



Annual Report 2023





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1 Who we are and what we stand for



Who We Are

Aoibhneas was established in June 1988 to meet the needs of women and children experiencing domestic abuse living in the Ballymun area. At that time, we supported women and children from a three-bedroom flat in Ballymun. Our accommodation provision expanded in 1997 with the opening of a new purpose-built 10-unit refuge in Coolock. In addition to our refuge centre, Aoibhneas has developed and adapted its service provision to support the needs of the community and to provide a continuum of care to women and children experiencing domestic abuse through access to a 24-hour Freephone Helpline and community and outreach service covering the North County Dublin and North Dublin area.



Play session with our Social Care team.

Our Beliefs

Our work with women and children experiencing domestic abuse is underpinned by a number of core beliefs centred on the impact of domestic abuse, individual human rights and how we respond:

Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on a person's wellbeing and in turn, a community's wellbeing. In some instances, it can be fatal. Women and children have a fundamental right to safety in their own home and the existence or threat of abuse deprives them of this right.

Being 'safe' is more than being physically safe – it includes all aspects of wellbeing.

Domestic abuse does not exist in a vacuum. How we respond as services, family members and friends is crucial. This response is informed by culture, media and societal perceptions of domestic abuse and gender inequality. We work to positively influence others and to create societal change.

Domestic abuse in all its forms is a violation of basic human rights. Every woman and child has a right to live free from abuse.

Our Beliefs

Vision

At Aoibhneas, we believe that abuse of any kind should not be tolerated. Our vision is to demonstrate leadership and partnership at both community and national level to seek to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence, including intergenerational abuse, through personal, social, political and legislative change. Where domestic abuse is perpetrated, our aim is to provide women and children full access to a range of interventions that enable recovery, healing and positive growth, at the earliest opportunity.

Mission

At Aoibhneas we seek to challenge and eliminate all forms of gender-based violence, including intergenerational abuse, through education and awareness.

We aim to empower women and children to live in safety and freedom from domestic abuse through the delivery of a range of therapeutic and crisis supports through the expansion of intervention-based accommodation and community services.



Refuge communal kitchen

Our Team Motto

The motto that we operate by is One Family One Team. The meaning behind our motto is layered. At the most basic level, we invite service users, staff, collaborators, supporters, and funders to join our family. Joining our family for service users carries particular meaning, because for a lot of women and children that access our service, they feel isolated, removed and disconnected from their own family, friends and networks. From the moment a service user engages with our service we aim to create a sense of belonging.

From an organisational perspective, we respect everyone's individualism, and how everyone's individual makeup and effort supports a shared purpose and vision.

We aim to reinforce a shared sense of commitment and partnership amongst our service users, staff, collaborators, supporters and funders to promote better outcomes for women and children.

Purpose





Celebrating Sandra McAdam's 30 years' of service with colleagues through the years.



Play session



Art Exhibition hosted by Aoibhneas during the 16 Days of Action Opposing Violence Against Women, Swords Castle

Our Values

As an organisation we are:

Compassionate: Our work is person centred and built on the fundamental human rights of our service users. We strive to understand the suffering of others and are motivated to alleviate this suffering. We respond to another's suffering through positively using an interpersonal and individualised approach. We promote kindness and empathy towards colleagues, to remain connected, healthy, and productive as we work with trauma on a day-to-day basis.

Empowering: We support our service users to heal and to become stronger and more confident in controlling their lives and claiming their rights, including the right to freedom from abuse. At an organisational level we put in place structures to enable, where possible, decision making at every level within the organisation..

Empathetic: We give service users the necessary time and space to express their feelings and emotions and we respond supportively and without judgement. At an organisational level we strive to actively engage and listen, at the same time encouraging genuine perspective taking and compassion.

Respectful: We treat our service users with courtesy, dignity and respect, showing them consideration and working with them at their pace. At an organisational level we promote respect as an action by exhibiting an interest in, and appreciation for, others' perspectives, knowledge, skills, and abilities, by expressing recognition and gratitude for the efforts and contributions of others and by taking concerns seriously

Courageous: We hold courageous conversations with service users about their situation and options for them, with staff about their own development and the development of the organisation, with policy makers and funders about how our vision can be achieved and supported. We strive to encourage discussion and conversation within the organisation defined by a commitment to lean into vulnerability and create a culture that inspires courage. This involves stepping up as a leader in our area of specialism, pioneering efforts including stepping into new areas, and taking action.

Trustworthy: We work hard to gain and maintain our service users' trust and confidence. We are honest in our dealings with them, with our staff, with our partners, collaborators and other stakeholders.

Learning: We learn from our service users' experiences and their feedback to us and this informs how we work internally and with others. We keep up to date with the latest developments and practices in our sector and apply the knowledge gained to our own work.

Ambitious: We are driven and have the determination to work to eliminate gender-based abuse. We endeavour to foster individual and collective ambition by hiring motivated employees that feed into organisational culture to promote progressive change.

2 A Note From Our Chairperson

Dear Supporters, Friends, and Allies,

It is with profound gratitude and a shared sense of purpose that I present to you our Annual Report for 2023. This past year has been a time of reflection, consolidation, and growth. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and amidst the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, Aoi bhneas has remained steadfast in its commitment to responding to unmet needs while navigating the constant demand for our services. The resilience we've shown during these challenges speaks to the dedication of our team, the strength of our partnerships, and the trust our valued supporters have placed in us.

Throughout the year, our devoted team has worked tirelessly to provide victims and survivors of domestic abuse a supportive community and a pathway from crisis to recovery, healing, and ultimately freedom. The case studies shared within this report highlight the courage and resilience of the women and children we serve. Their stories are not only a reflection of the hardships they have endured but also a testament to the unwavering commitment of our staff, volunteers, and partners in driving meaningful, lasting changes they journey from crisis to recovery.

Our accomplishments in 2023 have reached far beyond the immediate impact of our services. Among our key achievements are:

- Development of a new refuge centre including site acquisition, design brief development, approval of Capital Appraisal Support Stage 1 and the onboarding of an integrated design team.
- Design consultation and planning permission approval for Children and Youth service upgrade
- A comprehensive staffing review in recognition of key areas of development over the life cycle of our Strategic Plan 2023-2027.
- Trauma informed training for our staff team in the use of our 24/7 Freephone helpline
- Expansion of community and outreach services in the areas of our court service and through the launch of our APSIRE Programme.
- Delivery of core therapeutic programmes and interventions including the launch of somatic experience, integrated psychotherapy and Jungian sand tray therapy and the delivery of our Freedom programme to women inmates in the Dochas Centre.



Play time at our plaground!



“

Our service activity and key achievements would not have been possible without the collective efforts of our dedicated team, who remain the foundation of our organisation.

”

- Strengthened relationships with frontline personnel through scheduled agency visits, training and engagement through agreed referral pathways and escalations.
- Ongoing professional development and CPD accredited and unaccredited training for frontline professionals.
- The launch of our podcast series aimed at spreading information and awareness around domestic abuse, its forms and impacts, while breaking the legal and court process down through conversation.
- The development of a legal resource toolkit and through our website our I Need Help section translated into multiple languages.

These initiatives are all grounded in our commitment to empowering women and children while maintaining strong advocacy efforts on their behalf.

Our service activity and key achievements would not have been possible without the collective efforts of our dedicated team, who remain the foundation of our organisation. We also welcome the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual, and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) and its focus on Zero Tolerance and establishment of CUAN, a new standalone State agency dedicated to DSGBV, overseen by Minister for Justice Helen McEntee TD.

To our shareholders, I express my deepest gratitude for your continued trust and support. To our incredible employees, thank you for your tireless dedication and commitment. And to our partners, donors, and funders—your collaboration, generosity, and belief in our mission have been instrumental in our achievements. Your support allows us to bridge critical funding gaps, raise awareness, and sustain the vital services we provide.

As we celebrate the milestones of the past year, we look to the future with renewed energy and determination. Together, with your continued support, we will persist in our mission to amplify the conversation around domestic abuse, challenge harmful misconceptions, and lead with the values of compassion, respect, empathy, and empowerment. Together, we can build safe homes and communities where no one has to live in fear.

Warmest regards,



Aoibheann Treacy
Chairperson

3 Chief Executive Officer's Welcome





Chief Executive Officer's Welcome

I am pleased to present our Annual Report for the year 2023, outlining the significant achievements, challenges, and impact of our work. It is with immense gratitude and a sense of purpose that I reflect on the strides we have taken in our mission to combat domestic abuse and provide support to women and children victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Over the past year, our organisation has navigated a changing and complex landscape marked by the lingering effects of a cost-of-living crisis and an ever-increasing demand for our essential services.

Impact and Cost of Living and Housing Crisis

The cost-of-living crisis has placed increased financial strain on vulnerable women and children, leaving them more susceptible to abusive situations or further compounding experiences of poverty and financial hardship. Further to this the housing crisis continues to limit victims in their ability to leave an abusive relationship and remain out of an abusive relationship, with critically low access to refuge spaces, short term housing, step down or supported housing and private rental accommodation. In 2023 we saw the lack of move on options post refuge continue to impact adversely a family's recovery from domestic abuse with **21%** of families post refuge accessing homeless services, **34%** of families post refuge returning home and **14%** of families post refuge seeking accommodation through family and friends.

We accommodated through our refuge centre and Airbnb **243** 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 while in 2022 we saw plans to develop a step-down accommodation solution for family's stall we advocated for Dublin City Council to recommence engagement on the proposed development or offer an alternative solution to enable us to respond to the medium-term accommodation needs of families to no avail. This feeds into the criticism we hold regarding how housing solutions do not go far enough to resource women and children

victims and survivors of domestic abuse in their post refuge journey out of homelessness.

Unprecedented Demand for Services

The demand for our services remains consistency high, as more individuals respond to signposting and recognise the importance of seeking help and support. Our organisation faces the challenge of meeting ongoing demand with limited resources. This has called for innovative solutions, efficient resource allocation, and close collaboration with other stakeholders in our sector.

A key achievement for Aoibhneas in 2023 was our ability to directly support **1,022** women and children experiencing domestic abuse from **44** different country of origins, through the delivery of **59,161** interventions to women and **15,606** interventions to children, representing a staggering **57%** and **152%** increase based on our activity in 2022. Further to that we supported **5,720** callers through our 24-hour Freephone Helpline. Our ability to reach and safeguard families experiencing domestic abuse remains our number one priority.

In 2023 we progressed our plans to develop and refurbish dedicated therapeutic spaces 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 in 2025 of this much needed centre for children, a first of its kind in Ireland.

In 2023 we acquired a site for the development of a 13-unit refuge centre with the assistance of Fingal County Council. In 2023 we developed a design brief, achieved Stage 1 Capital Appraisal Support (CAS) Approval, developed a general description of services for the acquisition of an integrated design team and commenced the tender process to procure and onboard an integrated Design Team and Project Manager with support from the Housing Agency. In 2023 alone Aoibhneas could not accommodate **522** families seeking refuge, a **30%** increase on the previous year. This refuge development will go



Over the past year, our organisation has navigated a changing and complex landscape marked by the lingering effects of a cost-of-living crisis and an ever-increasing demand for our essential services.



some way to meet the very immediate and short-term needs of families in crisis by providing refuge accommodation in the North County area when it comes on stream, however we continue to advocate with Fingal County Council and Dublin City Council for access to interim accommodation solutions to alleviate the demand for refuge to resource women and children who are seeking access to safety with supports and resources through specialist accommodation providers like Aoibhneas.

Looking Forward

Our 5 Year Strategic Plan, aligned with the four pillars of the Third National Strategy on DSGBV-Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Policy Co-ordination, will see Aoibhneas continue to lead in the delivery of key supports across the sector to develop what is required and at a minimum to deliver on the requirements of the Istanbul Convention. Our Strategic Plan 2023-2027 reinforces our commitment to combating domestic abuse and supporting survivors with enhanced focus on furthering our advocacy efforts, expanding our accommodation and community-based support services, and working collaboratively to create systemic change.

While our year-end financial results show stability, this remains 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 operational costs. We face uncertainty in the wake of the cost-of-living and energy crisis and require increased dedicated and specified funding from our core funder Tusla, Child and Family Agency and Cuan, Department of Justice from 2024 to meet increasing operational costs and the shortfall in fundraised income.

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.

In conclusion, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated board, staff, volunteers, supporters, and partners. With your support and belief in our mission we are confident in our ability to make a lasting impact and bring positive change to the lives of those affected by domestic abuse.

With warm regards,



Emma Reidy
Chief Executive
Officer

Cara's Story



Background: Cara, an 18-year-old single woman originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, came to Aoibhneas just three weeks after her 18th birthday. Her journey into the refuge began when her school teacher raised concerns about her safety, prompting involvement from both An Garda Síochána and Tusla, The Child and Family Agency. Following these interventions, Cara was referred to Aoibhneas by a Garda of the Domestic Abuse Coordination Team (DACT) in her local area.

Presenting Needs: Cara was experiencing familial abuse at the hands of her father, who subjected her to physical, verbal, and financial abuse. Cara disclosed that her father would physically assault her using belts and shoes and invade her privacy by going through her personal belongings. Her basic human needs, such as food and hygiene, were restricted, including being denied access to the toilet and food in the home. Upon arrival at refuge, Cara had not eaten regularly for over 2-weeks, with the only food she had access to being the lunches provided by her school.

Cara also disclosed that her father had issued multiple death threats, which she believed to be serious and credible. These threats, coupled with the ongoing abuse, led her to flee her home for safety.

Refuge Experience: The refuge team worked to provide Cara with immediate support, including vouchers for essentials, transportation support, and eventually access to consistent financial support.

Despite our efforts, Cara faces numerous barriers, especially regarding documentation and financial stability. She recently completed her 5th year of secondary school and is preparing for her Leaving Cert year, but lacks formal identification, which has hampered access to social welfare and other essential services. Her status in Ireland is uncertain, as she has no knowledge of the visa or documentation process that facilitated her arrival. Cara believes her father and stepmother may have destroyed her passport and other key documents, a suspicion confirmed by An Garda Síochána during a failed attempt to retrieve her paperwork.

The refuge team successfully secured a one-off Emergency Needs Payment and grant aid for Cara, however her long-term financial support remains precarious. To help address this, Cara's keyworker created a monthly budget to help Cara manage her day-to-day expenses.

Support Network: The refuge team has coordinated with multiple organisations to build a strong support network for Cara. These include:

- Immigrant Council of Ireland to address immigration concerns and documentation.
- Crosscare and Swan Youth Centre for youth and social services support.
- Mercy Law Centre to assist with legal challenges.
- DACT Gardai by continuing to provide protection and advocacy for Cara.

Despite ongoing efforts, Cara's housing situation remains uncertain, with delays to Cara's applications for housing and emergency accommodation being processed through Fingal County Council due to complications linked to her immigration status. Cara remains without concrete move-on pathways, because of this Cara also availed of an extended stay at Aoibhneas.

Barriers and Advocacy: Cara's lack of Identification and official immigration status has proven to be one of the most significant obstacles. Without these, it has been difficult to secure consistent financial supports or long-term housing options.

Conclusion: The refuge team supported Cara with access to step-down accommodation, medium term financial and keyworking support.

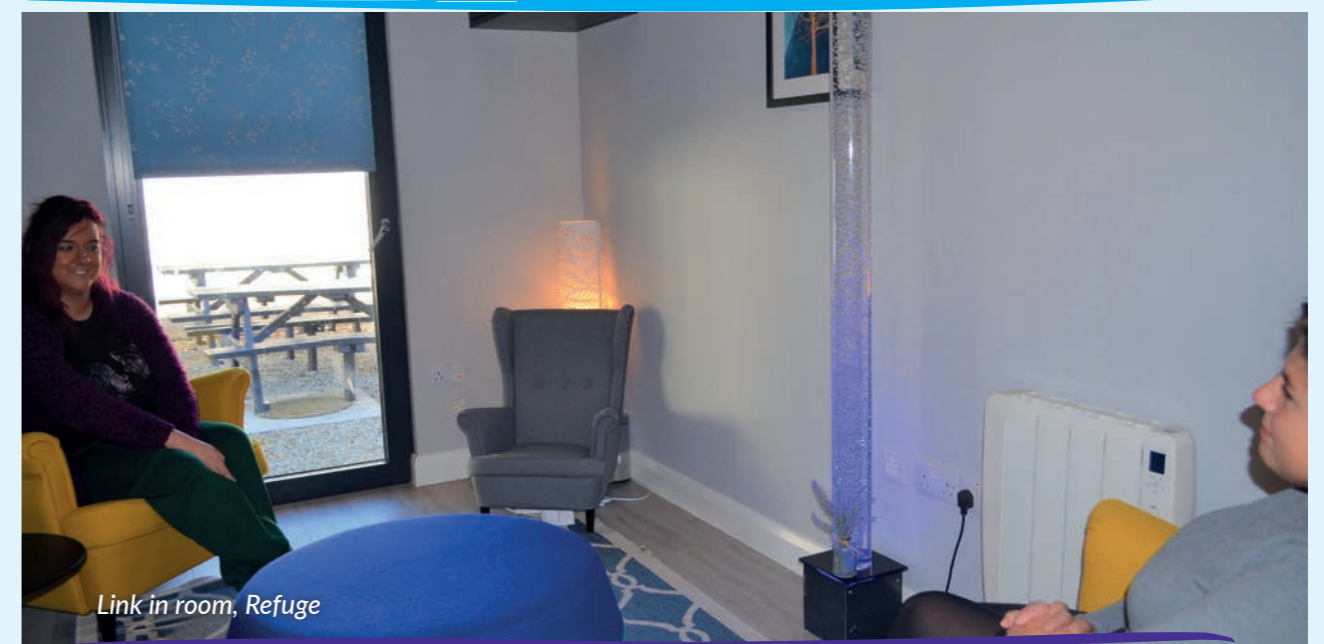
Cara's story is one of resilience in the face of profound adversity. She has survived the trauma of familial abuse and homelessness and continues to fight for her future as she navigates the complex systems of immigration, housing, and social welfare.



Refuge communal kitchen



Link in room, Community Outreach Office



Link in room, Refuge

4 Our Services

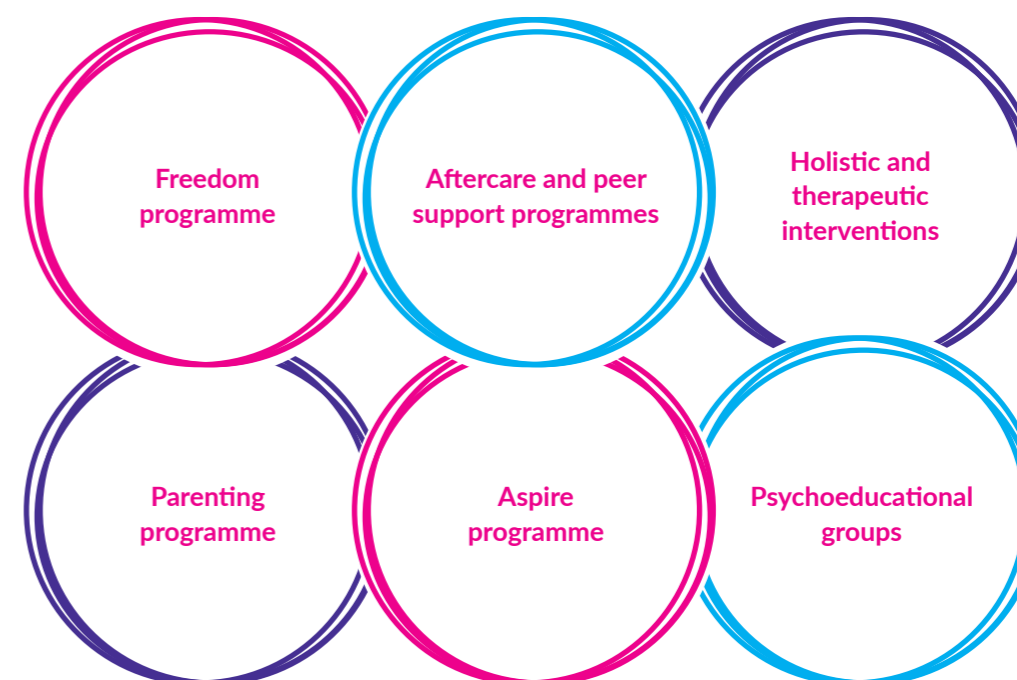


Our Services

Our objective is to provide victims and survivors of domestic abuse access to information and support through a range of interventions across our services including.



We deliver a range of one to one and group interventions across our service including:





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 offers facilities such as a communal 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 2023, we supported **219** women and children through access to refuge and **24** women and children with access to Airbnb accommodation. Within these settings, we provided a number of interventions to women and children. In 2023, we supported women with access to **39,240** interventions and children with access to **11,756** interventions (representing a **59%** increase in interventions to women and **116%** increase of interventions to children provided in 2022). In addition to planned admissions and arrivals to our refuge centre **22** women and children presented to our centre in crisis, in these presentations women and children signalled feeling unsafe, unable to return home and seeking immediate support, information and referral to an alternative location when we had no room availability.



24 Freephone Helpline

Access to a 24-hour freephone confidential helpline service to women experiencing domestic abuse and agencies, family, friends ringing on behalf of victims looking for information and/or referral into our service.

In 2023, we provided support through our helpline to **5,735** callers (**9%** decrease on service activity in 2022). The ongoing demand we see for helpline support signifies an important access route for callers experiencing domestic abuse seeking information, support, and accommodation, however the decrease signals greater engagement between service providers regarding the availability of refuge accommodation through our shared bed availability APP Safe Space, necessitating less engagement on the part of the caller.



Outreach and Community Support

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 with offices in Coolock, Smithfield, Swords and Balbriggan and several satellite clinics located in Dublin City Centre, Finglas, Ballymun, Coolock, Swords.

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.

In 2023, we provided direct support to **779** 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 family's engagement with our service is sustained to ensure as they journey from crisis to recovery, we provide adequate and tailored interventions and supports.

In 2023, we supported women with access to **19,921** interventions and children with access to **3,850** interventions through community and outreach (representing a **53%** increase in interventions to women and **2%** increase in interventions to children provided in 2022)

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 experiences of domestic abuse. In 2023 we supported **133** women and children with access to drop-in support through our refuge centre.



Court Preparation and Accompaniment Service

In 2023, we provided case management support and assistance to **927** women and children through access to **5,486** interventions in our court preparation and accompaniment support service including

- **123** Court accompaniments
- **95** An Garda Síochána, Legal aid, Solicitor, Barrister accompaniment
- **552** Callers to our Court Preparation and Accompaniment Phone Service

Linked to our Victim of Crime funding, Department of Justice under strands prevention and early intervention we developed promotional materials, a FAQ legal guide, website page and podcast and video series with a focus on the victim's journey including a victim's interaction and engagement with the legal and judicial system.

“

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to the entire Aoibhneas Team for all the help provided. You are wonderful people. Special thanks to Robyn my keyworker for the support, she was always by my side for whatever I needed. I never expected to meet such special people in this refuge (I mean the entire staff that works here!). It is easier to get over a trauma with people like you all by my side. You are all and will remain special to me. Thank you!

”

Child/Youth Specific Services

In 2023 we supported **596** children with access to **15,606** interventions through **5,038** engagements (representing a **152%** and **79%** increase on service activity 2022) including access to.

- Childcare (supervised)
- Homework/after-school support
- Breakfast club
- Developmental play
- Play therapy
- 1:1 Therapeutic work
- Group programmes
- Holistic and therapeutic interventions

Advocacy / Accompaniment

Enabling and supporting women and children to attend or access a civil or statutory service with a view to reducing crisis or increasing empowerment. In 2023 we provided **316** (**14%** increase on service activity in 2022) accompaniments to Women and Children, ranging from accompaniment to court, legal support, gardai, mental health services, SATU, medical services, social welfare and social work.

Training and Prevention Work

Aoibhneas recognises in order to reduce the number of people affected by domestic abuse, we must work towards social and community change. Aoibhneas provides specialist training to statutory groups, non-statutory groups, family resource centres, women's groups and specialist domestic violence services responding to domestic violence. As such we were in a position to provide **26** targeted training sessions.



Developmental play session in our Seomra Spraoi, Refuge



Internal Courtyard, Refuge



Self-contained family unit, Refuge

 **Networking and Engagement**

To promote wraparound and collaborative care it is vital that Aobhneas enlist specialist providers to support women and children who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse. In 2023 Aobhneas made **1,262** referrals to external organisations on behalf of women and children receiving a direct service, in addition our staff team made **545** referrals on behalf of service users who engaged our helpline, the source of referrals range from social welfare, counselling services, mental health services, An Garda Síochána, legal services, education supports, immigration services, childcare services, school, CAMHS, family support, social work.

In 2023 we promoted our awareness raising efforts by partaking in and hosting **125** networking and awareness raising events providing information on domestic violence and abuse to victims and survivors, their families and friends and their wider communities with particular focus on collaborative practice and engagement.






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



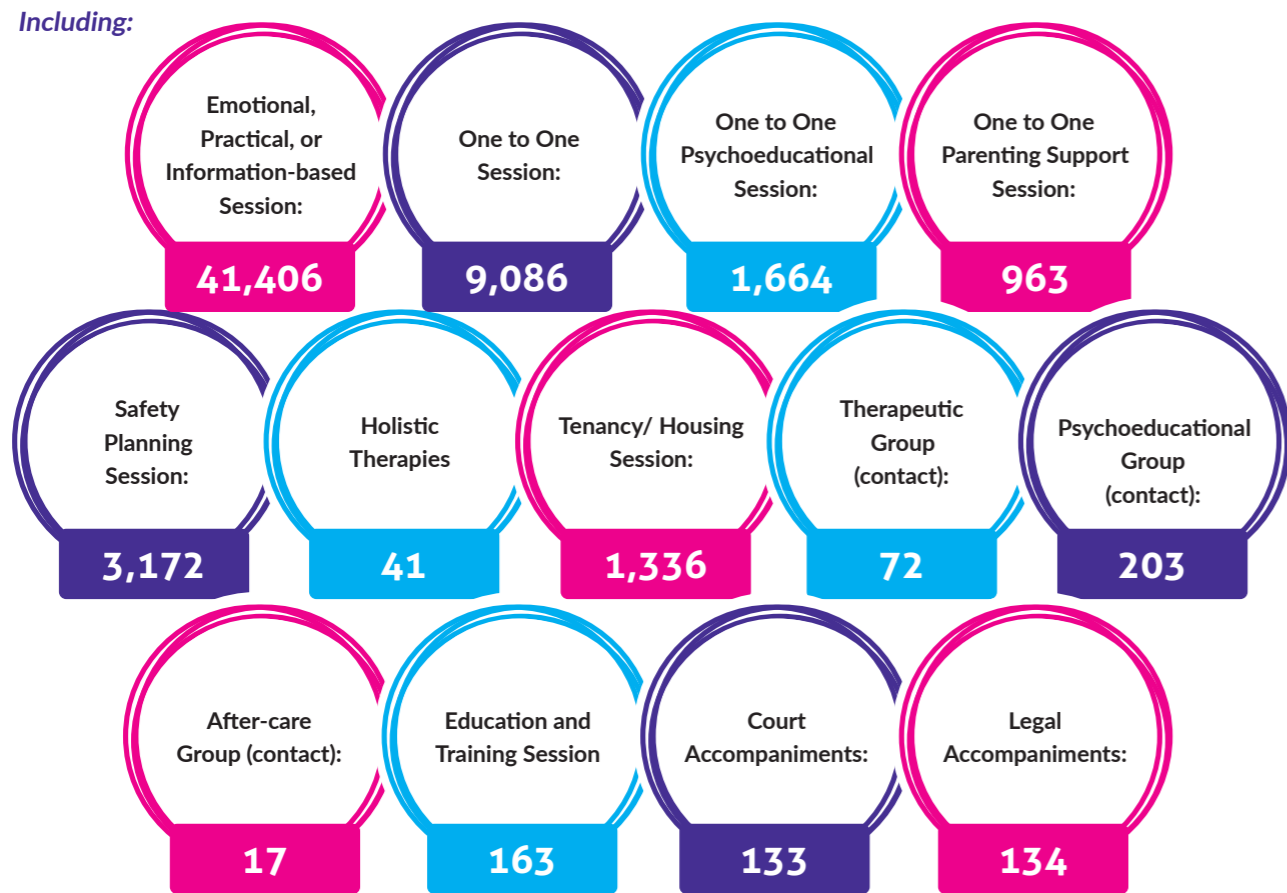
5 Service Activity in 2023



 In 2023 Aoibhneas provided frontline and direct and indirect support to 1,022 women and children in the following areas:

Refuge Accommodation 	Women 109	Children 110
Hotel Initiative 	Women 13	Children 11
Outreach and Community 	Women 231	Children 371
Drop-in service 	Women 55	Children 78
Crisis Presentation to Refuge Centre 	Women 18	Children 26

Total Interventions Women: 59,161 through 23,783 engagements



Total Interventions Children:

15,606 through 5,038 engagements 

Including:




External Accompaniment provided to Women and Children (includes accompaniment to court, legal support, gardai, mental health services, SATU, medical services, social welfare, social work etc.):

316 

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

2,121 

5,720 Helpline Calls: 

Training and prevention workshops

26 

Networking and engagement events (hosted and attended)

103 

Awareness raising events (hosted and attended)

22 

6 Service Delivery in 2023



Service Delivery in 2023

During 2023, we provided direct and indirect support to **1,022** women and children including the delivery of **59,161** (57% increase on service activity 2022) interventions through **23,783** (35% increase on service activity 2022) engagements to women and **15,606** (152% increase on service activity 2022) interventions to children through **5,038** (79% increase on service activity 2022) engagements. Additionally, we responded to **5,720** helpline calls.

In 2023, Aoibhneas provided domestic abuse support to women and children from **44** different country of origins. 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 which has meant that as an organisation we have adapted our service to ensure we cater for the needs of women and children from all backgrounds. **75%** of our clients identified their legal status as National, we noted an increase of complex presentations with **11%** of clients who along with experiences of domestic abuse required support around their immigration status.

In addition to a clients country of origin we recognise the need to consider the ethnicity and race of our client cohort, and as such **6%** of our clients identified as members of the Traveller community.

When it comes to age, domestic abuse does not discriminate and 2023 saw a diverse range of age categories among clients, with our youngest adult refuge resident aged **17** years to our oldest outreach client aged **70** years. Our largest cohort of clients presented in the age ranges **36-44 (31%)**, **27-35 (29%)**, **45-53 (16%)**, with a continued increase in **18-26 (16%)** age category seeking support. **9%** of clients that presented to us were over **54** years of age.

49% of women we supported identified their perpetrator as a current spouse, partner or boyfriend. **37%** 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.

“
I don't want to leave Aoibhneas, I felt more than welcome in here. I will be forever grateful. A special thanks to Dammy, Angelica, Robbie, Raluca, Noleen, Caroline, Marcella and Katy
”

However, **13%** of clients (an increase of **4%** on 2022) disclosed that their abuser was a family member, this represents an increasing trend of adult child to parent violence and familial violence, with clients noting an increase in secondary perpetrators in the form of their perpetrators' family.

Our refuge accommodation responds to the complex and crisis needs of women and families who identify fear and an inability to remain safely in their homes. Our refuge accommodation provided accommodation in the majority of cases to women and children residing in the Dublin area (Dublin City Council **44%**, Fingal County Council **23%**, South Dublin County Council **13%**, and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council **4%**) however we accommodated family's seeking refuge and fleeing counties Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kildare, Louth, Meath, Roscommon, Sligo and Wicklow. Our objective is to support all women seeking accommodation with access to safe accommodation, however due to the considerable need for our refuge service we were unable to accommodate **522** families in 2023. Our goal is to refer to other specialist accommodation providers to ensure women and children's safety and through a bed availability App we co-manage with 7 domestic abuse providers in the Dublin North East region, we have been able to communicate with specialist accommodation providers in real time to resource families without delay or distress.



“
I thank all the staff for your words of encouragement and supporting me when I felt no hope. Thank you all for the love that you have shown me during my stay in Aoibhneas. I'm really happy and grateful for everything. I wish blessings and love to you all.
 ”

In recent years we associate this as a feature of the housing crisis whereby more adult children or adult siblings 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.

Following an intake to refuge a period of assessment commences for resident women and children, during this time we complete a needs survey with every client this guides our care plan and interventions by ultimately providing clients 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 client 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 in the main return home (34%), access homeless services (21%), access supported or transitional housing (15%) and seek accommodation through family and friends (14%).

Exit from refuge	
Family/ Friends	14%
Homeless Accommodation	21%
Other	15%
Private Rent	2%
Returned home with supports	20%
Returned home without supports	14%
Supported/ transitional housing	15%

The lack of alternative move on options impacts a family's length of stay and our ability to accommodate families presenting in crisis, not to mention clients engaging in invisible forms of homelessness like couch surfing or moving in with family and friends in the aftermath of a stay in refuge. In 2023 the average length of refuge stay was 33 days. The chart below shows a stay broken down by family/ unit size.

Family Type	No.	Days (Total)	Mean Average (number of days)
Single women	53	1522	29
Woman and 1 Child	27	1162	43
Woman and 2 children	13	529	40
Woman and 3 children	8	236	30
Woman and 4/ more children	8	157	20

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 (94%), while physical abuse followed with 71% of clients experiencing abuse of that nature. 75% of clients presenting to refuge detailing physical abuse with 29 women and 1 child accessing refuge with physical injuries. Injuries ranged from concussion/ head trauma to broken, broke, dislocated and fractured bones, choking, bruising and cuts and bites, with reference to in some cases to the use of weapons (bar, baseball bat, knife and scissors). In 10 of these cases clients needed immediate referral to medical support. We note the escalating form domestic abuse can take following pregnancy, in 2023 6% of our clients at refuge intake informed us that they were pregnant.

Many clients disclosed more than one type of abuse with financial abuse being another common experience (62%). Digital abuse is a more recent type of abuse experienced by clients (39%) and continues to be used by perpetrators as another form of coercive control. 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 (28%) 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.

Chart v	2023	2022
Emotional	94%	90%
Physical	71%	60%
Financial	62%	54%
Sexual	28%	19%
Digital	39%	29%

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. 42% of clients informed us they had some form of court order in place, this included protection, safety, barring, maintenance and access orders. 41% of clients informed us that prior to accessing our service they had sought Garda assistance regarding their experience of domestic abuse. 24% of clients informed us of past or ongoing involvement with Tusla, Child and Family Agency. A further 23% of 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 2023 we provided direct or indirect support to 596 children across refuge and community. 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. While we can't predict the age profile of children or young people that access refuge with their mothers in crisis, we consistently see higher presentations under 4 years of age (29%) and between the ages of 5-9 years (24%) with increased numbers noted in 2023 from children aged 10 to 14 years (19%).

Aged 0 - 4	Aged 5-9	Aged 10-14	Aged 15-17	Other/ UNK
29%	24%	19%	12%	17%

We support 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. In our community and outreach services we see similar trends of engagement with 0 to 12years representing our biggest cohort (71%)

Aged 0 - 5	Aged 6-12	Aged 13-14	Aged 15-16	Age 17	Other
28%	43%	10%	9%	5%	5%

“
The Aspire programme has been a life line to me and I am sure to all of the others . It was well organised, planned and mapped by Hannah who herself has been so helpful and professional. I would recommend it to everyone who comes to Aoibhneas. It helps on all levels practical, emotional, psychological and moving forward. It gives you hope.
 ”



Maria's Story



Charity partner Pimco donating to our Christmas Appeal 2023



Team Building Day 2023



Aoibhneas in attendance at Voices from the Shadows, an event celebrating stories of ethnic minority women.

Background: Maria is a 37-year-old mother of two children—a 3-year-old son and a 1-year-old daughter—originally from Brazil. She moved to Ireland with her husband over three years ago, under Visa Stamp 1G, which designated her as a dependent of her husband. What was supposed to be a new beginning in a new country became an experience whereby Maria was subjected to control, abuse, and isolation.

Referral Background: Maria's husband identified as a devout Catholic who enforced his rigid set of beliefs through physical and sexual abuse. He used religion as a weapon, confining Maria to their home, denying her the opportunity to work, and forcing her to focus solely on housework and child-rearing. He also controlled Maria's reproductive rights, preventing her from accessing birth control. When Maria expressed her desire to divorce, her husband threatened to kill her.

The birth of her youngest child was followed by a difficult period of postnatal depression. Instead of receiving support, Maria faced more restrictions and emotional abuse. Maria felt increasingly trapped in her home, isolated and fearful of the threats and control her husband exerted over every aspect of her life.

Service Engagement: With the help of a concerned friend, Maria fled to a hotel with her two children and contacted our helpline. She was able to self-refer into our refuge service after attending a drop-in appointment.

Maria's husband controlled all financial and digital resources, this included access to her emails, phone and APPs, making it difficult for her to maintain control over her information. In refuge, Maria was supported in opening her own bank account and setting up a new email address, taking the first steps toward financial independence.

Maria's husband obtained legal representation and took her to court, seeking custody of their children. As part of the legal proceedings, Maria was ordered by the court to surrender her passport and the passports of her children, a situation that left her feeling even more vulnerable and uncertain about her future.

Challenges and Barriers: One of the most significant hurdles Maria faced was the limitations of her immigration status under Stamp 1G. This status restricted her access to essential financial and medical supports. With assistance from our refuge team and Crosscare, Maria was able to secure Stamp 4 status, on a temporary 12-month basis. This at least opened up some pathways for her, but her situation remained uncertain.

Despite these challenges, Maria was granted a Protection Order against her husband, which provided her with some immediate safety. After a number of adjournments Maria is still awaiting a court hearing for a Safety Order, which could offer longer-term protection for herself and her children.

Outcome: Maria and her children stayed in refuge for four months, a time during which she found some sense of security and support. However, upon exiting the service, Maria and her children were placed in homeless accommodation due to a lack of suitable long-term housing options. Even now her immigration status continues to complicate the process of finding stable housing.

The homeless accommodation proved unsuitable for Maria and her children, with Maria concerned that the environment was unstable, with issues related to addiction and volatility among other residents, making it an unsafe and unhealthy place to raise her young children. With no better alternatives and feeling increasingly desperate, Maria made the difficult decision to return to her abusive husband. She continues to engage with the outreach and community services provided by Aoibhneas and is awaiting her court hearing and the outcome of her housing application.

Maria's story is one of strength, courage and survival, but her journey to freedom is far from over. While she has taken important steps toward independence and safety, the barriers posed by her immigration status, the ongoing legal battle, and the lack of suitable housing options keep her trapped in a precarious situation. Maria remains connected to support services through Aoibhneas, holding onto hope for a future where she and her children can live free from fear.

7 Organisational Achievements in 2023



It's evident from our strategic priorities and organisational achievements that Aoibhneas is making significant strides in its mission to be a leader in the provision of domestic abuse services.

A summary of our key achievements in 2023 is as follows:

Development of a new refuge centre in Balbriggan

In 2023 we acquired a site for the development of a 13-unit refuge centre with the assistance of Fingal County Council. In 2023 we developed a design brief, achieved Stage 1 Capital Appraisal Support Approval, developed a general description of services for the acquisition of an integrated design team and commenced the tender process to procure and onboard an integrated Design Team and Project Manager with support from the Housing Agency. This represents significant milestones in our efforts to expand and create future capacity to provide support and accommodation to women and children experiencing domestic abuse and in crisis.

Children and Youth Service enhancements

In 2023 we progressed design consultation and obtained planning permission for the upgrade of our children and youth spaces in our North Dublin refuge centre with pro bono support of Reddy's Architecture + Urbanism. We hope to complete a playroom refurbishment and extension in 2024/2025, with the separate creation of a teen pod illustrating our ongoing commitment to providing comprehensive specialist support to children and young people.

Staffing Review

Following the launch of our 5-year Strategic Plan we commenced an external review of staffing in recognition of key areas of development over the life cycle of our Strategic Plan and our need to consider our organisational capacity to progress and drive development. In 2023 the following recommendations were progressed; formation of an Executive Management Team, allocation of enhanced staff terms and conditions, recruitment of a Financial Controller, and focus on staff well-being.

24/7 Freephone helpline

Our Freephone Helpline represents a gateway into our services providing round-the-clock support to meet the diverse crisis and support needs of callers. In 2023 we extended helpline training to our frontline team in trauma informed practice and developed supporting digital resources to enhance our connectivity with organisations working with the hard-to-reach communities such as the Traveller community.

Expansion of community and outreach services

We expanded our court preparation and accompaniment service with the additional hire of a Court Support Worker through funding assistance from Victim of Crime- Department of Justice. We were further enabled to develop and launch The ASPIRE Programme, a programme developed by Aoibhneas as part of our Freedom response phase of our intervention model. The Programme aims to empower women in their journey from recovery to freedom from domestic abuse, to identify and enhance their skills and abilities and reach new opportunities of their own choice and design. The Aspire Programme is delivered through a mixture of mentor and peer supports based on the principles of Action Learning and the Pacific Institute STEPS programme.



The Aspire Programme literally changed my life. I had very busy 3 months with something to look forward every Thursday. It was food for my mind, my soul and tummy! The STEPS programme changed my attitude towards life and goals.



Through a competitive grant process by Community Foundations Ireland Aoibhneas presented its ambition to PIMCO, a global investment management firm who shared in our vision and provided us with the financial support and belief to roll out the Aspire Programme.



“ Overall, our achievements demonstrate a holistic and comprehensive approach to addressing domestic abuse and supporting women and children through stages crisis, recovery and freedom. Our commitment to quality services, empowerment, and advocacy aligns with our strategic priorities and ambition to drive societal change. ”

These important developments facilitate a fullness to our programme supports and increased reach and impact within the community.

Core therapies and programmes

We deliver a core set of therapies and programmes for women and for children experiencing domestic abuse and through stages crisis, recovery, and healing. All interventions are underpinned through our application of the Crisis Intervention and Empowerment Model and Trauma Informed Practice.

We welcomed the commencement of somatic experience, integrated psychotherapy and Jungian sand tray therapy and delivery of our Freedom Programme to women incarcerated in the Dochas Centre. By introducing ranging mediums, we enable clients to access tailored care and remain engaged in our service with access to interventions that facilitate long term recovery and healing.

Establishing and maintaining a foundational set of therapies and programmes for women and children underscores our commitment to evidence-based practice and longer-term recovery.

Maintaining relationships with frontline personnel

Partnership building and collaboration with frontline agencies like CPS, an Garda Síochána, and Addiction Services remains crucial for effective responses and service delivery, this remained an area Aoibhneas committed to in 2023 with scheduled agency visits, training and engagement through agreed referral pathways and escalations.

The Aoibhneas Podcast

We launched a themed podcast series to spread information and awareness around domestic abuse, its forms and impact and break the legal and court process down through conversations, using our experiences and survivors' courageous stories to inform, support and reassure podcast listeners. The podcast provides another important and innovative platform for outreach and education.

Professional training and development

We provided CPD accredited and unaccredited training to frontline professionals supports their continuous professional development, enhancing the quality of care provided.

Resource/ Toolkit development

We developed a legal resource toolkit on our website and translated a I need Help section with the assistance and support from our multi-disciplinary team in multiple languages (Romanian, French, Spanish, German, Greek) with the objective to improve access to information for a diverse audience.

Empowering women

Meeting women where they are at remains a core priority for Aoibhneas, and as such we offered training, legal information, holistic and therapeutic interventions and peer support to clients through initiatives like coffee mornings, psychoeducational programmes, Freedom programme, the Aspire Programme.

Advocacy efforts

We maintain and drive advocacy in all areas of client frontline and first responder engagement. One particular engagement we welcomed input into was with design of the new family courts to be located in Hammond Lane, highlighting our organisation's commitment to ensuring appropriate resources are available for those in need of legal support and recourse.

Overall, our achievements demonstrate a holistic and comprehensive approach to addressing domestic abuse and supporting women and children through stages crisis, recovery and freedom. Our commitment to quality services, empowerment, and advocacy aligns with our strategic priorities and ambition to drive societal change.



Aoibhneas fundraising event at Swords Pavillion Shopping Centre



Santa visits our Refuge Centre



Resident Elves Eve and Ness creating fun in our Refuge Centre.

8

Structure, Governance and Management



Structure, Governance and Management

Structure

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 Memorandum of Association and how it conducts its business is set out in its Articles of Association. Both of these documents (now the Constitution) are publicly available from the Companies Registration Office website (www.cro.ie).

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, and Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA) compliant details pertaining to company status are updated on AHBRA website (<https://www.ahbregulator.ie/>).

Board members do not receive remuneration in respect to their services to the charity. There have been no contacts or arrangements entered into during the financial year in which a Board member was materially interested or which were significant in relation to the charity's activities.

All Board members are independent.

Board Committees

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

Finance and Audit Subcommittee

The Finance and Audit Subcommittee monitors and reviews the financial performance and governance of the company. It provides an independent review of the annual budgets, forecasts, monthly management and annual financial statements and reports on the effectiveness of and compliance with Aoibhneas' internal financial systems.

The Subcommittee makes recommendations to the Board as relevant.

Strategic Subcommittee

The Strategic Subcommittee sets the organisations strategic objectives over the medium and long term. The Subcommittee is responsible for developing the organisations Strategic Plan and for setting realistic key performance indicators to evaluate performance of both the Board, and management team in line with the plan. The Subcommittee is also responsible for evaluating and assessing growth opportunities for the organisation and to report said opportunities back to the Board.

Risk Management Subcommittee

The Risk Management Subcommittee monitors risk within the organisation by promoting that the management of risk is the concern of everyone, management of risk is part of normal day to day business, and the process for managing risk is logical and systematic and should be implemented on a routine basis and integrated with service delivery. The Risk Management Subcommittee ensures 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 Subcommittee member meet to consider Health and Safety issues. The Subcommittee refers all pertinent issues into the Risk Management Subcommittee for review and consideration in the context of Risk Management.

Staffing Subcommittee

The Staffing Subcommittee 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 Subcommittee also supports the CEO in the resolution of human resources and staffing issues where input is requested by the CEO.

A summary of director meeting attendance during the year is as follows:

Directors	AGM	Board Meeting	Finance and Audit	Strategic	Risk Management	Staffing
Aoibheann Treacy	Y	6/6	5/5	4/5		1/1
Ciara Savage	Y	5/6			4/4	
Fiona Little	Y	3/3		2/2		
Bláthnaid Evans	N	3/6				6/6
Nicola Fowler	Y	5/6	5/5			
Aimee Millar	Y	5/6		4/5		1/1
Declan Daly	N/A	2/2				
Fiona Scott	N/A	3/3				
Donal Costello	N	2/4				
Biola Wyrwas	Y	2/2				
Selene Alford	Y	2/2				

Reference and Administrative Details

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. The company use the professional services of their auditor and solicitors as and when required. Details of these providers are noted in the Director's information page of the financial statements. Any other professional services used by the company are used for purposes of them fulfilling the objectives of running the company.

“
Aspire Programme Group participant:
I have been taught tools to help me going forward, coping skills, confidence, the ability to do things. I am in a better place now and the support from the group has been great. I looked forward to attending each week. I feel powerful and confident again after years of it taken away from me. I am getting back to my old self.
 ”

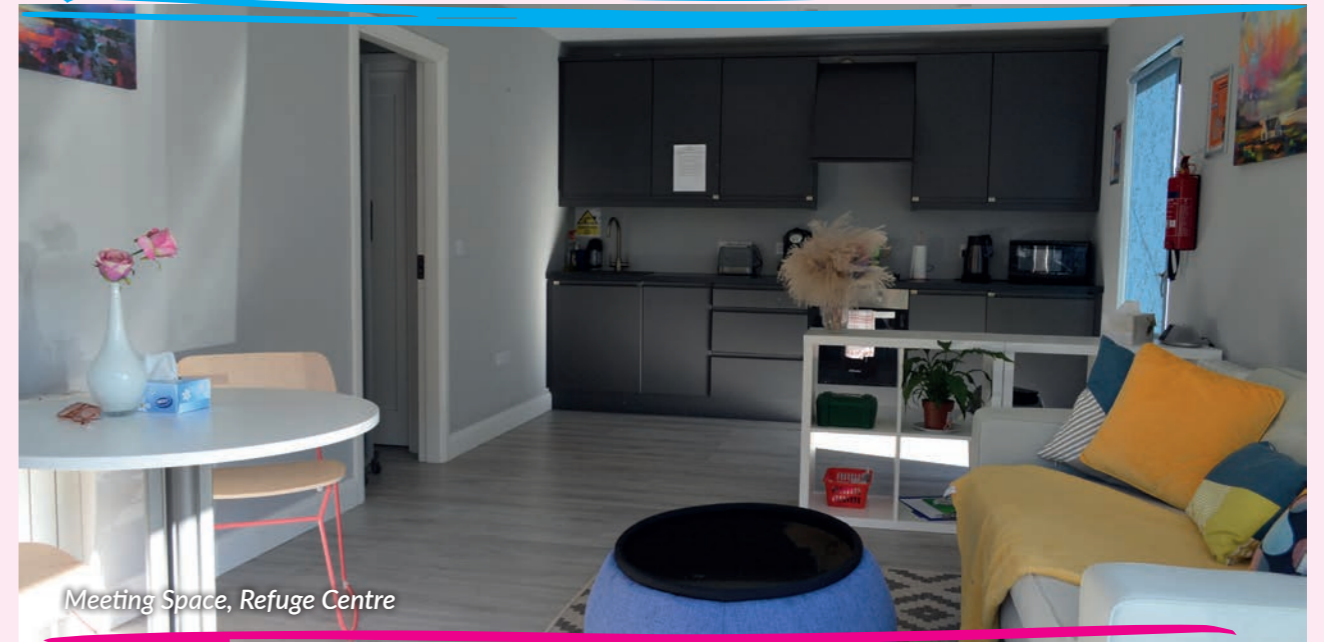
Representation and Membership in 2023

We continued our representation roles at:

- Children and Young People's Services Committee
- Child Family Support Networks
- Prevention, Partnership and Family Support
- 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
- Irish Council for Social Housing
- Northside Partnership
- Children's Rights Alliance
- Brio



Meeting Space, Refuge Centre



Meeting Space, Community Office



Outdoor Space, Refuge Centre

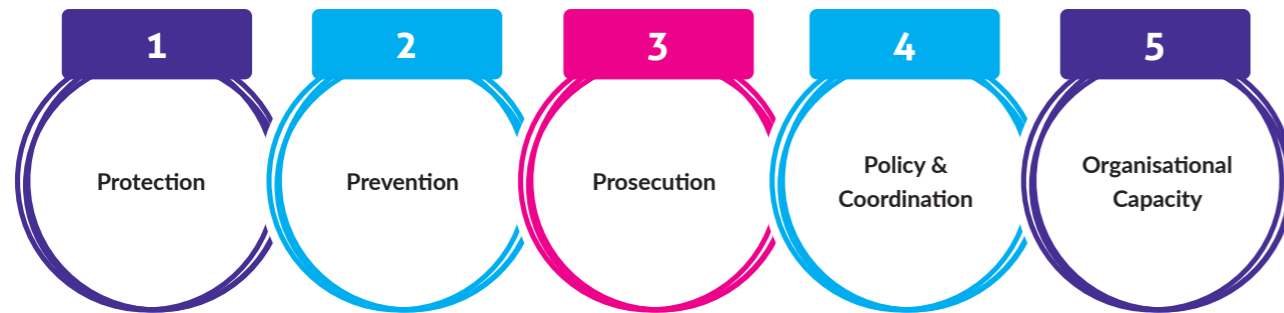


Future Developments

Our Strategic Priorities 2023-2027

Aoibhneas' goal is to be a leader in the provision of domestic abuse services. Our overall strategic priority for 2023-2027 is to ensure quality services for women and children with a strong emphasis on safety, empowerment, and advocacy.

Our strategic priorities for the period will be aligned with the Third National Strategy as follows:



Protection will continue to form the largest part of our work, nonetheless we also have a role to play in prevention, prosecution, and policy, and we strive to develop our organisational capacity to meet the needs of women and children, and which will ultimately support in the delivery of the Third National Strategy.

Our overall strategic priority for 2023-2027 is to ensure quality services for women and children with a strong emphasis on safety, empowerment, and advocacy.

1 Protection

Strategic Objective: To enhance our service offering to ensure women and children are protected.

Critical Success Factors

We often have to turn women away from our refuge because it is full. Expanding refuge places and developing our children's centre will be a critical aspect of the delivery of this strategic plan. Access to safe accommodation is an ongoing challenge and relationships with housing providers as well as the development of our own step-down options will be important. Our networks and collaboration with other service providers will be critical to this success.

Desired Outcome

Women and children have access to immediate safety when needed and to move-on accommodation options if required. Women and children have access to integrated pathways of care that support them on their journey to healing and that empower them to be agents of change in their lives.

2 Prevention

Strategic Objective: To use our skills and knowledge to support efforts to prevent the occurrence of domestic abuse and to intervene at the earliest opportunity.

Critical Success Factors

Harnessing our knowledge and good programme design to develop training programmes, continuing our communitybased approach, and working with partners and the Department of Justice will be critical success factors. Our training provision will be targeted and will move primarily to a train the trainer model. We will use our web site, social media platforms ,outreach and community services to raise awareness in the community. We will use our therapies to support children who have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse.

Desired Outcome

We are recognised as a thought leader and key voice in the sector. Our work contributes to greater awareness, understanding and skills to recognise and prevent domestic abuse and enable women and children at risk to have access to early interventions.

3 Prosecution

Strategic Objective: To provide supports that enable positive legal experiences for women and children.

Critical Success Factors

While Aoibhneas does not have a direct role in prosecution, the supports we provide to women enable them to enhance their safety (e.g. barring orders) and empowers them to make decisions about legal actions they might pursue. Access to relevant and up to date legal information and advice and knowledge of the court system are critical to supporting women who are taking legal action to protect themselves and their children or who may have legal action initiated against them. In addition, Aoibhneas can play a role in educating legal professionals and court officials on the impact domestic abuse has on its victims.

Desired Outcome

Women have the knowledge to make informed decisions about their options and are supported through the court system if necessary.

4 Policy & Coordination

Strategic Objective : To maintain a high profile for domestic abuse and Aoibhneas amongst key policymakers and relevant stakeholders contribute to the development of relevant policy and a strong sector capable of responding to the needs of victims of domestic abuse.

Critical Success

Factors fundamental to success will be keeping domestic abuse on the agenda for key policymakers and relevant stakeholders, collaborating with others and using our own experience and knowledge to highlight the issue of domestic abuse and to demonstrate how it can be addressed.

Desired Outcome

Domestic abuse remains a high national priority and Aoibhneas is recognised as the 'go to' organisation for practical advice on service excellence.

5 Organisational Capacity

Strategic Objective: To ensure continued operational excellence and enhanced organisational sustainability.

Critical Success Factors

We will continue to work to a high standard in our service provision and to develop our model of support for women and children. Sufficient funding to enable this is fundamental. We have invested significantly in our Board composition and skills to reflect the ambition of the organisation and will continue to do this. Sustainability will pivot around finances and fundraising, human resources and where we can play our part re climate change mitigation. We strive to create an environment where positivity, diversity, innovation, flexibility, and responsiveness flourish, for both our staff and our service users. Physical infrastructure also needs to be to a high standard.

Desired Outcomes

To have adequate resources (physical, human and financial) to meet the needs of our service users and access adequate statutory funding to meet these needs.

9 Financial Statements



AOIBHNEAS COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE ANNUAL REPORT AND
AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31
DECEMBER 2023

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

(INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE
FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Total 2023 €	Unrestricted Funds 2022 €	Restricted Funds 2022 €	Total 2022 €
Donations and legacies	81,775	-	81,775	198,693	-	198,693
Charitable activities						
- Grants from governments and other co-funders	-	1,505,285	1,505,285	-	1,414,017	1,414,017
Other income	10,976	1,000	11,976	10,956	1,000	11,956
Total income	92,751	1,506,285	1,599,036	209,649	1,415,017	1,624,666
Expenditure						
Charitable activities	59,085	1,599,014	1,658,099	110,097	1,448,262	1,558,359
Net income/ (expenditure)	33,666	(92,729)	(59,063)	99,552	(33,245)	66,307
Transfers between funds	(92,729)	92,729	-	(23,245)	23,245	-
Net movement in funds for the financial year	(59,063)	-	(59,063)	76,307	(10,000)	66,307
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds beginning of the year	1,186,153	-	1,186,153	1,109,846	10,000	1,119,846
Total funds at the end of the year	1,127,090	-	1,127,090	1,186,153	-	1,186,153

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 Directors on 9 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Bláthnaid Evans Aoibheann Treacy
Director Director

AOIBHNEAS COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023 €	2022 €
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	214,828	234,972
Current Assets		
Debtors	14,957	16,774
Cash at bank and in hand	1,172,293	1,099,848
	1,187,250	1,116,622
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(228,988)	(118,441)
Net Current Assets	958,262	998,181
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	1,173,090	1,233,153
Grants receivable	(46,000)	(47,000)
Total Net Assets	1,127,090	1,186,153
Funds		
Designated funds (Unrestricted)	607,680	630,000
General fund (unrestricted)	519,410	556,153
Total funds	1,127,090	1,186,153

Approved by the Board of Directors on 9 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Bláthnaid Evans Aoibheann Treacy
Director Director

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023 €	2022 €
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net movement in funds	(59,063)	66,307
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	42,464	89,554
Interest receivable and similar income	(266)	-
Amortisation of capital grants received	(1,000)	(1,000)
	(17,865)	154,861
Movements in working capital:		
Movement in debtors	1,817	(6,487)
Movement in creditors	110,547	42,987
Cash generated from operations	94,499	191,361
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments to acquire tangible assets		-
Cash flows from investing activities		
Interest received	266	-
Payments to acquire tangible assets	(22,320)	-
Net cash (used in)/generated from investment activities	(22,054)	-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	72,445	191,361
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	1,099,848	908,487
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	1,172,293	1,099,848

Note

Out of the company's cash reserves it maintains a sinking fund reserve of €480,000

- €380,000 projected organisational expenditure over a 3-month period
- €100,000 sinking fund to cover working capital requirements and to assist refurbishment and upgrade of key services such as, roofs, fire alarm systems, boilers, carpets.

The company also holds a designated funding reserve of €350,000 for the development of a dedicated space 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.

Extract from Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Aoibhneas CLG Year ended 31 December 2023

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the company financial statements of Aoibhneas Company Limited by Guarantee ('the Charity') for the financial year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the notes to the financial statements, including the summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 2. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", issued in the United Kingdom by the Financial Reporting Council.

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 2023 and of its deficit 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"; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described below in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report.

We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard for Auditors (Ireland) issued

by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and the Provisions Available for Audits of Small Entities, in the circumstances set out in note 4 to the financial statements, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Note

A full copy of Aoibhneas CLG Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023 can be obtained through the Companies Registration Office (www.cro.ie) and the Charities Regulator (www.charitiesregulator.ie)

10 Acknowledgements



Funders, Supporters and Collaborators

Aoibhneas is grateful for the support in 2023 of our main funder, Tusla Child and Family Agency, and we look forward to working with Cuan, the new Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) Agency, Department of Justice from 2024 on delivering the Third National Strategy on Domestic Sexual and Gender-based Violence. Thank you to the Victim of Crime Section, Department of Justice for supporting us to expand our Court Preparation and Accompaniment Service.

We are very appreciative of the support provided by our donors, sponsors and volunteers. We work and collaborate with a wide range of statutory, housing, domestic abuse and community and voluntary organisations to make a meaningful impact in the lives of women and children.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all the donors, including corporate donors who have generously contributed to our cause throughout the year. Your compassionate donations have provided us with the resources necessary to offer comprehensive assistance and support to women and children. We would like to acknowledge in particular grant funding from PIMCO which has facilitated us to the design, develop and deliver an innovative programme Aspire that promotes women's journey from recovery to healing.

We would like to also thanks Reddy's Architecture and Urbanism who provided pro bono services to support our children and youth playroom refurbishment and children centre design. Thank you Aislinn NicDhomhnaill and Barbara O'Brien, The Housing Agency who gave so generously of themselves to support the initial and very developmental stages of building out our need and feasibility outline for our new Refuge in Balbriggan.

Our success would not be possible without the dedication of our board members, whose strategic guidance has steered us in the right direction. To our incredible staff, your tireless efforts and passion continue to inspire us all. To our volunteers, who selflessly give their time and energy, your commitment drives our mission forward.

With your ongoing support, we look ahead to a future where safety, respect, and empowerment are the cornerstones of every woman and child's life.

Thank you,

Aoibheann Treacy
Chairperson



