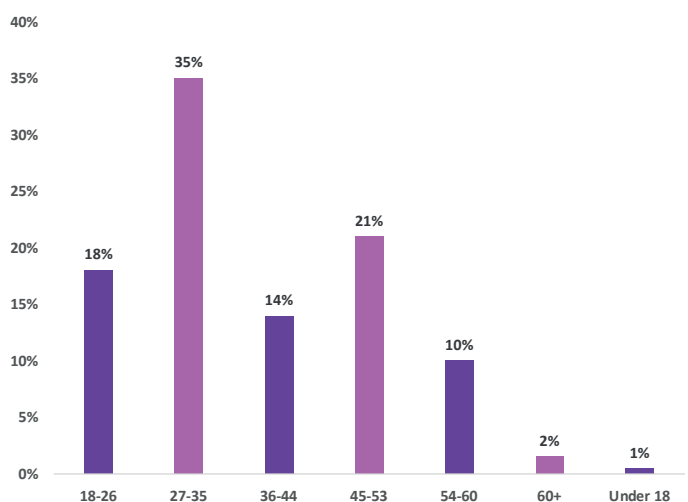
In 2021, Aoibhneas provided domestic abuse support to women and children from **47 different nationalities**. The diversity we see in our client's backgrounds demonstrate the global nature of domestic abuse and its prevalence in our diverse society of today. The diversity of our client base has grown over the past number of years (an **increase of 7%** based on 2020 data) which has meant that as an organisation we have had to adapt our service to ensure we cater for the needs of women and children from all backgrounds.

We endeavour to promote cultural awareness across the organisation to ensure we continue to respond to women and children's cultural needs.

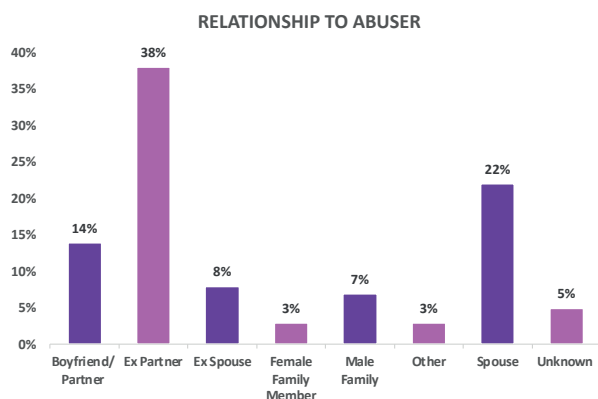
While we supported clients from **47 different nationalities**, **58% of our client base** identified as Irish highlighting the prevalence of domestic abuse in Irish society today.

When it comes to age, domestic abuse does not discriminate and 2021 saw a diverse range of age categories among clients, with our youngest adult refuge resident aged **17 years** to our oldest outreach client aged **77 years**. Our largest cohort of clients presented in the age range of **27-35 (34%)**, **45-53 (21%)** age category. **2% of clients** that presented to us were over **60 years of age**.

CLIENT AGE PROFILE



36% of women we supported identified their perpetrator as a current spouse, partner or boyfriend. **46% of women** disclosed an ex-spouse, ex-partner or ex-boyfriend; these figures suggest that intimate partner relationships represent the majority of cases whereby domestic abuse gets perpetrated. However, **10% of clients** disclosed that their abuser was a family member, this represents an increasing trend of adult child to parent violence. In recent years we associate this as a feature of the housing crisis whereby more adult children are remaining in or returning to the family home, we have also seen increased cases of child to parent abuse when an adult child is acting also as the parents' caregiver.



At a client's initial access to our service, they report their experience of abuse, we note experiences as wide ranging, overlapping and escalating depending on the stage into the violence we first engage a client.

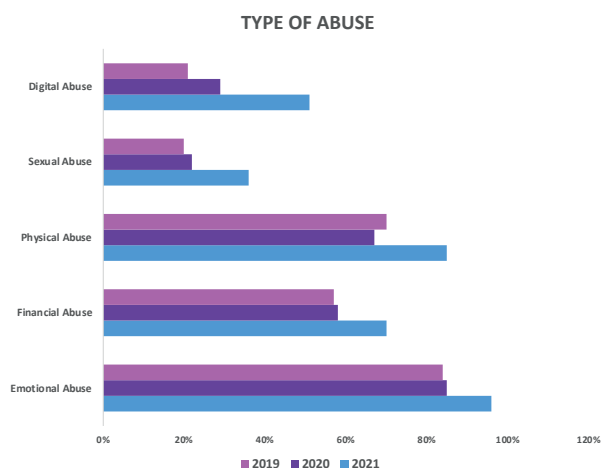
Emotional abuse was the most common form of abuse experienced by clients (**96%**), while physical abuse followed second with **85%** of clients experiencing abuse of that nature. **49** clients presented to refuge with physical injuries. Injuries ranged from concussion/head trauma to broken, dislocated and fractured bones, choking, bruising and cuts, dental injuries, strains, and sprains. Many clients disclosed more than one type of abuse with financial abuse being another common experience (**70%**).

Digital abuse is a more recent type of abuse experienced by clients (**51%**) and continues to be used by perpetrators as another form of coercive control. This is an **22%** increase on 2020 figures and was a continuing feature.

Clients outlined that often, when they attempted to end the relationship they experienced heightened digital abuse which ranged from being sent negative, insulting, or even threatening emails, Facebook messages, tweets, or DMs. Clients recalled having movements and activities monitored and scrutinised using sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Clients also experienced unwanted demands made and threats of unwanted or explicit pictures shared through social media.

Sexual abuse disclosures (**36%**) are typically underreported due to the fact we ask information pertaining to abuse type at a clients first engagement with our service.

We note once a client builds rapport, understanding and comfort they feel more enabled to speak on the true and full extent of their situation and experience. This is indicative of how layered and complex situations not to mention patterns of coercive control and domestic abuse are.



At initial engagement with Aoibhneas clients are asked about their involvement with external services. **44%** of clients informed us they had some form of court order in place, this included protection, safety, barring, maintenance and access orders (295 clients). **22%** of clients (297 clients) informed us that prior to accessing our service they had sought Garda assistance regarding their experience of domestic abuse. **48%** of clients (277 clients) informed us of past or ongoing involvement with Tusla, Child and Family Agency. A further **33%** of clients (227 clients) described child protection or child welfare concerns for their children. This indicates that multidisciplinary services often share insight into the family's individual experience of domestic abuse before we commence engagement with that family. It indicates a long and protracted process that women and their children face concerning 'the leaving' and how leaving or ending an abusive relationship does not signal the end of abuse.

In 2021 we provided support to **751** children across refuge and community. Of that number, **30%** were **under 4 years** of age and **34%** of the children were between the **ages of 5-9** years. This is a **18%** increase on the number of children we provided support to in 2020. This highlights a concern regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and associated

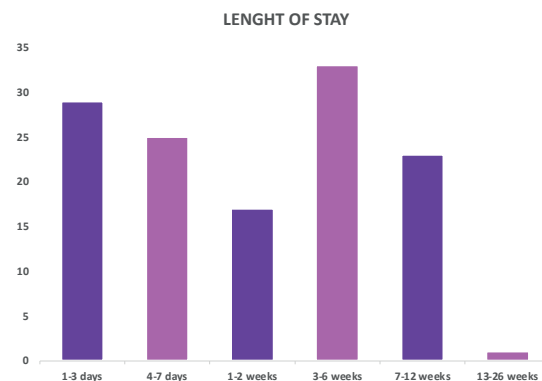
restrictions and the reduced visibility of children and young people's access to specialist services. The support we provide to children is a vital aspect of our work and we know that children who live with and are aware of violence in the home face many challenges and risks that can last throughout their lives. The pandemic has added to the trauma children and young people have experienced in the home. We recognise the continued importance of promoting our community and inhouse reach to children and young people at earliest opportunity with a diverse range of trauma and therapeutic response-based interventions.

Our child refuge population diverges quite considerably week to week, so we promote interventions that facilitate and adapt to the ages and needs of children living in refuge.

We had noted at the beginning of the pandemic and during heightened restrictions reduced numbers of children accessing our refuge service, reflected back to us by clients was their concern of being exposed to COVID-19 in a residential based setting. Following easing of restrictions, we immediately responded to an increase of families with 2 or more children accessing our service, we anticipate this trend will continue as families feel increased comfort and reassurance.

In 2021 we maintained a hybrid delivery of refuge and community-based supports and interventions that took place in a virtual and face to face form. We supported individual children and families with access to a range of family-based interventions including art and play therapy, baking, family play sessions in our playroom and outdoor play areas, homework and breakfast clubs, parent/child mindfulness relaxation classes, creative play, therapeutic stories, resilience building, free play, and sensory play.

12% of children that presented alongside mum were **18 and over**, which is indicative of how child adult dependents themselves have few options concerning access to social welfare assistance, housing assistance and free third level education.



Following an intake to refuge a period of assessment commences, during this time we complete a needs survey with every client both with regard to her and her children's identified needs. This guides our care plan and interventions by ultimately providing client and team a clear set of expectations and objectives. An increased length of stay for us generally facilitates a more substantial focus in areas of psychoeducational support, housing or tenancy supports and legal protection.

Whatever steps a woman decides to take in relation to housing, we aim to work alongside and advocate on her behalf to support her and her children. A lack of move on options post refuge saw family's access homeless services (**19%**), return home (**32%**) and seek accommodation through family and friends (**21%**). The lack of alternative move on options invariably impacts on a family's length of stay. In 2021 the average length of refuge stay was **21 days**.



366

**Women and Children
accomodated through
refuge and Airbnb**

Eithna's Story

Eithna came to refuge after being asked by her social worker to leave the family home due to the high risk her alleged perpetrator presented and the likelihood of recurring assaults directed at her and her children.

Eithna presented to refuge with physical injuries following a physical assault with her four children aged 5 years, 3 years, 1 year and 2 months.

Eithna had been in a relationship with her abuser for 2 years and he was father to her two youngest children. During this time, Eithna had been emotionally and physically assaulted on several occasions, with her children exposed to abuse on a consistent basis.

Eithna's abuser did not live in the family home but had access as he pleased, having made a copy of her house keys. Eithna's abuser had a history of domestic abuse and criminal behaviour, including court order breaches which resulted in numerous arrests. Despite receiving reassurances following arrests her abuser would not be granted bail, Eithna's abuser has never been remanded in custody or received a custodial sentence.

Though fearful, Eithna wished to remain in her home with her children however with her perpetrator abusing, assaulting, and breaching court orders without facing sanction or consequence, her social worker requested she leave her home and access refuge. Eithna forced to leave her house felt punished for her abusers' actions. Eithna felt like she wasn't being heard and this had initially a negative impact on her experience of the services Aoibhneas would provide.

Eithna had regular and involved contact with different social workers allocated to her family. During the family's stay in refuge, Eithna and her children were allocated a new social worker, unfamiliar with her case and experiences. Eithna was delayed returning home due to a lack of communication

between an Garda Siochana and Tusla, Child and Family Agency progressing a safety plan. An additional challenge presented with Eithna's engagement with the judicial process, and her abuser despite ongoing arrests remaining a source of risk being released on bail to reoffend.

In preparation for her return home, Aoibhneas designed a safety plan with Eithna, completed a Danger Assessment and referred her to the High-Risk Support Project, Women's Aid, where Eithna could access a phone while engaged in our service to support enhanced access to An Garda Siochana in an emergency. It was through these enhanced safety measures that Eithna and her children were able to return home with supports in place.

Aoibhneas worked with Eithna to create a plan that would see her return to the family home and ultimately promote Eithna's ability to engage with services while living in her community. Eithna's children took part in various activities like therapeutic play sessions, creative play and developmental play and on exiting refuge, Eithna was linked to our Community and Outreach Service where she and her children continue to access support around their past and ongoing experiences of domestic abuse.



Our Services

Refuge accommodation

Safe emergency/crisis short term accommodation for women and children experiencing domestic abuse through provision of 10 self-contained units for 10 families. The refuge provides additional access to communal facilities such as a kitchen, dining area, sitting room, laundry facilities, courtyard and outdoor children's play area. Women and children can access refuge accommodation on a 24-hour, 365 days per year basis.

In 2021, we supported **329** women and children through access to refuge, **37** women and children with access to Airbnb accommodation. Within these settings, we provided a number of interventions to women and children. In 2021, we supported women with access to **26,964 interventions** and children with access to **3,737 interventions** (representing a **26% and 79% increase** of interventions provided in 2021).



Renovated Communal Kitchen, Refuge Centre



Outdoor Play Area, Refuge Centre



Staff Kitchen in our new POD - Teach Solais

24-Hour Helpline

We provide access to a 24-Hour confidential helpline service for women and for agencies, family or friends ringing on behalf of women, looking for information about aspects of their current situation.

The helpline provides:

- Practical and emotional support to women who have or are experiencing physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse.
- Advice and assistance on legal, housing, social welfare, rights and entitlements, budgeting.
- Information, advocacy and referral to appropriate services.
- Referral to refuge.

In 2021, we provided support through our helpline to **9,878 callers (9% increase based on 2020 data)**. The ongoing demand we see for helpline support signifies an important access route for callers experiencing domestic abuse seeking information, support, and accommodation. In recognition of the diverse population we serve and taking into consideration the financial constraints many victims of domestic abuse experience. We committed in 2021 to promoting increased reach and accessibility to our helpline with our transition to a Freephone Helpline.



Family Link -in Room, Applewood Community Office

Community and Outreach Service

In addition to our refuge and helpline, we provide a community-based service that enables women experiencing domestic abuse to access the necessary supports from a range of locations. The outreach service also offers a continued service to women post-refuge who return home or relocate elsewhere. Aoibhneas outreach service spans across all North Dublin; from inner city to north county Dublin.

This service offers:

- Practical and emotional support to women who have or are experiencing physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse.
- Advice and assistance on legal, housing, social welfare, rights and entitlements, budgeting.
- Information, advocacy and referrals to appropriate services.
- Freedom programme.
- Aftercare programme.
- Alternative therapies.
- Play and Art therapy.
- Court accompaniment and preparation service.



Client Link-In Room, Applewood Community Office

Through the COVID-19 pandemic including Level 5 restrictions our Community and Outreach team maintained service provision by facilitating sibling/family work through 1:1 online/ virtual engagements and in-house sessions (restrictions permitting). Interventions proved to be an exceptionally beneficial support to children/families at a time when other statutory, non-statutory and NGO service providers were unable to maintain visibility or reach.

In 2021, we provided direct support to **899 women and children** through our outreach and community service. We place a huge emphasis on our ability to work within a continuum of care model so families engagement with our service is sustained to ensure as they journey from crisis to recovery we provide adequate and tailored interventions and supports.

In 2021, we supported women with access to **16,879 interventions** and children with access to **4,055 interventions** through community and outreach.

As part of our community support, we provide a drop-in service which offers a safe confidential space for women to talk and work through their difficulties with staff who will provide:

- Practical and emotional support to women who have or are experiencing physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse.
- Advice and assistance on legal, housing, social welfare, rights and entitlements, budgeting.
- Information, advocacy and referral to appropriate services.
- Court accompaniment and preparation service.
- Referral to refuge.
- Post refuge support.

In 2021, we supported **26 families** with access to drop in support, a further **30 families** presented in crisis to our service seeking immediate safety and access into refuge.

Court Preparation and Accompaniment

The legal system and court process can be a daunting prospect for anyone. Knowing your rights and entitlements, as well as understanding how the system works and what you can expect when you go before the courts goes a long way supporting women obtaining relevant legal orders to increase their safety. We provide a Court Preparation and Accompaniment Service for women, which offers support in the following areas

- Advice on legal orders, court process and court application process.
- Court preparation-assistance formulating, preparing, and delivering case.
- Assistance in legal aid application and gathering necessary and applicable documents
- Court accompaniment - (application/ court hearing) in District, Circuit and High Court.
- Information and referral to outreach, refuge and drop-in service.
- Linkage/Advocacy with Gardaí, solicitors, barristers, social workers and legal personnel.
- Post court support/debrief.

In 2021, Our court service experienced considerable demand, providing **5,671 interventions** and **168** court accompaniments resulting in **208** orders obtained through engagement in our service.



168

Women supported through our Court Preparation and Accompaniment Service

Training & Networking

Aoibhneas recognises that in order to reduce the number of people affected by domestic abuse, we must work towards community and societal change.

Aoibhneas provides specialist training to statutory groups, non-statutory groups, family resource centres, women's groups and specialist services responding to domestic violence.

We have designed a Positive Relationships Programme, which is delivered to Secondary Schools and Youthreach. All training provided by Aoibhneas is tailored to meet the identified needs of those requesting the training. Our prevention work involves awareness raising, building relationships, promoting understanding of domestic abuse, the need for zero tolerance and working together.

Many providers who had halted or adapted their service provision in 2020 to reflect public health advice, resumed delivery in 2021. As such we were in a position to provide **24** targeted training sessions.

Awareness raising is a vital aspect of our work and we have developed local referral pathways and networks with key stakeholders such as Gardaí, GPs, local community groups, with emphasis on seldom heard and hard to reach communities.

In 2021 we intensified our awareness raising efforts by partaking in and hosting **130** networking and awareness raising events providing information on domestic violence and abuse to victims and survivors, their families and friends and their wider communities.

We engaged with media to promote our specialist support services and their continued availability even through lockdowns this included featuring on national TV, local and national radio, national and local newspapers and on online news sites.



Lucy Watters, Outreach Worker at a Networking Event



Cristina Santamaria, Head of Service speaking at UCD

2021 Strategic Highlights

Ambition

In 2019, Aoibhneas launched its Strategic Plan 2019-2021 outlining our ambition to provide women and children engaged with our service access to a tailored and complete range of services.

While a key component to Aoibhneas' work is the delivery of specialist adult and child therapeutic, support and holistic interventions, another is transforming response to domestic abuse. This means challenging the way women and child victims of domestic abuse are acknowledged, regarded, responded to, and supported. The Strategic Plan outlines how Aoibhneas is actively working to both respond to domestic abuse and challenge its very existence by taking on preventionist activities alongside its crisis intervention activities.

The strategic priorities outlined in the 3 year Strategic Plan are:

1. Maintain and improve a quality service for women and children who experience domestic abuse.
2. Maintain a service of excellence by promoting team collaboration and a high- performance culture.
3. Expand and broaden our service provision.
4. Improve regulation and governance structures, processes, and infrastructure.
5. Develop a volunteer programme.
6. Develop a brand and profile.
7. Develop sustainable and alternative funding structures.
8. Develop a best practice data and technology management process.

Organisational Highlights in 2021

No one could have anticipated the extent in which life as we knew it would halt and even stop with the onset of a global pandemic and our nation fight to control the spread and transmission of COVID-19. From early March 2020 to year-end 2021 Aoibhneas would adapt, shift, and expand its' service delivery to provide women and child victims of domestic abuse access to therapeutic and support-based interventions including access to safe accommodation, all the time adhering as a service provider and employer to public health and government advice.

While a challenging ask, Aoibhneas remained focused and determined to prioritise service users and their crisis and therapeutic care needs. With the allocation of healthcare essential status Aoibhneas has remained visible to women and children throughout 2021 providing women and child victims of domestic abuse access to both a tailored and a complete range of services. When Aoibhneas considers its achievements in 2021, its ability to remain visible and available to women and children stands to the forefront given that remaining open, responsive, and dynamic were hard fought victories.

Ultimately Aoibhneas' ability to keep service users and its staff team safe from COVID-19 while at the same time supporting women and children to remain safe from their direct experiences of domestic abuse is Aoibhneas' greatest achievement of 2021.

Organisational response to COVID-19

In 2021 Aoibhneas continued to adapt and respond dynamically to COVID-19. The Aoibhneas team worked tirelessly to make infrastructural and operational changes to see refuge occupancy return to 100% by January 2021. During the year Aoibhneas managed increased need for refuge accommodation by sourcing alternative accommodation through Airbnb. This enabled Aoibhneas to accommodate families in crisis due to domestic abuse, and once more expand its accommodation brief.

Growth and Development of the Board of Management

In 2020 Aoibhneas successfully recruited, elected, and inducted 3 Directors to the Board of Management. Aoibhneas considers the Board to have a skill mix conducive to maintaining strong compliance and governance while also driving organisational vision and strategy. Coinciding with the recruitment and election of Directors Aoibhneas developed and launched a Board Induction Handbook and Checklist in 2020.

In 2021 the Board completed an evaluation concerning performance and from there designed a training day conducive to growth and development. The training day facilitated training and information exchanges from The Wheel and Staff team to consider areas like the role of the Charity Regulator, the role of the board, overview of domestic, sexual, gender-based violence sector, the victim's journey and staff role and function.

Development of Step-Down Accommodation

Aoibhneas was informed by Dublin City Council in 2020 that they were successful obtaining their support to develop 15 units for the purpose of step-down accommodation on a site adjacent to the refuge centre. The allocation of 15 units signals an important development for Aoibhneas in the delivery of a more complete and sustained level of care to victims of domestic abuse. In 2021 Aoibhneas established a consultation and focus group and maintained regular engagement with Dublin City Council Design team to advance an accommodation design brief. The design is part of a larger housing development and Aoibhneas is awaiting the progression of planning and development of the full site.

Increased Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns

Throughout COVID-19 there was increased awareness of domestic abuse and its prevalence. Aoibhneas was able to bring awareness to its work, and its ability to remain open and responsive. Aoibhneas engaged with local and national media to promote key messaging around visibility and reachability. This proved important as Aoibhneas was introduced as a specialist voice in frontline service delivery enabling the public

to learn more about the range of domestic abuse supports that exist including how to access them, while also bringing public attention to the issues and real-life experience of women and children who experience domestic abuse including the victim's journey.

Capacity Expansion

By repurposing spaces at our refuge centre to increase operational capacity and remain COVID-19 compliant Aoibhneas lost space to carry out therapeutic support work. In order to ensure we remained available to women and children, we signed off on and awaited the delivery of a 4 room custom-built POD in January 2021. The installation of the POD named Teach Solais (translated means Light House) has created extra space within our refuge facility to engage clients and professionals while also providing staff access to a recreational/ rest space. The acquisition of the Teach Solais was enabled through the generosity of donations received by the public, Tusla- Child and Family Agency and Safe Ireland.



Therapy Room in our new POD - Teach Solais

To all the staff... A heartfelt thanks to everyone. You made our stay memorable. All you guys are amazing!!! You made us feel at home with love, care, support, with privacy and dignity for 8 weeks and 2 days. It was a huge help for me and Sarah*. You helped me save her. She had 8 weeks and 2 days of peace of mind and happiness away from our abuser. We owe you a lot.

Community Expansion

Aoibhneas opened new community offices in Smithfield and Swords in 2021, and with community offices already in Balbriggan and Coolock, Aoibhneas has increased its coverage enabling greater visibility and reach within the communities it serves - Dublin North, North County Dublin and North Inner City. In addition to its community offices, Aoibhneas was able to resume satellite clinics in Balbriggan, Swords, Ballymun, Finglas, Dublin City Centre, thereby re-establishing links with professional and community-based organisations who throughout the pandemic had to cease, alter, or scale down services.

Growth in areas of community and outreach is particularly important, given Aoibhneas aim to work in a preventative manner and to reduce the escalation of risk and reliance on refuge as a last resort by enabling families to remain in their homes and communities.



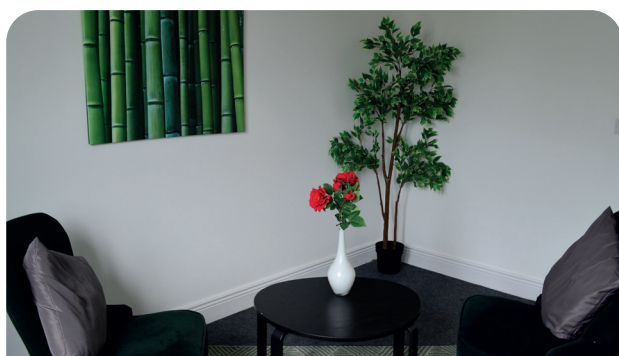
899

Women and Children accessed direct support through Outreach and Community

Annual Report and Webinar Launch

As Aoibhneas adjusted to life in the virtual lane with the introduction of hybrid led client interventions, Aoibhneas launched its Annual Impact Report 2020 to a virtual audience outlining details of its service delivery in 2020 bringing into focus the needs Aoibhneas saw emerge from the onset of the pandemic and its organisational response to these needs.

The webinar also focused on a survey completed with women engaged in Aoibhneas on domestic violence and parenting post separation.



Therapy Room, Applewood Community Office



Lord Mayor Allison Gilliland visiting Aoibhneas and meeting Service Users

Launch of 24-Hour Freephone Helpline

We launched our 24-Hour freephone helpline in September, as need for community support continued to rise during Covid-19. The Freephone Helpline reduces barriers of access and offers a critical lifeline for women and children experiencing domestic abuse.

The launch of the helpline was made possible by fundraising support Aoibhneas received since the onset of the pandemic.

Volunteer Programme

We launched our volunteer programme in the Autumn of 2021. The aim of the volunteer programme is to support Aoibhneas in its mission to promote safety, recovery and healing for women and children living with Domestic Abuse. Through volunteer engagement Aoibhneas has increased visibility in the following areas:

- Court Preparation and Accompaniment Service
- Helpline
- Holistic and Therapeutic Interventions

In addition, Volunteer Helpers assisted preparing food hampers, toiletries and clothes and gift wrapping to ensure donations reach families around seasonal celebrations like Christmas as well as special celebrations like Birthdays, Mother's Day, Confirmations, Communions.

Trauma Informed Care and Courageous Conversations Training

Trauma forms part of why Aoibhneas exists. As such, Aoibhneas recognises trauma as widespread and far-reaching. Trauma experiences, can impact on individuals so much that it creates difficulties in relationships between service users and service providers.

Aoibhneas considered it imperative to create safe and nurturing relationships between staff and service users to facilitate greater recovery from trauma and positive engagement within service. Aoibhneas introduced trauma informed training for all staff, and from there introduced a trauma informed care approach to areas of practice. Courageous Conversations training followed on from Trauma Informed Care Training to enable the Aoibhneas team agree shared values that facilitate open and honest dialogue to support individuals and groups to have difficult and challenging conversations.

Aoibhneas commits to basing conversations on shared values, to enable partnership with those who may have different points of view or understanding of a situation by living its shared values to foster a culture of connection, accountability, problem solving and compassion.



Melanie Farrell, Lord Mayor Allison Gilliland and Emma Reidy at the Launch of Aoibhneas 24-Hour Freephone Helpline

Organisation Structure, Governance & Management

Aoibhneas is constituted as a company limited by guarantee as set out under parts 1 – 15 of the Companies Act 2014. Its purpose and objects are set out in its Constitution and is publicly available from the Companies Registration Office website (www.cro.ie).

Governance and Charity Compliance

Aoibhneas adopted the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in 2018. Aoibhneas is Charity Regulator Governance Code compliant, details pertaining to company status are updated on the Charity Regulator Website (www.charitiesregulator.ie)

Aoibhneas is an Approved Housing Body, details pertaining to company status are updated on the Housing Agency Website (www.housingagency.ie)

Our Organisational Structure

The Management and staff team provide a multidisciplinary range of practical, emotional and therapeutic supports for women and children. Our frontline team includes Keyworkers, Social Care Workers, Outreach Workers, a Court Accompaniment Worker, Weekend Activity and Support Workers and Night Support Worker.

Board of Management

Members of the Board of Management offer their services on a voluntary basis. They direct the organisation's affairs while meeting the appropriate interests of its stakeholders and comply with all necessary legislation and regulation.

The Board discharge the day-to-day organisation and running the company to CEO Emma Reidy, her management team, frontline support staff and administrative staff.

ONE FAMILY ONE TEAM



Organisational Structure

Board of Directors

Management Team

CEO

Head of Services

Social Care Leaders

Community and Volunteer Co-ordinator

Multi-Disciplinary Team

Social Care Workers

Keyworkers

Outreach Workers

Court Accompaniment Worker

Weekend and Activity Support Workers

Night Support Workers

Administrators

Housekeeper and Maintenance Personnel

Board Committees

The Board has decided to operate the following sub-committees of the Board:

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee monitors and reviews the financial performance of the Company. It provides an independent review of the annual budgets, forecasts, monthly management and annual financial statements and reports. The Committee also undertakes Governance reviews. The Committee makes recommendations to the Board as relevant.

Strategic Development & Planning Committee

The Strategic Development & Planning Committee sets the organisations strategic objectives over the medium and long term. The Committee is responsible for developing the organisations strategic plan and for setting realistic KPI's to evaluate performance of both the Board and management team in line with the plan. The Committee is also responsible for evaluating and assessing growth opportunities for the organisation and to report said opportunities back to the Board.

Risk Management Committee

The Risk Management Committee monitors risk within the organisation by promoting Risk Management is an integral and ongoing part of a management process, is as simple and straightforward as possible and that structures and responsibilities are clearly defined. As such a Health and Safety Committee comprised of staff and a committee member meet to consider Health and Safety issues. The Committee refers all pertinent issues into the Risk Management Committee for review and consideration in the context of Risk Management and Audit.

Human Resources & Staffing Committee

The Human Resources and Staffing Committee assists the Board in ensuring that all pertinent human resources and staffing issues are reviewed, monitored, and highlighted to the Board as necessary. It ensures that best practice recruitment and selection processes are in place and utilised in full and that future hiring requirements are identified and planned as efficiently and effectively as possible. The Committee also supports the CEO in the resolution of day-to-day human resources and staffing issues where input is requested by the CEO.

2021 Board Meeting Attendance

Board Member	Board Meeting	Finance	HR	Strategy	Risk Management and Health & Safety	AGM
Richard Plenty	8/9			4/4		Y
Donal Costello	5/9					Y
Melanie Farrell	8/9	5/5		4/4		Y
Aoibheann Treacy	8/9	5/5				Y
Ciara Savage	9/9				5/5	Y
Fiona Scott	6/9					Y
Fiona Little	9/9			3/4		Y
Bláthnaid Evans	8/9		3/3			Y
Nickie Fowler	7/9	5/5				Y

Representation and Membership In 2021

We continued our representation roles at:

- Children and Young People's Services Committee
- Child Family Support Networks
- Prevention, Partnership and Family Support
- Tusla Accommodation Review Advisory 2020 – 2021
- Irish Observatory on Violence against Women and Girls

We continued our membership roles at:

- The National Women's Council of Ireland
- SAFE Ireland
- The Wheel
- IBEC
- Irish Council for Social Housing
- Northside Partnership

**"AOIBHNEAS LIMITED" COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING SHARE CAPITAL)**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
(CONTINUED) FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

	Restricted Funds 2021 €	Unrestricted Funds 2021 €	Total Funds 2021 €	Total Funds 2020 €
Income				
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds	-	<u>210,120</u>	<u>210,120</u>	<u>125,887</u>
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities	<u>1,424,740</u>	<u>10,826</u>	<u>1,435,566</u>	<u>1,409,456</u>
Other Incoming Resources	-	-	-	-
Total Incoming Resources	<u>1,424,740</u>	<u>220,946</u>	<u>1,645,686</u>	<u>1,535,343</u>
Expenditure				
Cost of Generating Funds	-	-	-	-
Charitable Activities	<u>1,415,754</u>	<u>64,519</u>	<u>1,510,273</u>	<u>1,410,972</u>
Governance Costs	<u>26,611</u>	-	<u>26,611</u>	<u>23,519</u>
	<u>1,515,605</u>	<u>98,007</u>	<u>1,613,612</u>	<u>1,437,583</u>
Net (Outgoing)/Incoming Resources Before Transfers	<u>(89,865)</u>	<u>122,939</u>	<u>33,074</u>	<u>97,760</u>
Transfers	<u>32,312</u>	<u>32,312</u>	-	-
Transfers Between Funds	-	-	-	-
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	<u>(57,553)</u>	<u>90,627</u>	<u>33,074</u>	<u>97,760</u>

The Statement of Financial Activities has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing operations.

There are no recognised gains and losses other than those passing through the Statement of Financial Activities.

**"AOIBHNEAS LIMITED" COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING SHARE CAPITAL)**

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021**

	2021		2020	
	€	€	€	€
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets	<u>324,526</u>		<u>324,526</u>	
		<u>322,150</u>		<u>322,150</u>
Current assets				
Debtors	<u>10,287</u>		<u>14,805</u>	
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>908,487</u>		<u>918,774</u>	
	<u>942,457</u>		<u>957,262</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(75,454)		(192,640)	
Net current assets		<u>843,320</u>		<u>764,622</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>1,167,846</u>		<u>1,086,772</u>
Net assets		<u>1,119,846</u>		<u>1,086,772</u>
Reserves				
Restricted Reserves		<u>10,000</u>		<u>67,553</u>
Designated Reserves		<u>350,000</u>		<u>350,000</u>
Unrestricted Reserves		<u>759,846</u>		<u>669,219</u>
Members funds		<u>1,119,846</u>		<u>1,086,772</u>

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 6 September 2022 and signed on behalf of the board by:

Melanie Farrell
Director

Aoibheann Treacy
Director

**"AOIBHNEAS LIMITED" COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING SHARE CAPITAL)**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS (CONTINUED)
FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

	2021 €	2020 €
Cash flows from operating activities		
Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year	33,074	97,760
<i>Adjustments for:</i>		
Depreciation of tangible assets	92,583	90,943
Government grant income	(38,040)	(15,549)
Accrued expenses/(income)	(130,928)	111,025
<i>Changes in:</i>		
Trade and other debtors	4,518	661
Trade and other creditors	61,742	685
Cash generated from operations	59,989	299,752
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	59,989	299,752
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible assets	(94,959)	(74,915)
Proceeds from sale of tangible assets	-	-
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	(94,959)	(74,915)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Government grant income	38,040	15,549
Net cash from financing activities	38,040	15,549
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(33,970)	224,837
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	942,457	717,620
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	908,487	942,457

Note

Out of the company's cash reserves it maintains a sinking fund reserve of €260,000 and designated funding reserve of €350,000 for the development of a dedicated centre to support children affected by domestic abuse. Restricted reserves forward are accumulated reserves from the current funder Tulsa, previous funder Dublin City Council and certain other specific grants awarded. Unrestricted reserves forward are reserves accumulated from previous funders since the incorporation of the company up until now along with income streams that are not restricted.

The complete set of Audited Accounts 2021

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Aoibhneas Company Limited By Guarantee for the financial year ended 31 December 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activity (Including Income and Expenditure Account), balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 3. 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.

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 profit 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
- Have been 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 further described 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 the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and the provisions available for small entities, in the

circumstances set out in note 18 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

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you where:

- The directors use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate
- The directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Note

A full copy of Aoibhneas CLG Audited Accounts 2021 can be obtained through the Companies Registration Office (www.cro.ie) and the Charities Regulator (www.charitiesregulator.ie)

Mary's Story

Mary has been a client of our Community and Outreach Service for 8 months. Mary has been separated from her ex-husband for 2 years, however, her experience of abuse continues. During her marriage, Mary experienced physical, emotional, psychological and digital abuse. The abuse escalated after the birth of her son who has grown up witnessing the abuse perpetrated by his father.

Now, aged 13, Mary's son has begun to mirror his father's behaviours and has become both aggressive and abusive towards his mother. Since the onset of Covid-19 and the introduction of restrictions in 2020, Mary identified her son become angrier and more withdrawn. Mary disclosed her son physically assaulted her and on one occasion threatened to end her life as he held a knife to her throat.

In 2021 Mary's son moved in with his father, after which Mary observed a further decline in her son's treatment to her, with her son mocking and calling her names and assaulting her during visitation.

Mary's son came back to live with her after only a short period with his father. Mary disclosed high levels of anxiety and fear over her son's return home, how she felt prevented from parenting her son and promoting her safety within her home. As a result, Mary started locking herself in her room and curtailing her movement in her home. Mary said her ex-husband actively encourages her son's behaviour and fears for her son and the impact this is having on him. Mary disclosed finding drug paraphernalia in her son's room, noting a decline in his mental health and increased concerns for her own safety.

Mary's Community and Outreach worker supported her with a referral to counselling supports for her son, however her ex-husband prevented his son's access and engagement by withholding consent. Mary's Community and Outreach worker provided tailored supports sessions in understanding the impact of domestic abuse on children and parenting, and safety planning.

Aoibhneas has supported Mary with contact and engagement with Tusla, Child and Family Agency and community services to escalate her concerns and access supports. These supports range from Mary's son access to his School Liaison Officer, and Mary's access into a Non-Violent Resistant Programme, a programme designed to support parents experiencing child to parent violence and support parents managing their child's challenging behaviour.

Mary's experience highlights how ending an abusive relationship does not signal the end of abuse, how abuse can be directed and experienced and how children experience adverse childhood trauma, and if unrecognised and un-treated can lead to long term adverse impacts into adulthood.



Awknowledgements

Our work is made possible by the funding support of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and specifically the agency's Domestic Sexual and Gender-based Violence unit. Our relationship with Tusla goes beyond a funding relationship as we work on an inter and multi-agency basis with Tusla staff to provide services and better outcomes for victims of domestic abuse.

We thank the Department of Justice/ Victims of Crime contribution in 2021 to our services as they relate to accompanying victims to court and providing support around legal processes. We look forward to working closely with the Department and ultimately the new Agency tasked with the DSGBV brief and the implementation of the Third National Strategy.

Thank you to the local authorities we work intensively with to support better housing and accommodation outcomes for clients engaged with our service- Fingal County Council and Dublin City Council. Thank you to Dublin City Council who continue to support our expansion efforts, to bring step down accommodation on stream.

A huge thank you to the other individuals, organisations and agencies, both statutory and NGO, whom we work with every day in Dublin to ensure women and children experiencing domestic abuse get the help and support that they need at they journey from crisis to recovery.

A big thank you to our staff team for the outstanding work that they do. They continually to go above and beyond and we are truly grateful for all their hard work and commitment. THANK YOU!

Special thank you to all our donors who, through their generosity, allow us to provide practical assistance to women and children. In 2021 we continued to receive an incredible response from members of the public, as a result we were able to bring emotional,

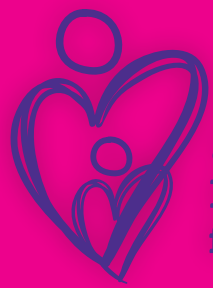
practical, and financial supports to vulnerable families living with us and in the community. We wish to acknowledge the efforts of Danny, Kilian and Patrick who nominated Aoibhneas as their charity of choice for the 4x4x48 challenge, as a result of the money received through this fundraiser, we were able to make our 24- Hour Helpline Freephone. Special thanks to DLA Piper for choosing Aoibhneas as their Charity Partner and taking on pro bono services, fundraising and volunteering in 2021. A very special mention to David, Hidden Depth who completely redesigned our website on a pro bono basis.



Launch of our Shining the Light on Domestic Abuse Campaign



Patrick Fitzgerald and Danny O'Sullivan, 4x4x48 Challenge Organisers with Emma Reidy at Freephone Helpline Launch



Aoibhneas

**Domestic Abuse Support
for Women and Children**

Safety. Recovery. Freedom.



Thank you for giving me the tools to understand where I've come from, to recognize how it happened, to understand why it happened and to help make sure it never happens again.

Forever in your gratitude.



Healthy
Fingal

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice



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**Domestic Abuse Support
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