



**Challenging
homelessness.
Changing lives.**

FOCUS
Ireland

**Annual Report
2023**



Lisa Brennan
Focus Ireland Peer Support Worker

Challenging homelessness. Changing lives.

Lisa Brennan, a wheelchair user, who was supported to move into a special purpose-built Focus Housing apartment complex three years ago, launched our 2021 Annual Report. She now works for Focus Ireland as a Peer Support Worker helping others. She said: 'I know the damage caused by homelessness and I am pleased to be helping people when they need it the most as it is so vital.'

Contents

7	Foreword
10	Company information
11	Our values
12	Messages from chairpersons
16	CEO's 2023 overview: another challenging year
20	Focus on 2023: Our impact in numbers
23	Focus Ireland 2021–2025 Strategy: Overview of 2023
27	Family homelessness
27	Crucial support for families
28	Tenancy Sustainment Support
28	Across the country
31	Bord Gáis Energy continued support
33	Al Leahy's story
35	Youth homelessness
35	Why is youth homelessness a distinct issue?
35	Focus Ireland youth services in 2023
36	Under-18 residential care services
36	Aftercare
39	Youth housing
39	Day services and case management
42	Youth Homelessness Strategy 2023–2025
42	Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness
45	James's story
49	Adult-only homelessness
50	The Women's Outlook Programme
51	Housing First
52	Housing First in the Mid-West
52	Housing First in the South-East
52	Housing First in the South-West
53	Advocacy and Housing First

57 Focus Housing

- 57 A challenging year for the housing sector
- 58 Projects delivered
- 60 Projects in the pipeline
- 60 The Meascán Staff Day – Portlaoise, Co. Laois
- 65 Stephanie’s* story

69 Research and policy submissions

- 69 Research publications
- 69 Policy submissions

73 Reports and Consolidated Financial Statements

Focus on staff:

- 29 Monica McElhinney, Community Fundraising Officer Northwest
- 30 Julie Talbot, Childers Road Family Initiative, Manager, Limerick
- 30 Yukaene Rivera, Team Leader
- 37 Robert McDonagh, Assistant Project Leader

Focus on:

- 41 Mediation
- 47 ‘Best Interests of the Child’ campaign
- 53 *Stories from the Streets*
- 55 Lived Experience Ambassador Programme (LEAP)
- 62 Focus Ireland’s Submission to the Review of the Private Rented Sector
- 62 Humans of Dublin partnership
- 63 Rock Against Homelessness concert, 2023, 3Olympia Theatre, Dublin
- 66 Legacies
- 67 Thank you...
- 67 Tax reclaim guidance
- 70 Better Supports for Older Customers and Ageing Tenants
- 71 Multi-Disciplinary Team for Homeless Families Feasibility Study

All of us at Focus Ireland firmly believe that homelessness can be ended.



Foreword

We can all take home for granted at times. But at the end of the day, we all know what it means. Our home is the foundation stone of our personal and family life. It is where we feel safe.

**Sr Stanislaus
Kennedy**
Life President
and Founder,
Focus Ireland

Every month in 2023 it seemed that there was yet another new record total number of people homeless; 13,318 people were homeless at year end.

People often ask: 'Do you not lose hope when you see the numbers rising all the time?' But the simple truth is the situation would be a lot worse without Focus Ireland and other NGOs.

As I write this, Focus Ireland has just published a report titled 'Focus on Homelessness' which, shockingly, shows that 50,000 people have experienced homelessness in the last ten years. This means that tens of thousands of people have been supported to secure a home and leave homelessness in their past where it should remain.

I am proud to say that Focus Ireland has played a key role in helping so many of these families and individuals to move on and secure a place to call home. You will read in this Annual Report how we helped 18,000 people in 2023 who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. We now provide homes for over 1,500 households across Ireland.

All of us at Focus Ireland firmly believe that homelessness can be ended. We know what is working and what isn't and have a very clear vision of what needs to be done by the Government and all parties concerned to ease and then end this crisis.

Focus Ireland works hard to do this as we continue to develop realistic policy solutions to help end homelessness. Our vision to achieve this is outlined in this Annual Report and in our current strategy, and is informed directly by the amazing work our staff does as we help to support families and individuals while they are homeless. This work is also guided by the people who come to us for support. We listen to them when, often, they feel that nobody does.

Our values are central to our work. Empowerment is one of these values, and it is rewarding to see two people who were previously homeless helping to guide our work as members of Board sub-committees; their insight is invaluable. We also employed several people who had experience of homelessness as Peer Support Workers who know how to advise and support others in difficulty. This really shows that Focus Ireland is living up to its values.

I am proud to say that Focus Ireland has played a key role in helping so many of these families and individuals to move on and secure a place to call home.

Staying on the subject of values, another one is social justice, which is central to our work and must be central for our society. It is a value that Ireland must live up to and apply equally to all.

The past two years have been extraordinary for migration in Ireland and Europe. That we as a country rose to the challenge of providing an emergency response to thousands of Ukrainian refugees, as well as others seeking international protection, is very welcome.

However, some seem to forget our own history of migration. Every family in Ireland knows this process; we all have a sibling, a cousin, or indeed a child who has made a life for themselves in Australia, Canada and other locations around the world.

Once we move past the statistics and jargon, migration is a very human process, informed by very human desires. The Irish experience is the lens through which we must view the phenomenon of migration as it has an impact in Ireland. We must view those who come here as human beings first, and not lose sight of our shared humanity and connection.

Recent migration to Ireland mirrors past Irish experiences. The motivations of those who come here are the same as Irish generations past and present, in all ways but one: the men, women and children arriving in Ireland now are often fleeing active and suffocating conflict and human-rights abuses.

Many migrants who have come here have enriched their communities through work, volunteering and integrating themselves, contributing positively to Irish society. It is crucial to recognise that they face similar challenges to us, like struggling to find suitable housing.

Migrants, too, are victims of the broader housing crisis, not the cause of it, as some voices suggest. We have for too long reacted to migration in Ireland as opposed to planning for it. We have failed to build the necessary infrastructure to respond to migration appropriately, leading then to instances where our emergency responses become exhausted, and tensions rise in communities under pressure.

Migration, not just in Ireland but globally, is a fact of life. It may ebb and flow depending on global issues, but, overall, it is part of the fabric of life in our countries and communities. Those who migrate to Ireland, in whatever way, are net contributors to this country.

Viewing things through the narrow lens of economics may feel coarse to some, but it is often the language of policy makers and politicians, and they must adhere to the fact that migration is not just a reality, but an essential and net positive reality.

That we as a country rose to the challenge of providing an emergency response to thousands of Ukrainian refugees, as well as others seeking international protection, is very welcome.



Putting the finishing touches on the Focus Ireland Christmas tree on Grafton Street, in association with Dublin City Council, are Focus Ireland Head of Communications Roughan MacNamara with his son Max (one year old) and Aoife Mooney (seven years old), standing in solidarity with those experiencing homelessness for the launch of the charity's Christmas appeal in 2023

Company information

Focus Ireland Group

Directors

Focus Ireland Board

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy
(Founder and Life President)
Mr Michael Layde (Chairman)
Mr Tony Fahey
Mr Conor Jones
Mr Andrew Gunne
Ms Susan O'Connell
Mr Niall Keane
(resigned 19 April 2024)
Ms Katie Burke
(appointed 29 September 2023)

Focus Housing Association Board

Mr Diarmuid Burke (Chairman)
(resigned 26 March 2024)
Mr Fergal O'Dwyer (Chairman)
(appointed 26 March 2024)
Ms Patricia Crisp
Mr Mark Dunleavy
Ms Anne Fletcher
Mr Lonan McDowell
Ms Gloria Kirwan
(appointed 27 January 2024)

Members of both Boards

Mr David Kelly
(appointed 27 January 2024)
Ms Anna Lee
(resigned 29 September 2023)
Ms Fionnuala Meehan

Chief Executive Officer

Mr Pat Dennigan

Secretary and Registered Office

Ms Pamela Branagan
9–12 High Street, Dublin 8, D08 EIWO

Registered Nos:

Focus Ireland CLG: 106149
Focus Housing Association CLG: 133953

Independent Auditors

PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants and
Statutory Audit Firm
1 Spencer Dock, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1

Solicitors

McCann FitzGerald
Mason Hayes & Curran
Clohessy Minihane
MM Halley & Sons
Holmes O'Malley Sexton
O'Donnell Breen-Walsh O'Donoghue
Hogan Dowling
Byrne Wallace
Kilcullen and Associates
HOS Partners LLP
J.W. O'Donovan LLP
Eversheds Sutherland LLP

Bankers

Bank of Ireland
Allied Irish Bank plc
Housing Finance Agency

Company

Focus Ireland
Focus Housing Association
Excellent Common Areas

Revenue Registered Charity No.

CHY 7220
CHY 9040
Not registered

CRA Registered Charity No.

20015107
20022624
Not registered

Our values

Our values inform our actions and help us to ensure that our attitudes and behaviour reflect the ethos of the organisation.

Our expectation for every employee is that Focus Ireland's values are reflected in our work, our communications and in our relationships – with each other, and with customers and tenants, volunteers, partners, donors and funders, and the wider public. Our customers' needs shape the services we provide. The quality of services delivery is equally as important as the kind of services we provide. These values underpin our behaviour and attitudes in the provision of service to all stakeholders.

In 2022, our refreshed values were launched at a special event in Trinity College Dublin. They are as follows:



Dignity is about treating people equally, with respect, kindness, compassion and empathy. It involves valuing people's diversity, engaging in relationships of care, and having regard for people's capacities, values, feelings, and beliefs.



Quality is about professionalism, effectiveness, accountability, and integrity. It involves setting, achieving, and maintaining high standards; collaborative approaches; continuous learning; and ensuring environmental sustainability.



Social Justice is about the achievement of positive outcomes to address social exclusion and inequality, and enabling people to lead independent and fulfilling lives. It involves responding to specific needs that flow from people's diversity, securing a fulfilment of rights, and challenging structural inequalities.



Empowerment is about independence and autonomy. It involves people understanding issues of power and powerlessness in their lives, having power to make informed decisions and choices, and being able to realise their full potential.

Messages from chairpersons

To our customers and tenants, **Focus Ireland** and **Focus Housing Association** may appear as a single entity, providing an integrated service to people who face, or have faced, homelessness.

This integration of support services and affordable housing is central to our shared vision of how best to end homelessness. However, legally and financially, they are two distinct and independent companies, which are regulated separately. For the purposes of this joint report for 2023, we set out the details of the finances and governance of the two companies on pages 75–158. Transparency and clarity about the internal workings of the two organisations are crucial for regulatory compliance and the long-term sustainability of our work.

Focus Housing Association, as the housing arm of Focus Ireland, deploys large capital sums as it purchases and constructs homes using long-term loans, while the work of **Focus Ireland** primarily involves the employment of skilled and dedicated staff to provide support. Maintaining separate governance for these very different financial and organisational needs is crucial to sustainability and ensures that all revenues are deployed appropriately.

Everything that **Focus Housing** and **Focus Ireland** do is concerned with the customers and tenants who use our services and live in our homes. Their personal stories and the impact of this integrated approach are set out in this report.

The following are messages for stakeholders from the chairpersons of the two organisations.

Everything that Focus Housing and Focus Ireland do is concerned with the customers and tenants who use our services and live in our homes.

Michael Layde
Chairperson of
Focus Ireland



A key development in youth services in 2023 was the transfer of the two Home Again Children's Residential Services into Focus Ireland. Since its establishment in 1965, **Home Again** has been of crucial importance to many young, vulnerable people. Many people who are homeless have complex support needs, so there will always be a need for specialist organisations working with specific

groups. Focus Ireland is actively committed to consolidation across the sector, which means providing more efficient services to vulnerable people. Focus Ireland has developed highly regarded services, pioneering Housing First services for young adults, supporting young people leaving State care and providing emergency responses for children in crisis. Home Again has built a reputation for providing long-term, supported homes for young people in State care. The amalgamation of the two organisations strengthens both and provides a full range of services from a highly skilled and dedicated staff.

As always, we are proud to say that our services, housing and support staff rose to the new challenges, and the achievements of the year are notable, both for the record number of customers we supported and the level of impact in helping to end homelessness for 1,100 households.

The Focus Ireland Board deeply values the capacity and commitment of our staff, understanding the importance of providing the necessary structures, supports, and conditions to enable our highly skilled and dedicated team to continue delivering quality services. We recognise that the rising cost of living and increasing rents place additional strain not only on our customers but also on our staff. The recent wave of public sector recruitment has created new opportunities for some of our experienced team members.

Addressing these challenges has been a priority for the Board throughout the year, alongside tackling long-standing issues of State underfunding for key services, which have been exacerbated by the current period of high inflation. I am pleased to report that we have engaged positively with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, as well as the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE), to address these issues, and we anticipate a favourable outcome from these discussions.



A key development in youth services in 2023 was the transfer of the two Home Again Children's Residential Services into Focus Ireland.

Diarmuid Burke
Chairperson of
Focus Housing
Association
(during 2023)



Major steps forward were achieved in a number of large projects in 2023, and we will see the fruits of this work in the years ahead. These include the joint project in Kerry with Co-operative Housing, which will deliver 67 homes, 31 owned by Focus Housing. Particularly significant will be the 95 homes planned for Cabra, for which planning permission was obtained towards the end of 2022.

We continued the commitment to our Meascán housing model, with a number of new projects being tenanted using the ‘intentional social mix’ approach. Underpinning this commitment is a rolling evaluation of the new approach, which has been supported by a Housing Agency research grant. The Meascán model allows us to maintain our commitment to providing homes for the most vulnerable – the people likely to need continued support to maintain their tenancy – along with our commitment to integrate our tenants into a wider, diverse community.

None of this would have been possible without our dedicated, skilled, and experienced staff teams. They not only meet the new housing targets but also manage our existing stock with a high level of professionalism. The Development Team’s year-on-year successes have led to a steadily increasing number of housing units to maintain and rents to collect. The Focus Housing Board has implemented a rolling programme to upgrade our existing housing stock. The faster filling of empty units and more efficient rent collection highlight the growing professionalism alongside the expanding housing stock.

The Focus Ireland/Focus Housing model is unique, providing homes and long-term, complex support through an integration of housing management and social care. As noted elsewhere in the report, the extensive engagement in refreshing the shared values of Focus Housing and Focus Ireland has fostered a sense of common purpose between the two arms of the project, further strengthening our collaborative efforts.

At the end of 2023, Focus Housing was in a very strong position to meet ambitious growth targets and address the challenges that this growth brings to housing management and community development, ensuring sustainable progress and enhanced service delivery for the future.

The Focus Ireland/Focus Housing model is unique, providing homes and long-term, complex support through an integration of housing management and social care.



CEO's 2023 overview: another challenging year

2023 was another challenging year, as homelessness continued to rise sharply. By year end, a total of 13,318 people, including 3,962 children, were homeless, with many thousands more at risk of becoming homeless. Throughout 2023, our services supported 18,000 people who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, which is a 12.5% rise from the 16,000 we supported in 2022.

Pat Dennigan
CEO Focus Ireland



I believe that it is vital to continue to emphasise that homelessness is not inevitable. It is possible to end homelessness with the right policies in place. To this end, Focus Ireland remained committed to its overall objective of ending homelessness in Ireland through prevention and sustained exits, as outlined in our current strategy 2021–2025. Because our work is fundamentally

concerned with people – the challenges they face and how we can support them to secure their existing home or move out of homelessness – our strategy is built around the household circumstances in which people live.

We took account of this and targeted families who are homeless with complex needs, families homeless for economic reasons, young people homeless with complex needs, and single adults with complex needs who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Our strategy set out this innovative approach, and we have worked hard to ensure that our organisation is now firmly structured around these customer groups.

Supporting families and children

We worked to support the most vulnerable families in 2023, and the Family Centre, Family Homeless Action Team and other family services proved highly effective in supporting 486 families with children out of homelessness. A further 174 families remained in their homes because of our case management and essential wrap-around services, which were available to families with greater needs.

This crucial work in assisting vulnerable families was underpinned by research into multi-disciplinary teamwork and its roll-out across the organisation. Part of this work involved the development of a training framework for Child Support Workers, which contributes to the empowerment of family members to reach their potential.



Focus Ireland services now operate more than 100 different projects across the country, as our organisation continues to respond at a very human level to the significant rise in demand for our support.

During the year, our services assumed management of two, under-18, long-term youth residential services in Dublin, previously run by Home Again Residential Services. This expansion of Focus Ireland's long-term, youth residential services in the Dublin area comes at a time when the demand for these services has never been greater. This expansion highlights the clear need for early intervention to prevent homelessness for young, vulnerable people and for a bridge to our after-care services.

Preventing youth homelessness through policy and services

Focus Ireland played a significant role in helping to bring about the publication of the first ever National Youth Homelessness Strategy (NYHS) in 2022, and we are a member of the Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness. Our Policy Team represents the Coalition's 19 member organisations on the Steering Group for the implementation of the NYHS.

An achievement in this area is winning the tender for the SHY (Supported Housing for Youth) pilot in partnership with Clúid Housing. SHY is part of the government's Youth Homelessness Strategy (Action 22). It is a housing-led approach which will cater for 20 young people, aged 18 to 24 years, who are experiencing homelessness. Clúid will provide the housing and Focus Ireland will provide the support. The project will officially start in May 2024.

We also established The Haven in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, in which Focus Ireland, in partnership with Tusla, undertook to support 'unaccompanied minors' who are refugees from the war in Ukraine.

This cross-departmental work is very well supported by our Finance Team who turn around projects of this size and respond to organisational demands while ensuring sustainability. In 2023, the team implemented a new accounting system (Business Central), rolled out a new expenses online portal and app (Continia Expense Management), and moved GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and key cyber training online, using MetaEngage. These changes were made to support governance and internal structures

In 2023, we continued to work hard to try to address the critical shortage of rental accommodation and rising homelessness.

to deliver and enhance overall service quality for our customers and operations for the foreseeable future.

As Focus Ireland grew significantly in both complexity and scale, we ramped up our commitment to supporting the organisation by introducing and adopting an enhanced trauma-informed care approach across the whole organisation. This is in line with our links with multi-disciplinary partners and our commitment to the values of dignity, quality, social justice, and empowerment. This was further reinforced by the executive and senior management undertaking training to implement a new diversity and equality draft policy aimed at supporting all functions across the organisation, including in employment and beyond.

Our success is down to our skilled and dedicated staff

At Focus Ireland we passionately believe that our success is down to our people, and the HR Team is always exploring innovative ways to attract and retain staff. As well as running our successful graduate programme, new initiatives, such as the Always-On Digital Campaign, contributed to a 44% increase in roles filled within the organisation in 2023, of which 30% were a result of new funding. The team works closely with our Practice Development department to ensure that the organisation aligns job skills training and well-being to achieve our long-term goals.

In 2023, the cost-of-living crisis and other factors saw public attitudes shift towards not giving to the most vulnerable in our communities. This placed tremendous strain not just on Focus Ireland but on everyone in the Irish charity sector. This meant that our Fundraising, Digital and Branding Teams had to work even harder to gather financial support for our causes.

2023 also saw us continue to build our networks as a homeless charity and strengthen our collaboration and alliance with others in the sector to work together in tackling the difficulties of homelessness. This was done through our domestic affiliations in the National Homeless Action Committee (NHAC) (of which I am a member), chaired by Housing Minister Darragh O'Brien, and also through engaging with a range of overarching associations at European level to exchange and share information in the hope of understanding and solving our problems collectively with our colleagues in FEANTSA (the European Federation of National Organisations). Our Advocacy Team plays a vital part in this work and continues to raise awareness of the issues and put forward positive policy solutions aided by the development of a value-led, strategic approach to our overall communications.

Housing – a place to call home

In 2023, we continued to work hard to try to address the critical shortage of rental accommodation and rising homelessness. We did this by working in partnership with the State and other stakeholders to deliver new social and affordable homes as well as increased services to support the most marginalised in society.

We now provide more than 1,544 homes across the country through Focus Housing, the housing arm of Focus Ireland, and have a substantial plan for additional homes in the coming years, assisted by an Agile Acquisition Fund, which was established to serve as a cross-functional process to help speed up the delivery of housing. We delivered 168 homes in 2023, to add to the 130 homes in 2022, and 170 in 2021, which means delivery of just shy of 470 homes within these three years.



Senator Mary Fitzpatrick, Pat Dennigan, Sr Stan, Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien and Cllr Eimer McCormack at the opening of Focus Housing's 20-unit development at Connaught Street, Dublin

This work by our Property Team saw a continued shift from being a purchaser of homes for our customers to being a developer of new homes in many cases. In this report, you will read about our great new developments delivered in 2023. We also developed the Meascán model as an innovative solution to housing needs, and I was also pleased to oversee the development of our Energy Masterplan for future retrofitting needs, which is central to our efforts to build sustainable, dynamic communities for all.

The challenge to end homelessness never ends, but, although we operate in a complicated landscape, with increased regulation, I feel reassured as our Boards commit to the objectives of our five-year strategic plan to deliver more homes. Additionally, both Boards meet regularly and attend strategy days to produce the best innovative solutions to future-proof our organisation's needs.

I want to thank the two Boards who play a vital role in bringing guidance to our organisation and whose contribution ensures that structures, supports, and conditions are in place for our workforce to consistently deliver quality services to our customers, funders, volunteers, and partners. They do this by selflessly dedicating their time and expertise.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our outstanding and committed staff; their endeavours, professionalism, and kindness never cease to humble me, despite the challenges year in and year out. I also want to thank our volunteers, funders, and partnerships for their remarkable support.

In addition, thank you to our first group of LEAP (Lived Experience Ambassador Programme) Ambassadors: Kelly Anne Byrne, Scott Buckley, Catherine Keenan, Paul Geoghegan and Stephanie Clarke. It is always hard being first at anything, but this group has left an indelible mark, and we are truly thankful for the passion and expertise they have shared with us and the public over the last two years. It has been a pleasure working and getting to know each of them.

Lastly, I would like to pay sincere thanks to our corporate partners, donors and anyone who has taken the time to support our work during the year. The collaborative work with all our stakeholders, local authorities, Government and State agencies has been crucial. Without your kind support it would not be possible for us to help when families and individuals need us the most.

Focus on 2023: Our impact in numbers

Approximately

18,000

people engaged with our services, an increase of 12.5% compared to 2022 (16,000)



1,851

families engaged with our services, an increase of 11% compared to 2022 (1,668)



593

adults were supported by the Preparation for Education, Training and Employment (PETE) service, an increase of 44.2% compared to 2022 (411)



Over

4,223

children were supported across our services



450

adult-only households were supported out of homelessness



164

young people were supported to exit homelessness



Over **9,000**

customers engaged with our Advice and Information (A&I) service, an increase of 10% compared to 2022 (8,165)



Over **486**

families were supported out of homelessness



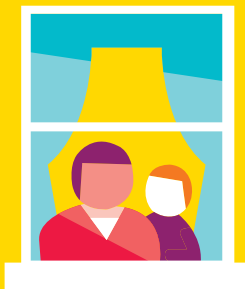
379

young people were supported by our youth and aftercare services



657

households were supported to keep their homes



174

family households at risk of homelessness were supported to remain in their homes by prevention case management services



372

adult-only households at risk of homelessness were supported to remain in their homes by prevention case management services





Over the lifetime of the strategy, our work will ensure that there are 8,000 fewer homeless households.

Focus Ireland 2021–2025 Strategy: Overview of 2023

The publication of this Annual Report 2023 brings Focus Ireland and Focus Housing past the halfway mark of our current five-year organisational strategy, *Restating our Vision 2021–25*.

Restating our Vision was an ambitious document, not just in terms of the objectives we set ourselves but also the aspirations we set for Ireland as a whole. At the time, Government policy was presented in *Rebuilding Ireland – Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* (2016), which was a huge step backwards, being the first Government strategy for over a decade that did not present homelessness as a solvable problem.

In our own strategy, we reasserted the value and purpose of a commitment to ending homelessness, set out our own contribution towards achieving it and called on the, then new, Government to match our ambition. We also drew an important distinction between objectives that would be reflected in our own outcomes (such as the number of customers supported to move out of homelessness, or homes constructed) and the broader objectives which require national strategy and vision (such as reducing overall homelessness). The organisational objectives and the national objectives are distinct but not separate. Our ability to support people out of homelessness always depends on the effectiveness of Government programmes and collaboration with local authorities. However, Focus Ireland is not just a passive recipient of Government policy; we actively work to inform policy through front-line expertise, evidence-based research and the voice of our customers.

Focus Ireland's evidence-based advocacy influenced the Government's decision to sign up to the Lisbon Declaration and to commit, in its strategy *Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland* (2021), to 'work towards ending homelessness by 2030'.

Unfortunately, this welcome Government ambition was combined with an unwelcome absence of specific policies for delivering on this commitment.

Last year, our Annual Report drew attention to the paradoxical situation where Focus Ireland was making great progress in its own organisational objectives while a growing number of people were experiencing the trauma of homelessness. This report reflects how this frustrating and challenging pattern continued throughout 2023, and this section sets out how we adapted our strategy to those circumstances.

The most significant measure for our organisational achievement is the number of people who would, without our help, have become homeless and who we helped to move into a new home or retain a home that was at risk. In our strategy, we set a target of supporting 1,000 households out of homelessness each year, and preventing 600 a year from becoming homeless. Over the lifetime of the strategy, our work will ensure that there are 8,000 fewer homeless households.

It is important to emphasise that we do not claim to be exclusively responsible for each of these successes. Homelessness is frequently complex, and collaboration with local

authorities, the HSE, Tusla, along with other agencies and non-government organisations, is required to support a household out of homelessness. Collaboration and partnership are the hallmark of all successful work to end homelessness, and these are reflected in our values and approach. Nevertheless, our intervention – whether by our skilled staff or through the provision of a home – makes a crucial difference in many cases, and it is this achievement that we attempt to quantify in this report.

In 2023, we met our target of preventing 600 households from becoming homeless, with 657 reported successes (174 families, 372 adult-only and 111 young adult households). Despite difficult circumstances, we exceeded our target of supporting 1,000 households out of homelessness, with 1,100 cases reported (486 families, 450 adult-only households and 164 young adults). Overall, 1,757 households who would have remained or become homeless were housed by the end of 2023, thanks to our efforts and collaboration with others.

The success of our work is measured in the difference we make, but the total number of customers we support is also an important measure of how hard our staff work and the pressures that they face. In 2022, after several years in which we had engaged with a total of around 12,000 customers each year, there was a sudden leap to around 16,000 customers. In 2023, the number rose again to 18,000, increasing the workload on staff and reflecting the rising tide of homelessness.

The impact of these difficult circumstances can also be seen in Focus Housing’s delivery of 168 housing units during 2023, which falls short of the 250 new homes that were projected for the year. Even with the 470 homes delivered in 2021, 2022 and 2023, this falls behind the 650 target we set for this period in our strategy. Focus Housing has adjusted its approach to meeting these targets and, with a number of large building projects in the pipeline, a new delivery schedule has been approved which will see us meeting our overall five-year targets. Some of the detailed achievements under the strands of our strategy are set out below:

- › **Homes for Housing First:** As part of our 2021–2025 organisational strategy, Focus Ireland committed to delivering at least an additional 52 units for the Housing First programme, and, thus far, 66 units have been delivered, which means that we have exceeded our target in the first three years of the strategy.
- › **Youth:** We set the goal of persuading the Government to publish a comprehensive strategy for youth homelessness and, in 2022, the Government published its first National Youth Homelessness Strategy. This year saw the first meeting of the Implementation Committee, including the Focus Ireland representative who was nominated by the Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness.
- › **Families:** We committed to piloting a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) approach to homeless families with complex needs. In 2023, we published a feasibility study and allocated funding for a manager for the pilot to start in 2024.



Despite difficult circumstances, we exceeded our target of supporting 1,000 households out of homelessness...

- › **Housing:** We set the goal of acquiring 1,152 additional homes by 2025 and delivered 478 by the end of 2023, with several large-scale projects in the pipeline. We set the goal of providing 200 additional homes for single people and achieved a total of 176 by the end of 2023.
- › **Secure homes:** We committed to ensuring that a minimum of 90% of our tenancies were sustained in our long-term housing; in 2023, we achieved a 99.47% sustainment rate.
- › **Advice and information to prevent economic homelessness:** We set a target of helping to prevent 600 households from becoming homeless each year; in 2023, we helped 657 to retain their homes. A new, single point of contact system was established in 2023 so that customers can get support from specialist advice and information staff across the country.
- › **Cross-cutting objectives:** The new Agile Acquisition Fund helped Focus Housing to respond quickly to opportunities in the housing market, resulting in the purchase of 23 new homes.

In 2023, we recruited six Peer Support Workers across the organisation, and people with lived experience of homelessness joined the Services Sub-Committee of the Focus Ireland Board. All of these achievements took place in a context in which there were 1,686 (14%) more people homeless than at the beginning of the year.

One response to this situation would be to abandon the broader perspective and re-focus our attention exclusively on what we can deliver through our own services and housing delivery. Such an approach would take on board the growing fatalism that the housing and homelessness crisis cannot be solved and that small victories are all we can hope for. The Boards of Focus Ireland and Focus Housing have rejected this option.

Instead, we have taken the approach of striving to make the greatest possible progress under the current policy framework, while at the same time starting to look in depth at what needs to change at a national strategic level to reverse the deteriorating situation.

A number of criticisms can be made of *Housing for All*, but, undoubtedly, its strongest achievement is to ramp up overall housing supply from historic lows to meet its own objective of over 30,000 new homes a year. Focus Ireland has contributed to a growing consensus that a higher target of 50,000 homes a year is essential to match the needs of our growing economy and population. But it is also increasingly clear that simply increasing the level of housing supply does not in itself result in reduced levels of homelessness. We have decided that our strategic attention now needs to focus on the question: What policies are needed to maximise the impact of new housing supply on the reduction of homelessness? In response, we have started to explore that process with leading researchers and academics. A research and events programme is being planned for 2024 under the title 'Ending homelessness by 2030. Are we serious?' Through this, we aim to develop our own strategic policy on this issue and to help shape national policy; ultimately, to turn aspirations to end homelessness into a credible and deliverable programme.

An organisational strategy is not a list to be rolled out irrespective of changing circumstances, nor is it a wish list to be abandoned at the first challenge. This report sets out how we have balanced our original strategic goals with a reconsideration of objectives in a deteriorating environment and purposeful action to improve that environment.



We remained committed to our goal of supporting families out of homelessness and faced up to many new challenges during 2023.

Family homelessness

Focus Ireland has been the leading organisation helping families who are homeless since 1985. The family homelessness crisis has deepened in recent years, and, in response, we have used our expertise to develop a range of targeted services to support families and children while they are homeless. We also work to support families to secure a home, and we successfully ended homelessness for 486 families in 2023, 17 of which were housed through Focus Housing. Meanwhile, another 174 families were prevented from becoming homeless through intensive support.

Crucial support for families

There was a very sharp increase of 20% in family homelessness in 2023 compared to 2022, and a 15% rise in child homelessness during the same period.

Households were stuck in homelessness for longer periods of time as it became harder than ever for families to exit homelessness by securing a home in the private rented market.

Our Family Homeless Action Team (FHAT) continued to partner with the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) to provide ongoing support and vital assistance to families in need. We remained committed to our goal of supporting families out of homelessness and faced up to many new challenges during 2023. FHAT remained the primary resource for vulnerable families, and we were pleased to have supported over 180 families to secure a home and leave homelessness in 2023.

Homelessness causes many complex issues for families, but we know it hurts children the most. We work hard to try to protect families and children from at least some of the trauma caused by homelessness. Focus Ireland has long-standing experience in addressing the unique needs of families; we provide prompt support to individuals and work proactively to prevent homelessness.

In 2023, our services across the country assisted over 1,850 families (this included 4,233 children), which was an increase of nearly 200 families compared to 2022.

As stated above, 174 families, who were identified as having support needs and were at risk of homelessness, were supported to remain in their home through wraparound prevention case management services. The Focus Ireland Family Centre in Dublin engaged with over 1,800 families through their Advice and Information (A&I) service.

Tenancy Sustainment Support

Our Tenancy Sustainment Support (TSS) continued to work with several local authorities in 2023 to create informative advice services, with the aim of preventing households from experiencing homelessness and helping them to settle in their new homes. In response to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, the TSS provided valuable assistance on various tenancy issues such as rent arrears, waste management, and budgeting, among others. This support is vital and often prevents a problem from turning into a real crisis for families at risk.

At a national level, 1,359 households were supported by our Tenancy Sustainment Support services, and 551 children were supported by TSS outside of Dublin.

Across the country

In 2023, Focus Ireland also continued its work of preventing families from experiencing homelessness throughout the country. It was a very challenging year due to a number of issues, including the lifting of the eviction ban and also a sharp rise in the number of private landlords exiting the housing market. The impact of these issues saw an increase in the number of families becoming homeless, with many more at risk. Our prevention work was more important than ever in 2023, as there was a real shortage of suitable emergency accommodation for families, and services were stretched right across the sector.

Focus Ireland provided support to 200 families in Cork who were either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In Sligo, 100 families facing homelessness or at risk of losing their homes received support from our services. Our services in Limerick engaged with approximately 450 families who were either homeless or at risk of losing their homes. We also continued our collaborative partnership with Waterford City and County Council, and engaged with over 300 families. Additionally, in Wexford, we supported 110 families. As well as providing support in these counties, we also provide Tenancy Sustainment Support across the country.



Focus Ireland Waterford at the official launch of The Gem Moon Garden Project in The Crescent Estate, Ferrybank, Co. Waterford. This initiative, coordinated by Elaine Roche (Focus Ireland), Ron Dool (Orchardstown Garden Centre, Waterford), Gemma Hoole (a resident in The Crescent Estate and garden designer), and Emer O’Keeffe (PETE Waterford), has transformed the estate’s garden into a safe and restful haven for Focus Ireland customers and their children.

Focus on staff:
Monica McElhinney
Community Fundraising Officer Northwest

‘My role is to work in all elements of the community of the Northwest region to help both fundraise and bring in more awareness to the area. I love taking part in events, regardless of what they are. I try to do as many as I can.’





**Focus on staff:
Julie Talbot
Childers Road Family
Initiative, Manager,
Limerick**

‘One of the things that I really love about Focus Ireland is the culture within the team. There’s lots of support available. They really focus on making sure that staff well-being is looked after. There is a really nice sense that, around the organisation, people have a lot of autonomy in their work.’

Watch Julie via the QR code below.



**Focus on staff:
Yukaene Rivera,
Team Leader**

‘I think one of the great things about working in different services is that you have an opportunity to see people in different situations, whether they are young people or adults.’

Watch Yukaene via the QR code below.





TV Presenter Brendan Courtney pictured with Focus Ireland staff in Croke Park for the Shine A Light Night sleep out, which raised €1,279,410 in 2023

Bord Gáis Energy continued support

In 2023, Bord Gáis Energy continued to support Focus Ireland and give vital funds to support children and family activities, which have helped 1,400 families.

More than half of the Bord Gáis Energy activity funding in 2023 helped children to avail of private psychological and educational assessments, which are essential in protecting them from the trauma of homelessness. The children's families would not be able to fund this substantial cost on their own, so it means that the children receive support that they would otherwise have to wait months and even years for.

This highlights the often long wait times experienced by children who need to be assessed by the early intervention and assessment service within the HSE and the primary education system. This, along with often long periods spent in emergency accommodation, can exacerbate the negative effects on children and families who have additional needs; and not having a stable address can often factor in how long it takes to access these assessments.



So, here I am today. I feel very blessed that I am working in drug rehabilitation where I can use all the experience and skills I have gained to help others.



Al Leahy's story

I remember waking up one night when I was only seven or eight to the sound of roaring and shouting. I went out into the hallway and I could see my sister and the next-door neighbour pulling my mother off the window ledge. She was trying to take her life. I was just pushed back into bed.

Then a few months later, I woke up during the night to see paramedics resuscitating my mother, and from that day on I lived with a lot of high anxiety and stress. I kind of became her carer, making sure things were alright. For instance, if I wanted to go to football training, if we thought something was going to happen, we wouldn't go because if we were not there, we would not be able to get between our parents if they start arguing while we were out at football. How I dealt with that insecurity – that's what they call it now – was, I'd be the comedian and class clown and I'd get myself into trouble.

I only realised a few of years ago that I had dyslexia. I left school at 15 with no education – no trade, no nothing – and that was quite normal in the area where I grew up. Later, when I first took a substance, I felt that all this – what I was carrying – was gone. I felt free in myself; free from the anxiety, fear and insecurity. In this release I just felt okay.

Al went into rehab in 2003, successfully completing treatment and then returned to education. After experiencing homelessness and his previous addiction, he got in touch with Focus Ireland.

They helped me to read and write. I then progressed. They put me on to a career counsellor. I didn't know if it was always in me, but I always liked helping people in life. It made me feel good any time I did help someone. I thought about this when I was thinking about going to college. I ended up going to UCD and doing a Certificate in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills.

Al qualified with a diploma and has been working in drug rehabilitation for 20 years, helping so many people along the way.

So, here I am today. I feel very blessed that I am working in drug rehabilitation where I can use all the experience and skills I have gained to help others. I also feel very blessed for the home that Focus Ireland gave me. I could not have asked for anything else in life. I am happy now and I will be forever grateful to Focus Ireland for the help and support they gave me when I needed it the most.

I ended up going to UCD and doing a Certificate in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills.

Focus Ireland's dedicated youth services aim to directly challenge the different pathways towards homelessness that affect young people.



Youth homelessness

Focus Ireland is committed to ending youth homelessness. Research produced and commissioned by Focus Ireland has consistently shown the existence of youth-specific triggers into homelessness, as well as evidence that a significant proportion of people who are homeless in later life have first experienced homelessness during childhood or adolescence. Focus Ireland challenges youth homelessness through youth-specific early intervention and prevention measures, and by supporting young people into secure homes.

Why is youth homelessness a distinct issue?

For young adults, the transition from adolescence to adulthood is a crucial point in their development, and traumatic experiences at this stage in their lives can have a life-long impact. Focus Ireland's dedicated youth services aim to directly challenge the different pathways towards homelessness that affect young people. These developmentally informed services address well-being and life skills, and support young people to achieve their goals and thrive in a safe and secure home.

Focus Ireland youth services in 2023

In 2023, we supported 379 young people through our Youth Housing and Aftercare Services, which is a 5% reduction in the number of young people supported by our services compared to 2022 (figures do not include the Haven and two Home Again services, which are residential units for children under the age of 18). Staff shortages and more complex cases affected the total number of young people we were able to support.

Focus Housing increased the number of homes provided for young people who had left State care under the Capital Assistance Scheme for care-leavers to 89 in 2023, with Focus Housing being the largest provider of such homes in Ireland. We also expanded our youth residential services for vulnerable children in 2023, creating a bridge to our aftercare services.

Focus Ireland youth services include:

- › Aftercare
- › Crisis intervention services
- › Day services
- › Family mediation
- › Housing First for Youth
- › Residential aftercare
- › Under-18 residential care
- › Youth housing.

Some of these services are provided in partnership with Tusla, the HSE, local authorities, and other State agencies. Active collaboration with these bodies has been a crucial factor in the successful delivery of Focus Ireland's youth services.

Under-18 residential care services

Pathways towards homelessness for young people often start during childhood and adolescence, before the age of 18. In recognition of this, in July 2023, Focus Ireland's youth services, in partnership with Tusla, assumed the management of Home Again, a youth residential service for 12–18-year-olds. The two organisations have a shared ethos, shared values and a shared commitment to social justice and high-quality service provision, and this amalgamation will lead to the provision of more effective services for vulnerable young people. This expansion of Focus Ireland's long-term youth residential services in the Dublin area came at a time when the need for these services has never been greater.

In May 2023, Focus Ireland, in collaboration with Tusla in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, opened The Haven, a service providing supported accommodation for unaccompanied 16 and 17-year-olds who have fled the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Ten young people were offered stability during a period of crisis.

These new services complement Focus Ireland's existing services for young people under the age of 18, including the Caretaker's Hostel, which provides emergency placements for children who are accessing the National Emergency Out-of-Hours Service, and Grange Lodge, which provides short-term residential accommodation for young people between 15 and 18 years of age as part of Tusla's Crisis Intervention Services.

In 2023, the Caretaker's Hostel and Grange Lodge supported 48 and 18 young people, respectively.

Aftercare

On behalf of Tusla, Focus Ireland provides aftercare support to care-leavers across Ireland, with this support taking different forms depending on the needs of the young person. High-quality aftercare support is crucial for young people who have left care and are at risk of homelessness. Our aftercare services empower and support young people leaving care to develop skills to live independently and move into appropriate, secure accommodation.

Focus Ireland **North Dublin** and **South Dublin** provide both residential aftercare and support and settlement aftercare services. Residential aftercare at Chéad Chéim and Greenhills accommodated 23 and 14 young people, respectively, who left care in 2023, while support and settlement aftercare services supported an additional 73 young people in **North Dublin** and 80 young people in **South Dublin** in 2023.

In the **South-East** of the country, Focus Ireland provided aftercare support services in Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Tipperary. These services supported 62 young people leaving care in the South-East in 2023.

Pathways towards homelessness for young people often start during childhood and adolescence, before the age of 18.

Focus Ireland customer Rob Dawson with Focus Ireland Founder and Life President Sr Stan at the launch of the Annual Report 2022. Rob is a very talented singer/songwriter and played a few songs at the event in Dublin.



Focus on staff: Robert McDonagh, Assistant Project Leader



‘We have a number of young people who struggle with change or when things don’t work. When we have that conversation with our customer about what’s going on, it really calms them.’

Watch Robert via the QR code above.





A safe and secure place to call home is central to young people's ability to develop and achieve their goals as they transition to adulthood.

Youth housing

A safe and secure place to call home is central to young people's ability to develop and achieve their goals as they transition to adulthood.

Focus Ireland Youth Housing supports young people with safe and supported housing, based upon their individual needs, and is underpinned by Housing First for Youth principles. These principles aim to provide rapid access to housing that is safe, affordable, appropriate, and without pre-conditions, combined with age-appropriate supports that focus on health, well-being, life skills, engagement in education and employment, as well as social inclusion and community integration.

Focus Ireland and Focus Housing provide a number of youth-specific housing projects across Ireland: Limerick, Cork, Clare and Tipperary Youth Housing; Housing First for Youth in Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford; and the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) specifically for young people who have left State care and are availing of aftercare support in Dublin, Carlow, Clare, Cork, Kilkenny, Limerick, Mayo, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford.

In 2023, through these youth-specific housing programmes, Focus Ireland supported 20 young people in Limerick, 39 in Waterford, 28 in Clare and North Tipperary, and 19 in Cork.

Throughout 2023, Focus Ireland Youth Housing prevented homelessness for a total of 105 people, including 16 young families, and supported a further 126 people to exit homelessness, including 29 young families.

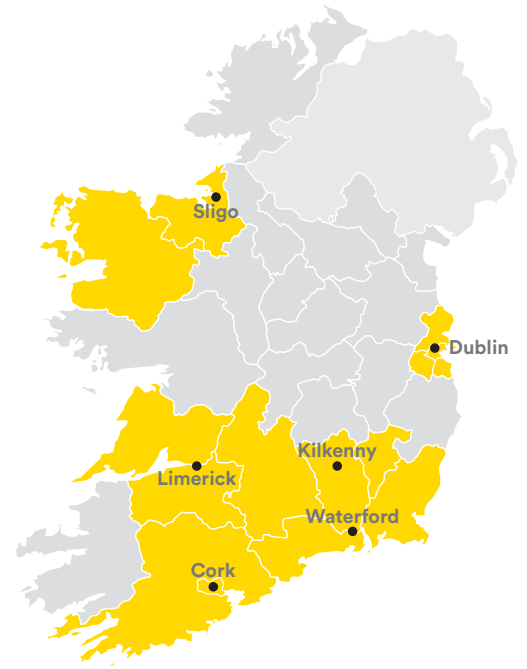
In each area where Focus Ireland has delivered results in preventing youth homelessness, and supported those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, a partnership approach with Tusla and the relevant local authority has been essential.

Day services and case management

Focus Ireland's Extension Youth Service is a day service in Dublin City Centre, which provides a safe, welcoming and supportive environment for young people accessing emergency accommodation during the day.

The service provides a youth-appropriate space where young people avail of advice, information and advocacy to enable them to access appropriate support services, address the causes of their homelessness and move towards independence. In 2023, 132 young people were supported by this service.

The Caretakers' Case Management service supports young people to exit homeless services through a developmental, youth-oriented, case management approach. In 2023, 49 young people currently accessing emergency accommodation were supported by this service.





Kristyna Alessandrini, Focus Ireland Mediator

Focus on: Mediation

The Youth Mediation service is a high-level prevention project aimed at young people aged between 12 and 18 years of age. It is targeted at young people and families or young people and their care-givers whose relationships have broken down and the young people are deemed to be at risk of being taken into care.

The service also works with children and young people who are already in care placements but whose placements are at risk of breaking down. Primarily, the service aims at preventing crisis situations developing or escalating, whereby a young person is asked to leave the family home or threatens to leave in response to an argument or dispute.

Professionally qualified mediators guide young people and their care-givers through a process of reconciliation, which aims to empower and support them to utilise their personal traits and skills to resolve conflict and agree workable solutions. Mediation can help to repair damaged relationships and support the process of reintegrating young people back into the family home.

The young people we engage with may have had challenging upbringing and often feel unseen, unheard, misunderstood and lost. Equally, the parents/carers have struggled to maintain a connection with their teens and need support to heal the relationship. The mediator's role is to create a safe space where both parties are heard and validated.

The service currently employs three mediators – one funded by Tusla – who have supported 46 young people and their families in 2023.

Mediation can help to repair damaged relationships and support the process of reintegrating young people back into the family home.

Youth Homelessness Strategy 2023–2025

Focus Ireland successfully campaigned for a national strategy on youth homelessness, having advocated for this, both as an organisation and as a member of the Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness, since 2017. The Youth Homelessness Strategy was launched by the Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in November 2022.

Since its publication, a Steering Group, convened by the Department of Housing, comprised of State agency and sectoral representatives, has monitored its implementation. The Steering Group is comprised of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and representatives of local authorities, Tusla, the Housing Agency, the HSE, and two representatives of the housing and youth NGO sectors.

Throughout 2023, Focus Ireland’s policy officer represented the Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness on this Steering Group, advising on actions within the strategy and providing oversight to the implementation of the strategy for the youth and homeless sectors.

Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness

The Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness is comprised of 19 organisations working in the youth, homeless, and housing sectors, and is currently chaired by Focus Ireland. The work of the coalition in 2023 has been focused on positively shaping the implementation of the Youth Homelessness Strategy as well as highlighting domestic and international best practice which might be adopted in an Irish context.



Professor Stephen Gaetz and Melanie Redman, of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and A Way Home Canada, presenting at *Working Together to End Youth Homelessness: The Importance of Effective Collaboration*, April 2023



The Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness is comprised of 19 organisations working in the youth, homeless, and housing sectors, and is currently chaired by Focus Ireland.

In April 2023, the coalition held a conference entitled *Working Together to End Youth Homelessness: The Importance of Effective Collaboration*. The purpose of the event was to bring together all relevant government departments, statutory bodies, and non-profit service providers and facilitate an open discussion on the need for an integrated whole-of-government approach to implement the actions contained within the strategy and to examine what improvements can be made collectively in this endeavour.

The headline component of the event was a panel discussion featuring Strategy Steering Group representatives from the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) and Tusla, chaired by Professor Stephen Gaetz and Melanie Redman, of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and A Way Home Canada, respectively, international experts on youth homelessness who generously gave an hour-long presentation on successful measures utilised in Canada which may be applied in the context of the Irish strategy.

The event also featured four young people with lived experience of youth homelessness who gave incredibly useful accounts of their experiences.

In August 2023, the coalition organised an informative webinar with our Welsh colleagues End Youth Homelessness Cymru. The presentation focused on the roll-out of Upstream by homeless charity Llamau in Wales, an early intervention programme which aims to prevent, reduce and identify the number of young people at risk of reaching a crisis point.

The webinar was held in the context of Strategic Aim 1 of the Youth Homelessness Strategy, *To prevent young people from entering homelessness*, and was attended by representatives from the Department of Housing, the Department of Education, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and Tusla.



I was around three years old, and I remember times when I was sleeping in cars.

Photo courtesy of Dara MacDonaill, *The Irish Times*.

James's story

James is a 19-year-old electrical engineer. He is also a Focus Ireland tenant and an ambassador of Focus Ireland's Lived Experience Ambassador Programme (LEAP). Having experienced homelessness as a child with his mother, James reflects on his experience of homelessness, his mother's journey, his experience within the education system, and why he wishes to use his story to help people going through similar experiences.

I was around three years old, and I remember times when I was sleeping in cars. I remember where it was, it was outside my nanny's. It was comforting to know that I could finally have somewhere to stay, but obviously it was still rough sleeping and there was still a danger to it because you're not actually surrounded by a building, you're inside a car. So there's not really that much safety. There's a lot of danger, especially sleeping beside your mother. I do talk to my mother about it and ask how was it? She's a better person now, ten times better than she was back then. And so am I.

James and his mother spent time sleeping in their car, moving between friends and family houses, and sleeping in different homeless accommodation services, such as hostels and family hubs. James reflects on his mother's experience of addiction and the effect this had on him as a young person.

I managed to stay off drugs and stay off drinking and smoking because of learning from other people's mistakes, especially my mother's. She made sure to learn from her mistakes and she's a better person, ten times better now than she was back then. And so am I. She told me herself, like, why she took it and obviously it was 'cos of trauma in her life. She, like, became homeless in London and she experienced it and then she moved over to Ireland and then still experienced it because she was still sleeping rough.

James faced difficulties engaging in mainstream education, and when he was 15 years old he stopped going to school, which worried his parents:

They didn't know what was going on. They thought that I was just having a tantrum and didn't want to go to school like every other child doesn't want to go to school.

James engaged with learning centres where he could focus on subjects that interested him, in a learning environment that supported him, first completing his Junior Certificate and then a pre-apprenticeship course in metalwork, maths and engineering.

From a safe and secure place to call home, James continues to progress in his career, having undertaken an apprenticeship. In 2023, he became a Focus Ireland LEAP ambassador.

So the reason I became a LEAP ambassador is to share my story so it can help other people that are going through the same trauma as me and the same background, so they can build a future like I have.



Over 12,000 people signed the petition and 2,365 people sent emails to their local TDs.

Focus on: 'Best Interests of the Child' campaign

In May 2023, we launched the 'Best Interests of the Child' campaign, which was supported by the Children's Rights Alliance and One Family.

The legislation that governs the obligations on local authorities to support people experiencing homelessness was first introduced in 1988 at a time when family and child homelessness was not a concern. The legislation did not consider the specific needs of children in emergency accommodation. Focus Ireland believes that 'Best Interests of the Child' legislation needs to be introduced that would ensure better outcomes for children in emergency accommodation. This would involve training local authority staff to assess the needs of children as well as providing accommodation close to children's schools, support for additional needs, and timely access to child support workers. The Labour Party introduced a Private Members Bill, which was unilaterally supported, and we called on the government to introduce an updated Bill that could be passed into legislation.

The campaign asked the general public to sign a petition to introduce the legislation and, after signing the petition, people were then asked to send a pre-populated email to their local TDs. Over 12,000 people signed the petition and 2,365 people sent emails to their local TDs. In the 2024 local elections, we are asking all candidates to support a resolution in their council implementing a policy that will prioritise the 'best interests of the child.'



Pictured at the launch of the Best Interests of the Child campaign are Mike Allen, Focus Ireland Advocacy Director, Karen Kiernan, CEO of One Family, and Julie Ahern, Director of Legal Policy and Services, Children's Rights Alliance

...adult-only homelessness has increased almost in a straight line for ten years, and there are now triple the number of homeless adult-only households than just a decade ago.



Adult-only homelessness

While we have seen significant fluctuations in the number of families experiencing homelessness over the last three years, the number of homeless adult-only households, sometimes referred to as single-adult households, has consistently increased year on year. For the first time ever, the number of adult-only households in emergency accommodation rose above 6,000 in October 2023.

This trend of an almost constant rise in the number of adults without accompanying children in emergency accommodation is different to the fluctuations in family and child homelessness we have witnessed over the last three years. What is even more striking is that adult-only homelessness has increased almost in a straight line for ten years, and there are now triple the number of homeless adult-only households than just a decade ago.

We know that the pathways into homelessness can be more complex for individuals than families, and individuals with complex mental health, addiction and behavioural challenges have always been at an increased risk of homelessness.

Since the establishment of Focus Ireland nearly 40 years ago when our first project with homeless women in Dublin began, homeless individuals and couples with complex needs have always been a central part of our mission, and we have an international reputation as a pioneer of Housing First. Single people with complex support needs are a key group in our 2021–2025 strategy, and we provide a range of services, including long-term supported housing, Tenancy Sustainment and Housing First, in partnership with State bodies and organisations across Ireland.

Permanent housing, with long-term support for those who need it, is a core element of Focus Ireland's approach to ending homelessness and, as part of our strategy, we have committed to acquiring over 200 additional housing units for single people moving out of homelessness – primarily those with complex support needs – during the lifetime of this strategy. In 2023, we purchased or leased an additional 60 new homes for adults, which were added to our housing stock. Combined with the 116 units delivered in 2021 and 2022, this means that we have reached 88% of our five-year housing target to deliver 200 new homes for adult-only households in the first three years of our strategy.

Permanent housing, with long-term support for those who need it, is a core element of Focus Ireland's approach to ending homelessness

The Women's Outlook Programme

The Women's Outlook Programme was developed as a woman-focused service to help reduce offending, improve opportunities for the reintegration of women following prison, and prevent women entering homelessness upon release from prison.

The Women's Outlook Programme is a collaborative initiative between the Irish Prison Service (IPS), Probation Service and Focus Ireland. The structured and holistic approach of the programme, addressing issues such as accommodation, life skills, and community reintegration, has demonstrated positive outcomes for the women involved, and their families. The establishment of the Women's Outlook Programme was a response to the recognised need for transitional services specifically tailored to women assessed as low risk for re-offending and as low risk to society. The collaboration between the IPS, Probation Service, and Focus Ireland has been a key strength, emphasising a synchronised response to the challenges faced by women leaving prison. The programme's success is evident in its ability to reduce homelessness and recidivism for participants to date. Strong connections have been forged with external services, contributing to the holistic support provided to participants. Family reintegration, education, training, and employment outcomes have been notably positive, showcasing the programme's effectiveness in facilitating the transition to independent and stable lives. As well as these employment and education supports, mothers participating in the programme are facilitated to have their children stay overnight with them from time to time, which helps to rebuild familial relationships after time spent apart.

The programme provides alternative accommodation and support for women who are still serving their sentences and aims to support participants to meet any conditions imposed on them, while simultaneously supporting them to develop skills and take control of their lives to make positive changes.

In 2023, the programme supported 35 women throughout the year, and 8 women were supported to move on from the programme into long-term accommodation. The eight women are now in either full-time adult education or employment. Some notable highlights from last year include one of the participants starting a university Masters course and another securing employment in Focus Ireland as part of our Peer Support Worker programme.

'I had a fantastic experience and lots of support in the Outlook programme. It allowed me lots of opportunities for personal development and growth, and made me feel empowered. It also allowed me to reach one of my goals – to work with people in the community who are experiencing difficulties, which I have been able to achieve in my new role as a Peer Support Worker.'

Focus Ireland Peer Support Worker and previous participant in the Women's Outlook Programme





For Housing First tenants, their experience of homelessness gradually becomes a chapter in their past.

Housing First

In 2023, we continued our very positive Housing First work with local authorities in Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Cork, Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Tipperary and Kilkenny, to provide Housing First programmes as part of the national Housing First strategy. In 2023, we supported 198 people as part of Housing First programmes around the country. This includes individuals who were supported in a pre-tenancy capacity prior to moving into accommodation. Focus Housing also provided 24 units for Housing First tenants in Dublin at the end of 2023. Our Housing First teams support people who are long-term rough sleepers and emergency accommodation users to move into a new home, and sustain their tenancy through the provision of ongoing, time-unlimited, intensive support. Housing First differs from traditional approaches: rather than offering a bed in a treatment facility or a hostel, we work to provide an appropriate, long-term housing solution with support.

As part of our 2021–2025 organisational strategy, Focus Ireland committed to delivering at least an additional 52 units for the Housing First programme, and in the first three years, 66 units have been delivered. We will continue to increase the number of homes we provide as part of our Housing First commitments, as well as advocating for flexibility around the size of homes that can be used for the programme. In addition to advocating for a more flexible policy, particularly in relation to tenants who are non-custodial parents, Focus Housing has sought to address this challenge through its building programme and has prioritised the construction of one- and two-bedroom homes to reflect the needs of those most excluded from housing.

Focus Ireland's Housing First support staff works with people who have experienced long-term homelessness and who have complex support needs. It offers people a tenancy with the wraparound health supports and connections to community supports that are needed to ensure that people maintain their housing and improve their overall health and well-being. This is vital to the long-term success of these tenancies, as Housing First tenants are gradually introduced to mainstream services, which reduces their reliance on the Housing First team and increases their independence. In the long term, tenants can rely on mainstream local supports as they settle into their new home and community. For Housing First tenants, their experience of homelessness gradually becomes a chapter in their past.

Housing First in the Mid-West

Housing First in Limerick and Clare continues to go from strength to strength. Housing First is four years in operation in Limerick and three years in Clare. In Limerick to date, we have had an 85% tenancy sustainment rate, with 54 tenancies created in total. Some customers have had more than one tenancy for various reasons, with a total of 40 customers housed through the project. To date, Clare has a tenancy sustainment rate of 92%: nine tenancies have been created and nine customers have been housed. The tenancy sustainment rates are in line with other countries that operate under the Housing First model. This success is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the staff team on the ground. Staff at the service provide vital, day-to-day, intensive supports to customers to help them manage their home, health and well-being.

With the support of our partners Limerick City and County Council, Clare County Council and the HSE Social Inclusion team, we hope to expand our team in 2024 and add Case Managers, Health Inclusion Outreach and Community Integration Workers to the Housing First team. These extra roles will enhance the support we can offer to our customers and hopefully ensure our high tenancy sustainment rates.

Housing First in the South-East

Focus Ireland has been delivering its housing-led approach to homelessness across the South-East since 2015. In 2019, as part of the National Housing First Implementation Plan, we commenced a close working partnership with South-East Simon, Kilkenny Voluntary Housing Association, and the five local authorities to provide a successful Housing First service in the South-East. Recently, the Peter McVerry Trust and Clúid joined the partnership as Housing First landlords. We currently provide the Housing First service in County Waterford, as landlord to Housing First tenants, and we are the Housing First service provider in Kilkenny, Wexford, South Tipperary and Carlow. In 2023, Focus Ireland, along with our partnership teams in each area, provided support to 67 households throughout the year and, by December, 58 of these households were still in a successful tenancy.

The Housing First team worked in partnership with Waterford's Preparation for Education, Training and Employment (PETE) team to support our tenants in accessing training and personal development programmes. Some of the programmes that benefited our customers in 2023 included driving lessons, counselling sessions, literacy courses, and safe pass construction skills. Through funding from HSE Social Inclusion, we have also been able to implement healthy life-skills programmes, aiding the development of skills such as well-being, managing a tenancy, healthy eating, and personal care.

Housing First in the South-West

In Cork City, Focus Ireland, in partnership with Cork Simon, has been providing a Housing First approach for the past five years. At the end of 2023 there were 44 people supported by the city service, with 39 active tenancies in place and 5 people linked in with outreach and waiting to move into a tenancy. The emphasis is placed on the customer's health needs and their integration with the local community. Over the past three years, we were fortunate enough to get the opportunity to roll out the programme into Counties Cork and Kerry, and there are now 17 tenancies in place in County Cork and 18 tenancies in place in County Kerry. The programme is constantly evolving, and having a client-centred approach ensures that customers maintain their homes, with their holistic needs being assessed on an ongoing basis. Focus Ireland also provides long-term supported housing

for single people with complex needs to enable them to live as independently as possible in their own home. In 2023, we delivered 48 new homes in the South-West region. This approach has been very successful in helping to prevent people from becoming homeless or ensuring they were able to permanently exit homelessness.

Advocacy and Housing First

Focus Ireland is a founding member of the European Housing First (EHF) Hub, based in Brussels. The EHF Hub aims to draw on the success of Finland's Housing First approach and other international good practice to enhance good practice across Europe. In April 2023, a delegation from Focus Ireland attended the EHF Hub partnership conference in Glasgow.

In order to share this good practice and experience in the Irish context, Focus Ireland convenes the Irish Housing First Platform, where all the voluntary organisations providing Housing First (North and South) meet to collaborate in delivering the most effective services.

Focus on: *Stories from the Streets*

The customers and staff at Focus Ireland's Coffee Shop were the main focus of the second episode of *Stories from the Streets*, which aired on Virgin Media in March 2023.

The first episode gave a unique insight into how Focus Ireland operates this service, as the camera crew were allowed weekly access over several months.

The documentary's aim was for people in homelessness to tell their own stories and to follow their journeys and the challenges they faced over a period of time. Additionally, the documentary highlighted the culture, values and working practices of the service providers who help people cope and improve their life situations.





We are delighted that two of our ambassadors, Paul and Catherine, are on the Focus Ireland Services Sub-committee.

Focus on: Lived Experience Ambassador Programme (LEAP)

In 2023, our five original LEAP ambassadors completed their two-year term. We wish Stephanie Clarke, Scott Buckley, Kelly-Anne Byrne, Paul Geoghegan and Catherine Keenan the best of luck for their future.

They served us extremely well as our inaugural ambassadors, and we will be forever grateful to their generosity of spirit, which involved sharing their stories, insights and lived experience. They had an exciting two years, which saw them featured on radio, newspaper, and television broadcasts. They produced a beautiful book, *Journey Home*, exploring their journey through homelessness through the medium of photography, and had an exhibition in Collins Barracks, National Museum of Ireland. We are delighted that two of our ambassadors, Paul and Catherine, are on the Focus Ireland Services Sub-committee.

While we will no doubt miss them, we are happy to welcome our new ambassadors James Flanagan, Keile O'Danza, Al Leahy and Des Murphy. Our four new ambassadors completed ten weekly workshops by December 2023 and have already started to share their stories. We look forward to working with them over the next two years, and in the meantime you can watch their video stories on our website. 2024 will be an exciting year, seeing how they can build on the work of our former ambassadors.

They produced a beautiful book, *Journey Home*, exploring their journey through homelessness through the medium of photography, and had an exhibition in Collins Barracks, National Museum of Ireland.



Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien, Focus Housing resident Jackie, and CEO Pat Dennigan at the opening of a Focus Housing 20-unit development at Connaught Street, which is providing homes for families and individuals in Phibsboro, Dublin

Focus Housing

Focus Housing, the housing arm of Focus Ireland, is a significant provider of housing across the country and is Ireland's seventh largest Approved Housing Body. We currently provide over 1,500 affordable, sustainable homes for individuals and families across the country, with a presence in Dublin, Kildare, Carlow, Wexford, Kilkenny, Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, Clare, Mayo and Sligo. Under our strategy 2021–2025 our aim is to deliver over 1,000 homes through direct builds, partnering with developers and acquisitions. To date, we have delivered 1,544 homes, 168 of which were delivered in 2023.

A challenging year for the housing sector

The sector experienced challenging times in 2023, including construction and materials inflation, supply chain issues and shortages of labour across the construction sector. Focus Housing continued its work in partnership to deliver new social and affordable homes with a variety of stakeholders, such as local authorities, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Housing Finance Agency, and the Housing Agency.

Meanwhile, our property and development teams concentrated their efforts on quality, sustainable practices, and being environmentally friendly. We strive to ensure that our developments are energy-efficient and that we remain economically resourceful when it comes to building our communities for the future.

This was done through renovation, adaptive re-use, and preservation to reduce the environmental impact compared to new construction. We see the value of re-using and developing existing buildings where suitable, and this ensures that we are as green as possible when delivering projects.

Focus Housing also continued a shift from being predominantly a purchaser of homes for our customers to being a developer of new homes. An exciting development in 2023 was the piloting of the Meascán housing model as a solution to housing needs.

The Meascán model is based on 'intentional social mix' and the idea is to provide homes for 'mainstream' households alongside some households who were previously homeless and might need some ongoing support.

This approach is designed to facilitate Focus Housing to become more active in building housing developments with green and blue spaces, while maintaining the good practice of providing 'scatter site' housing and social integration for people moving out of homelessness. What we do now is likely to have the greatest influence and will affect the future of our society.



Projects delivered

Connaught Street, Dublin

In August 2023, Focus Housing delivered a 20-unit apartment development in Connaught Street, Phibsborough, Dublin 7. The building was developed on a brownfield site that was formerly used as a tyre centre. These 20 homes were delivered in partnership with Dublin City Council, the Housing Finance Agency, the Housing Agency, and the Department of Housing. The development is centrally located, near local amenities such as Croke Park, the Mater Hospital and Dublin city centre, as well as being supported by accessible public transport.

This innovative development uses the Meascán model of intentional ‘social mix’, which includes people leaving homelessness who may need ongoing support and others from the local authority housing waiting lists who just need a home. This approach helps to promote sustainable communities while providing ongoing tenancy support for individuals with past experience of homelessness or those at risk of homelessness.

Irish House, Tipperary Town

Irish House, Tipperary Town, which was delivered at the end of 2023, is a construction project to re-purpose and provide much-needed social housing in the heart of Tipperary Town.

Vacant for an extended period, the building was acquired by Focusing Housing with the support of Tipperary County Council. The aim was to refurbish and convert the first and second floors of the building into six BER B2-rated apartment homes for tenants. The design ensured that original historical features were protected in this registered building of note.

Great care was taken to ensure the preservation of the original doors from the vocational school within the building, creating a blend of historical charm and modern living. Inside the apartments, the furnishings and layout create a softer look and feature bright, modern interiors, with well-equipped kitchens, and contemporary tiled bathrooms and wooden floors throughout.

In pursuit of sustainability, Focus Housing completed this upgrade without compromising the building’s character. Its central location on the main street of Tipperary provides convenient access to all local amenities, offering our tenants the opportunity to embark on and enjoy the next stages of their lives in a new home.

Limerick Derelict Properties Project

Three derelict properties were brought back into a state of use in partnership with Limerick County Council. These ‘pepper-potted’ properties across Limerick City and County were all derelict and vacant and in need of significant repair. The three properties were part of a bundle of 16 properties to be delivered and refurbished to a high standard, with a minimum BER B2 rating, and to be completed over three phases.

Lower Glanmire Road, Cork City

This property was a former public house with two apartments overhead and was designed to meet the need for one- and two-bedroom homes in Cork City. Planning was granted for a change of use on the public house and the one-bedroom apartment, along with the two existing apartments overhead. The property underwent significant refurbishment and modernisation. The properties are located close to Kent Railway Station on the Lower Glanmire Road, which provides easy access to Cork City centre and surrounding towns.

Chime House, Dublin

In partnership with the National Charity for Deafness and Hearing Loss, and Dublin County Council, Focus Housing delivered a four-bedroom, end-of-terrace home, fully adapted to meet the different needs of the tenants. This secure home will support three people to live independently and comfortably in a Dublin community, surrounded by well-equipped facilities and nearby services for convenience and accessibility.



Pat Dennigan, Tánaiste Micheál Martin and Aisling O’Connor pictured at the launch of 16 Focus Ireland homes in the heart of Cork City on the Grand Parade. The site was a previously vacant commercial premises at ground-floor level and derelict above. It has been transformed and renovated to deliver 16 homes to people on Cork City Council’s housing waiting list. The BER B1-rated apartments are delivered by Focus Housing, with the support of Cork City Council, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and with generous donations from the Tomar Trust, via Community Foundation Ireland. The ground floor of the premises serves as Focus Ireland’s central office in Cork

Projects in the pipeline

Bow Lane, Kilmainham, and Richmond Avenue, North Dublin

Focus Housing will deliver a number of projects in Dublin in 2025, including Bow Lane West, Kilmainham, in the South Inner City. This development will comprise 27 homes, 20 one-bedroom and 7 two-bedroom units. Across the city, the Richmond Avenue Development, North Dublin, is set to deliver 35 homes, comprising 19 one-bedroom and 16 two-bedroom units.

Castleisland, Co. Kerry

This is Focus Ireland's first joint development project with another AHB. In collaboration with Co-operative Housing Ireland and with the support of Kerry County Council, we completed the delivery of 67 homes in Castleisland, Co. Kerry, in early 2024. These modern new homes represent the first delivery of homes by Focus Housing in Kerry. The 67 homes will be split into 31 social homes, owned and managed by Focus Housing and consisting of one-, two- and three-bedroom homes, and the remaining 36 homes will be managed by Co-operative Housing Ireland.

Ashbrook, Glanmire, Cork City

This scheme will provide 30 apartments (one-, two- and three-bedroom) that are due to be delivered in Q4 2024.

The Meascán Staff Day – Portlaoise, Co. Laois

In early November, our Advocacy team facilitated a day offsite in Co. Laois for our CEO, Services and Property teams from across the organisation to come together to discuss the future of the Meascán Housing Model and to exchange experiences, awareness, ideas, encourage questions, and a greater understanding of Meascán.

The Meascán approach places people who are moving out of homelessness into units that have been purchased or built within an existing community. The model is based on 'intentional social mix' and the idea that 'mainstream' households are aware in advance of moving into their home that some of their neighbours have experienced homelessness and may, from time to time, continue to experience periods of difficulty. All households in the development will also be aware of the supports that are available and the standards and processes that will be applied. The approach allows Focus Housing to become more active in building and planning housing developments, while maintaining the good practice of providing 'scatter site' housing and social integration for people moving out of homelessness.

The Meascán approach places people who are moving out of homelessness into units that have been purchased or built within an existing community.



Focus on:

Focus Ireland's Submission to the Review of the Private Rented Sector

In 2023, Focus Ireland welcomed the opportunity to make a submission to the public consultation for a new strategy on the private rental sector.

The rental sector in Ireland is contracting at a time of rapidly growing demand, and this requires immediate policy action. As part of the submission, Focus Ireland recommended the reform of HAP (Housing Assistance Payment), the phasing out of HAP as a long-term policy objective, changes to taxation for smaller landlords where security of tenure is improved for tenants, robust data and definitions on homelessness, and measures to improve the affordability of the private rental sector, among other recommendations.

The State's reliance on the private rental sector to accommodate large numbers of its most vulnerable citizens is an inevitable outcome of inadequate State investment in social housing over several decades. Focus Ireland has long maintained that there is an over-reliance on the private rental sector and that it is not an appropriate social housing solution for many households.

Our full submission can be read on our website at <https://www.focusireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Focus-Irelands-Submission-to-the-Review-of-the-Private-Rented-Sector.pdf>

Focus on:

Humans of Dublin partnership

During 2023, Focus Ireland collaborated with Humans of Dublin, the brainchild of Peter Varga.

Peter was born in Budapest and moved to Dublin at the age of 19. Over the years, he has approached thousands of people on the streets of Dublin and beyond, posting over 2,000 stories to his hugely popular social media pages. The collaboration highlighted stories from some familiar faces who include some of our Lived Experience Ambassadors such as Catherine Keenan (pictured).



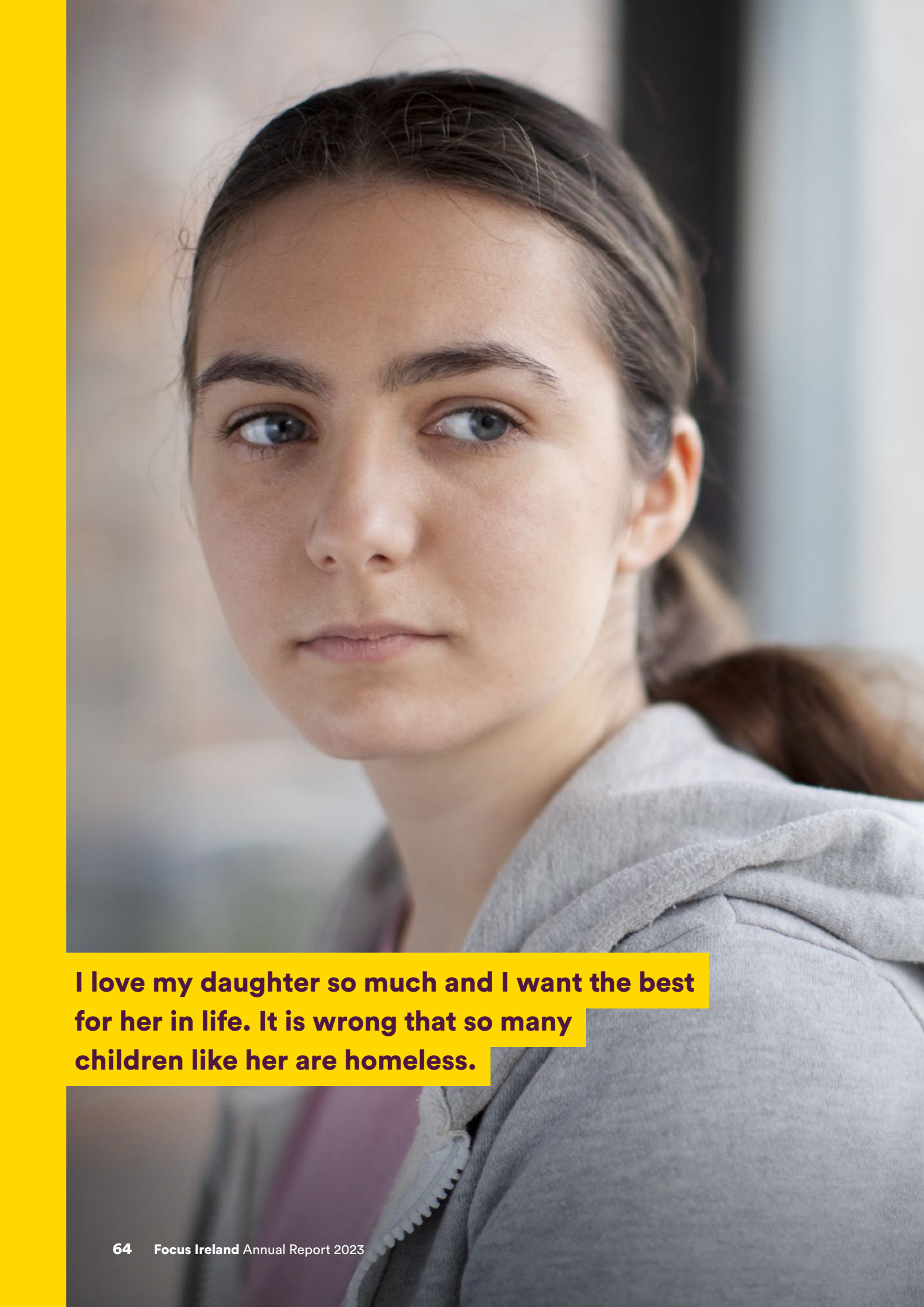


Focus on: Rock Against Homelessness concert, 2023, 3Olympia Theatre, Dublin

The Sunday Independent Rock Against Homelessness concert in aid of Focus Ireland took place at the 3Olympia Theatre, Dublin, in May 2023.

The concert was headlined by the amazing singer/songwriter Lyra who said: 'Thank God for charities like Focus Ireland, as without them I fear the worst. We as a nation need to be the voices for our fellow human beings who have lost everything.'

Cadbury Ireland, Arachas Insurance and Hard Rock Café, Dublin, kindly sponsored the event. It was the eighth year of this amazing event, which, to date, has raised over €175,000, while also raising awareness of the homeless crisis and about Focus Ireland's work. The concert also featured upcoming artist Toshin who was herself homeless for a brief period in the past. She said: 'The rents just kept going up and a few years ago I lost my place and was homeless, so I know how terrible a thing it is to happen in life. I am so happy to be able to do my bit to help through my music.'



I love my daughter so much and I want the best for her in life. It is wrong that so many children like her are homeless.

Stephanie's* story

Stephanie moved to Ireland in 2021. She was working in a restaurant in Dublin and in a relationship with an Irish man. However, when she got pregnant, he did not want to be involved. She had been renting a room as a licensee, but when she got pregnant the landlord evicted her and she ended up in emergency accommodation in the city centre.

She gave birth from there and was placed in a family hub in South Circular Road. She is supported by the Focus Ireland family team and, while this helps, she is finding things very tough.

I have not been able to work with the baby. I was thinking about going home to Greece, but I have to stay here now in case my daughter's father changes his mind and he does want to meet her and be a part of her life.

Focus Ireland have been giving me support, and my first support worker was amazing. She helped me with everything, such as applying to be on the housing list and getting supports. But we have been homeless for a year now and it is incredibly stressful. I am trying my best, but I cannot find anywhere to rent so we are stuck as homeless. It really makes you feel powerless. I know there are so many others in the same situation. It gets on top of you, and it is hard to feel that there will be an end to all this.

I just want to get a home for us, and I can start working again and we can build a life here. I love my daughter so much and I want the best for her in life. It is wrong that so many children like her are homeless.

Focus Ireland have been giving me support, and my first support worker was amazing.

*The name in this story has been changed as the person wishes to remain anonymous.

Focus on: Legacies

Each year, some of our most inspiring and committed donors choose to include a gift in their will to Focus Ireland. This special legacy gift means that families and children across Ireland will always have a place to call home.

Legacy gifts are life-changing and contribute to the development of Focus Ireland's services long into the future. These gifts allow us to build new homes and offer impactful and long-lasting support to people in their most vulnerable moments. Gifts in wills ensure that people at risk of becoming homeless will not have to experience the trauma that it causes, and helps them to secure stability and independence, which is crucial to living a fulfilled life.

In 2023, we received over €1 million in bequests from 43 generous supporters. Without legacy gifts of all sizes, we would not be able to help as many families, children and young people who need our help most. The people who leave gifts in their wills embody and share in our vision that homelessness in Ireland must end.



'By leaving a gift to Focus Ireland in my will, I am contributing to a better future for people who need it most. I feel a great sense of fulfilment in knowing that people will lead better lives because of my gift, and through them my sense of community spirit will hopefully live on.'

John O'Donoghue, Living Legacy

Focus on: Thank you...

St Stephen's Green Trust

Focus Ireland would like to thank the St Stephen's Green Trust for their support in the evaluation of Focus Ireland's Women's Outlook Programme in 2023.

Community Foundation Ireland

In 2023, Focus Ireland was delighted to launch 16 Focus Housing homes at Grand Parade in the heart of Cork City centre, which was made possible due to generous donations by the Tomar Trust through Community Foundation Ireland.

Little Company of Mary

In 2023, we were grateful to the Little Company of Mary for their continued support of the Family Centre.

Focus on: Tax reclaim guidance

The Charitable Donation Scheme allows tax relief on qualifying donations made to Focus Ireland. If an individual donates €250 or more in a year, Focus Ireland can claim tax efficiency on top of that donation. This increases the amount of the donation to Focus Ireland by approximately 44.9%. It only takes about 30 seconds to complete, but the difference it makes is invaluable. On a donation of €250, Focus Ireland could claim €112. This could allow us to provide vital supports for families, children and young people across Ireland. For more information, visit the 'Tax Effective Giving' section on Focus Ireland's website: www.focusireland.ie/tax-effective-giving/



Laurie O'Donnell · Paul Haughan ·
Dillon Ruddell · Kathleen Twomey

Growing Older at Home

Investigating long-term housing needs of mid-to-later life Focus Housing Association tenants

Challenging homelessness. Changing lives.

FOCUS
Ireland

FOCUS
Ireland

Challenging homelessness. Changing lives.

Multidisciplinary Team for Homeless Families Feasibility Study

Research and policy submissions

The exceptional research conducted by Focus Ireland’s dedicated team underpins and enhances the provision of our housing and services for those facing homelessness. Moreover, it bolsters our efforts in advocacy, campaigning, policy development, and educational initiatives. Throughout 2023, the team produced the impactful research publications and policy submissions outlined below.

Research publications

Our own publications:

- › *Growing Older at Home: Investigating long-term housing needs of mid-to-later life Focus Housing Association tenants*
- › *Multidisciplinary Team for Homeless Families Feasibility Study*

A paper related to a PhD we funded, which is published on our website:

- › *Transitions Into, Through and Out of Homeless: Quantitative Analysis of Administrative Data on Single Adults’ Emergency Accommodation Use in the Dublin Region between 2016 and 2018*

Policy submissions

- › Proposals to Increase Retention of Small-scale Landlords in the Residential Market
- › Letter to Minister O’Brien seeking extension of winter eviction moratorium
- › Letter to Minister regarding the Tenant in Situ Scheme
- › Submission to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport, and Media on the registration of short-term lets
- › Submission to the Child Poverty and Well-Being Unit on Housing and Homelessness Issues Relevant to Child Poverty
- › Focus Ireland’s Submission to the Review of the Private Rented Sector
- › Focus Ireland Pre-Budget Submission to Government for Budget 2024
- › Focus Ireland Submission to the Consultation of An Garda Síochána Strategic Plan 2025–27
- › Submission of Feedback to An Garda Síochána on Evictions Policy

Focus on: Better Supports for Older Customers and Ageing Tenants

Focus Ireland brought our Erasmus+ collaboration on ageing and homelessness to a powerful conclusion with a conference on 19 September 2023 at LinkedIn's Community Space, bringing together experts in health, social care, and homeless services to look at the challenges faced by older people who are homeless.

Our Policy Manager, Tara Gallagher, coordinated the conference as part of Focus Ireland's participation in the Erasmus+ project on Better Supports for Older People Experiencing Homelessness, which involved Focus Ireland partnering with four international project partners: BMSZKI and From Streets to Homes in Hungary, Caritas in Italy, and Groundswell in the UK.

The project consisted of study missions and site visits to participating countries to exchange knowledge and share best practices on how to better support older people experiencing homelessness. There were two interactive panel discussions held at the conference, with a range of speakers from the health and social care sectors, NGOs, and local government. The panel discussions explored a range of issues such as accelerated ageing, chronic homelessness and the vital link between healthcare supports and social inclusion. The speakers also explored how local authorities should respond to ageing and homelessness, strengthening best practice in health and social care, and the role for public policy to both prevent and address homelessness.

The panel discussions explored a range of issues such as accelerated ageing, chronic homelessness and the vital link between healthcare supports and social inclusion.



Focus on: Multi-Disciplinary Team for Homeless Families Feasibility Study

The core of Focus Ireland’s work is to support families and individuals out of homelessness into secure and sustainable homes. Our experience has shown that, for families with complex support needs, this is more likely to be successful with a team expanded to include other disciplines, particularly in clinical and therapeutic fields.

The objective of making all Focus Ireland activities ‘Trauma Informed’, as set out in the organisational strategy *Restating our Vision 2021–25*, reinforces the broadening of the teams supporting families with complex needs. It is in this context that Focus Ireland commissioned S3 Solutions to undertake a study into the potential for and challenges of establishing ‘multi-disciplinary teams’ to support vulnerable families.

The study consulted with 14 staff across six Focus Ireland services, 21 families experiencing homelessness with additional or complex needs, and 5 key stakeholders to outline key considerations for successful delivery of a multi-disciplinary team for homeless families and an implementation plan, including key roles and guiding principles.

The report was launched at a stakeholder event in the LinkedIn Community Space. Attendees included representatives from the HSE, Dublin City Council, Housing First National Office, Tusla, and various universities and healthcare services. A presentation of the study’s findings was followed by a roundtable discussion to explore funding and the implementation of a multi-disciplinary team for homeless families. The creation of such a multi-disciplinary team within Focus Ireland, and ensuring long-term funding for it, are now key commitments for the Executive over the coming years.

The study consulted with 14 staff across six Focus Ireland services, 21 families experiencing homelessness with additional or complex needs, and 5 key stakeholders...



At Focus Ireland, we are driven by the fundamental belief that homelessness is wrong.



Focus Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee

Reports and Consolidated Financial Statements

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

Company number: 106149

Contents

Directors and Other Information	74
Directors' Report	75
Independent Auditor's Report	120
Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities	125
Consolidated Balance Sheet	126
Company Balance Sheet	127
Consolidated Statement of Changes in Reserves	128
Company Statement of Changes in Reserves	129
Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows	130
Company Statement of Cash Flows	131
Notes to the Financial Statements	132
Appendix to the Financial Statements	155

Directors and Other Information

Directors

Focus Ireland Board

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy
(Founder and Life President)
Mr Michael Layde (Chairman)
Mr Tony Fahey
Mr Conor Jones
Mr Andrew Gunne
Ms Susan O'Connell
Mr Niall Keane
(resigned 19 April 2024)
Ms Katie Burke
(appointed 29 September 2023)

Focus Housing Association Board

Mr Diarmuid Burke (Chairman)
(resigned 26 March 2024)
Mr Fergal O'Dwyer (Chairman)
(appointed 26 March 2024)
Ms Patricia Crisp
Mr Mark Dunleavy
Ms Anne Fletcher
Mr Lonan McDowell
Ms Gloria Kirwan
(appointed 27 January 2024)

Members of both Boards

Mr David Kelly
(appointed 27 January 2024)
Ms Anna Lee
(resigned 29 September 2023)
Ms Fionnuala Meehan

Chief Executive Officer

Mr Pat Dennigan

Secretary and Registered Office

Ms Pamela Branagan
9–12 High Street, Dublin 8, D08 EIWO

Registered Nos:

Focus Ireland CLG: 106149
Focus Housing Association CLG: 133953

Independent Auditors

PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants and
Statutory Audit Firm
1 Spencer Dock, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1

Solicitors

McCann FitzGerald
Mason Hayes & Curran
Clohessy Minihane
MM Halley & Sons
Holmes O'Malley Sexton
O'Donnell Breen-Walsh O'Donoghue
Hogan Dowling
Byrne Wallace
Kilcullen and Associates
HOS Partners LLP
J.W. O'Donovan LLP
Eversheds Sutherland LLP

Bankers

Bank of Ireland
Allied Irish Bank plc
Housing Finance Agency

Company

Focus Ireland
Focus Housing Association
Excellent Common Areas

Revenue Registered Charity No.

CHY 7220
CHY 9040
Not registered

CRA Registered Charity No.

20015107
20022624
Not registered

Directors' Report

The Directors present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of the company and of its subsidiaries, together 'the Group', for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.

About Focus Ireland

Founded in 1985 by Sr Stanislaus Kennedy, Focus Ireland is a housing and homeless charity that works to prevent people becoming or remaining homeless, or returning to homelessness, through the provision of quality services, supported housing, research and advocacy.

Mission

At Focus Ireland, we are driven by the fundamental belief that homelessness is wrong. Wrong because it is a failure of society that creates victims out of ordinary people and robs them of their potential. Wrong because it can be prevented, it can be solved, but is allowed to continue, thereby undermining society. We need to challenge our society to think and act differently. We are committed to challenging everything about homelessness: the causes, systemic failures, people's perceptions and how it is tackled.

It can be different.



Objectives and activities

Focus Ireland is principally concerned with preventing homelessness and with the provision of support services to people who are homeless, as well as providing homes to secure their exit out of homelessness.

The organisation developed and rolled out its strategy in 2021: *Strategy 2021–2025: Challenging homelessness. Changing Lives*. We will continue to build on our achievements from our previous strategy and remain dedicated to our two key pillars:

- › preventing homelessness and
- › supporting people who are homeless to move on into secure homes.

We understand that homelessness remains a blight on individuals, families and our society as a whole. But homelessness cannot be ended by working just at the individual level, important as that is. Always, our challenge to homelessness is based on the lived experience of the people we work with and support. Over the period of this strategy, we will continue to draw evidence-based inspiration from all our sources, both domestic and international, and share them with our partners to help change the practices and policies that sustain homelessness.

Homelessness happens when people slip through the gaps in our society. Under this strategy, Focus Ireland commits itself to closing those gaps by working in ever closer partnership with the whole range of organisations, departments, authorities, agencies, donors and citizens who share our commitment to tackling homelessness.

Because our work is fundamentally concerned with people – the challenges they face and how we can support them to secure their existing home or move out of homelessness – this strategy is built around the household circumstances in which people live. Over the 2021–2025 period, Focus Ireland will concentrate our resources in four key work streams, reflecting the lives of the people we support:

- 1 Families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have complex support needs
- 2 Families who are at risk of homelessness due to economic reasons
- 3 Young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with complex support needs
- 4 Single adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with complex support needs.

We are also committed to providing 1,152 new properties over the lifetime of the strategy which will be acquired through our approved housing body, Focus Housing Association CLG ('Focus Housing'). Focus Housing is an Approved Housing Body with the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and has attained certified body status with the Housing Finance Agency providing accommodation nationwide.

But homelessness cannot be ended by working just at the individual level, important as that is. Always, our challenge to homelessness is based on the lived experience of the people we work with and support.



Active organisational structure

Focus Ireland CLG

Registered no.: 106149
 Revenue charity no.: CHY 7220
 CRA registered no.: 20015107

Focus Housing Association CLG

Registered no.: 133953
 Revenue charity no.: CHY 9040
 CRA registered no.: 20022624

The financial statements consolidate the results of Focus Ireland CLG and its subsidiary, Focus Housing Association.

Focus Housing became a subsidiary of Focus Ireland in 1998. Since then, consolidated financial statements have been prepared. During 2019, Focus Housing underwent a change to the current governance structure, and a separate Board of Directors for this organisation was set up. This Board is made up of nine members, two of which sit on the Focus Ireland Board. This ensures that while both organisations remain independent, the overall strategic goal is maintained and aligned.

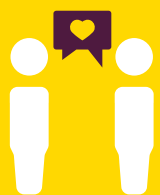
During 2016, Focus Housing acquired Excellent Common Areas Owner Management Limited, which is a dormant company.

Governing document

Focus Ireland is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated under the Companies Act.

Each of the Group companies is governed by their constitution, which was last amended at the AGM (Annual General Meeting) in June 2019. The changes related to the updated governance structure of the Group.

In compliance with Financial Reporting Standard 102, the company, as a registered charity and public benefit entity, has adopted the Statement of Recommended Practices (SORP): Accounting and Reporting by Charities 2015, as issued by the Charities Commission (for England and Wales).



Dignity



Quality



Social Justice



Empowerment

Values

Focus Ireland's models for service provision are dictated by the needs of our customers. We believe that the quality of service is as important as the kind of service we provide. We officially launched our new values after a review was carried out in 2021. This launch was supported by our staff, customers, Lived Experience Ambassador Programme (LEAP) participants, former president Mary McAleese and our founder Sr Stan. We continued to embed our values in how we carry out our work. We created a shared platform where staff could share examples of where they have seen the values being lived in the work of Focus Ireland. The four primary values that underpin our models of service delivery, both to our staff and our customers, are:

- › **Dignity** is about treating people equally, with respect, kindness, compassion and empathy. It involves valuing people's diversity, engaging in relationships of care and having regard for people's capacities, values, feelings, and beliefs.
- › **Quality** is about professionalism, effectiveness, accountability and integrity. It involves setting, achieving and maintaining high standards; collaborative approaches and continuous learning; and ensuring environmental sustainability.
- › **Social justice** is about the achievement of positive outcomes to address social exclusion and inequality and enabling people to lead independent and fulfilling lives. It involves responding to specific needs that flow from people's diversity, securing a fulfilment of rights and challenging structural inequalities.
- › **Empowerment** is about independence and autonomy. It involves people understanding issues of power and powerlessness in their lives, having power to make informed decisions and choices and being able to realise their full potential.

Relationships with other charities

Focus Ireland actively promotes partnership, working with statutory bodies and other charitable organisations in the provision of services and the pursuit of its advocacy goals. Examples of this work include participation in the Dublin Homeless Network and partnership work with local authorities and health services around the country in the Regional Homeless Forums. In addition, Focus Ireland has furthered its objectives through partnerships with other voluntary organisations. We deliver Housing First services in Cork, in partnership with Cork Simon. Focus Ireland is also a member of the Irish Council for Social Housing, the Charities Institute Ireland and FEANTSA (European network of organisations working with people who are homeless).

Achievements and performance

Performance

Our achievements in 2023 are outlined as follows:

Goal	Impact of strategy
Strategic pillar: Preventing homelessness	
3,000 households (600 per year) that would have otherwise become homeless will have been assisted to keep their home or find an alternative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › In 2023, 657 (2022: 613) households in danger of losing their home were prevented from becoming homeless. › So far in the strategy period we have prevented 1,680 households becoming homeless.
Strategic pillar: supporting people who are homeless to move on into secure homes	
Add 1,152 homes to our housing stock by the end of 2025 through Focus Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Provided an additional 168 units (2022: 130) to our housing stock in 2023, despite the significant challenges in the current housing market; 138 through acquisitions and 30 leases or managed properties. › As at 31 December 2023, the organisation has 1,544 housing units. So far, 468 homes have been delivered over the course of this strategy. › These strengthened our commitment to providing homes for customers and helped them with a pathway to exit homelessness.
5,000 households (1,000 per year) which have experienced homelessness will have moved out of homelessness into social or privately rented homes with Focus Ireland support (in partnership with local authorities and national Government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › In 2023, Focus Ireland supported approximately 1,100 households (2022: 566) to settle into secure accommodation, including social housing, Focus Ireland housing or private rented accommodation through our Advice and Information, TSS and short-term accommodation services. › So far in the strategy period we have supported 2,433 households to exit homelessness.

So far in the strategy period we have prevented 1,680 households becoming homeless.

Services

Focus Ireland supported approximately 18,000 people in 2023 through the provision of services in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Sligo, Leitrim, Mayo, Wexford, Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny, Kildare, Clare, Kerry and Monaghan. Our figures show significant increases in the numbers of people accessing our Advice and Information, Day, and Family Support services during this period, with staff also noting an increase in the level and intensity of support needs for many of the people accessing our services.

2023 focus on: Pillar one – prevention

Approximately

2,300



customers were supported with preventative Advice and Information services

Approximately

700



households were supported with preventative Tenancy Sustainment Support services

379

young people were supported with our Youth services



Preventing homelessness: Prevention services

Focus Ireland's prevention services aim to move people from a situation of crisis to stability by supporting people who are in danger of losing their accommodation. Focus Ireland provides support and advice in relation to issues like rising rent payments, breakdown in family relations, overcrowded or unsuitable existing accommodation, substance misuse, domestic abuse, or where a young person is leaving the care of the State and requires housing and support to make the transition to independent living. Early intervention and support for people facing these and other risk scenarios will reduce the likelihood of homelessness and ensure that they are supported to keep their existing home or, where this is not possible, supported in securing alternative housing, thereby avoiding homelessness and having to access homeless services.

The key services delivered by Focus Ireland under our prevention strategy are:

- 1 Advice and Information services**
- 2 Tenancy Sustainment Support services**
- 3 Youth services**



1 Focus Ireland's prevention **Advice and Information services** operate across the country and support people who are at risk of becoming homeless. Staff delivering our prevention Advice and Information services offer a variety of supports and services, including advocacy, mediation and dispute resolution, and signposting/facilitating their access to a range of other relevant support services, all of which are aimed at reducing or eliminating the factors that are putting their tenancy at risk. In 2023, approximately 2,300 (2022: 4,100) customers at risk of becoming homeless accessed and were supported by Focus Ireland's prevention Advice and Information services.

Staff delivering Focus Ireland's prevention Advice and Information services continue to provide an intensive case management element to specifically support customers who require an extended and more intense period of engagement to prevent them from becoming homeless.

2 Focus Ireland's **Tenancy Sustainment Support (TSS) services** continue to grow nationally, with Focus Ireland extending the support that we provide to Co. Leitrim. TSS services operate across the country and provide both a prevention and sustaining exits service element. Prevention TSS services deliver visiting support to customers who may be at risk of losing their homes and require support from Focus Ireland staff to identify, reduce or eliminate this risk. In 2023, approximately 700 (2022: 700) customers were supported by our staff. Typical support includes practical supports like home management (e.g. basic repairs, arrears management and debt counselling) and addressing anti-social behaviour (e.g. neighbour disputes and family relationships). Staff also supported customers with mental health/healthcare needs through signposting or facilitating access to specific and/or mainstream support services that can support them to continue to maintain their tenancy. We also help customers to build links with community and social networks in the local area to encourage integration and foster a sense of belonging in their community. This is an important element to strengthening their likelihood of investing in their communities and successfully maintaining their tenancy. As part of our Prevention TSS work, Focus Ireland also deliver mental health-specific services across the country, working closely with the HSE and mental health services to support people who are moving from a mental health setting and require support to live independently in the community, with the relevant wraparound supports.

3 Youth services also fall under Focus Ireland’s prevention services and provide support to young people who are leaving State care (having turned 18), and young people who require support to transition to and sustain a home in their community. Focus Ireland’s youth services are based on the Housing First model, with the young person facilitated to access appropriate housing and, thereafter, the commensurate levels of supports and wraparound services built around that young person. There are no preconditions set for the young person to access housing, other than payment of rent and agreeing to a set amount of meetings with their Focus Ireland keyworker. Key features of Focus Ireland’s youth services include:

- › Preparation for leaving care, in collaboration with Tusla
- › The development of flexible, individually-tailored care plans to support the young person’s transition into long-term housing and independent living
- › Ensuring the young person’s involvement in all assessments, planning, reviews and decision-making concerning their future, including housing, support services, etc.
- › Adopting a case management approach, whereby all services and supports that can have a positive impact on the young person achieving their care plan goals work together
- › Supporting social and community integration through signposting/facilitating the young person’s access to community supports and services
- › Linking in with labour market activation initiatives, including education and training

In 2023, 379 (2022: 400) young people were supported as part of Focus Ireland’s youth services. A key development in youth services in 2023 was the transfer of the two Home Again Children’s Residential Services into Focus Ireland. 2023 also saw the establishment of The Haven Service in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, under the Temporary Protection Directive, which operates as a ten-bed residential care service for young people seeking protection from the crisis in Ukraine.



Supporting people who are homeless to move into secure homes: sustained exit services

In addition to preventing people from becoming homeless, Focus Ireland delivers a number of services that support people in sustaining an exit out of homelessness. These services support people who are already homeless and require Focus Ireland's support to exit homelessness.

The key services delivered by Focus Ireland under our sustaining exits strategy are:

- 1 Advice and Information services
- 2 Tenancy Sustainment Support services
- 3 Housing services: long-term, Housing First, and short-term
- 4 Day services

2023 focus on: Pillar two – sustaining exits

Advice and Information staff provided assistance to

6,800

customers who were homeless



1,600

customers accessed our Tenancy Sustainment Support services



Family HAT supported over

900

families and

1,600

children



Approximately

970

households were supported with long-term housing services



Nearly

260

households were supported with our short-term accommodation



1 Focus Ireland's Sustaining Exits **Advice and Information services** operate across the country and support people who are already homeless and require support in sustaining an exit out of homelessness. Staff supports include advocacy to Government departments, support in accessing emergency and long-term accommodation, advice in accessing and understanding relevant information relating to housing, social welfare, health, education, employment, training, etc. Where appropriate, staff will also refer customers to some of Focus Ireland's own services in an effort to support the customer along the pathway towards housing and independent living.

There was a substantial increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness and requiring Focus Ireland's support to sustain an exit out of homelessness in 2023. Advice and Information staff provided assistance to 6,800 (2022: 4,200) customers during the year. Staff also provided intensive case management support to customers who required an extended and more intense period of engagement to sustain their exit out of homeless.

2 Focus Ireland's **Tenancy Sustainment Support (TSS) services** also supported customers to sustain an exit out of homelessness, supporting people in identifying, sourcing, and transitioning into appropriate accommodation and ensuring their access to the full range of relevant supports and services thereafter to ensure that they sustain that accommodation. This also includes families supported as part of our Family Homeless Action Team (HAT) in Dublin.

The majority of the 1,600 (2022: 1,500) customers accessing Focus Ireland's TSS service in 2023 were living in emergency and temporary accommodation. They were referred to Focus Ireland by the relevant local authority for support to move and settle into appropriate, long-term accommodation. Focus Ireland staff provide support in all aspects associated with this move. This can include support in physically moving to their new accommodation, accessing household goods and appliances, and understanding their tenancy agreement, including their rights and obligations as a tenant – rent, good neighbourhood relations, etc. Once the customer has successfully moved into their new home, staff will provide regular visiting support commensurate with the level of support needed. They will also offer guidance in accessing the relevant suite of services in relation to health, social welfare, budgeting, addiction, education, training and childcare, and all other relevant services.

As part of our work in supporting families out of homelessness, staff working in the Family HAT supported over 900 (2022: 800) families and 1,600 (2022: 1,700) children who were homeless. Despite the limited availability of housing, 176 of these families (2022: 220) were successfully moved into a new home during 2023.

Focus Ireland's Sustaining Exits Advice and Information services operate across the country and support people who are already homeless and require support in sustaining an exit out of homelessness.

3 Focus Ireland provides a number of **long-term supported accommodation** services throughout the country. These services actively promote the principle of independent living for our customers through supporting and facilitating them in taking control of their own lives. In 2023, approximately 970 (2022: 880) households were supported in our long-term housing services, including approximately 243 **Housing First** customers, all of whom have complex and specialised health, care and social support needs and were moving from homelessness into long-term accommodation.

Short-term accommodation services operate on a 24/7 basis, 365 days a year, and provide a full suite of programmes and activities to customers to meet their short-term accommodation and support needs.

The overarching aim of short-term accommodation services is to minimise the length of time spent homeless and to support the person to access housing with requisite supports as soon as possible after initial presentation to homeless services. Nearly 260 (2022: 280) households were supported in Focus Ireland's short-term accommodation services across the country during 2023.

Focus Ireland's under-18 accommodation service also supported a further 70 young people during the year.

4 Focus Ireland's Coffee Shop is our main **day service**, comprising two services: a subsidised, hot-meal service and an Advice and Information service. Operating 365 days a year, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, this service ensures that people affected by homelessness who do not have access to hot meals, can be catered for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment. In 2023, approximately 6,000 customers accessed the Coffee Shop, a substantial increase from the 5,000 people accessing the service in 2022.





Trauma Informed Care

In 2023, preparation for the rollout of Focus Ireland's Trauma Informed Care approach within our organisation culminated in the design of a bespoke programme for staff, which utilises the Power Threat Meaning (PTM) framework. The PTM framework is a new perspective on why people sometimes experience a whole range of forms of distress, confusion, fear, despair, and troubled or troubling behaviour. It is an alternative to the more traditional models, which are based on psychiatric diagnosis.

The framework summarises and integrates a great deal of evidence about the role of various kinds of power in people's lives; the kinds of threat that the misuse of power poses to us; and the ways we have learned as human beings to respond to these threats. In traditional mental health practice, these threat responses are sometimes called 'symptoms'. The framework describes the many different strategies people use, from automatic bodily reactions to deliberately chosen ways of coping with overwhelming emotions and experiences, in order to survive and protect themselves. The framework also looks at how we make sense of difficult experiences, and how messages from wider society can increase our feelings of shame, self-blame, isolation, fear and guilt.

An online e-learning training programme, which will be rolled out across the organisation in Q1 2024, will support Focus Ireland staff in helping the people we are supporting to create more hopeful narratives or stories about their lives and the difficulties they may have faced or are still facing, instead of seeing themselves as blameworthy, weak or deficient.

Staff will use the framework as a means of highlighting the links between wider social factors such as poverty, discrimination and inequality, along with traumas such as abuse and violence, and the resulting emotional distress or troubled behaviour.

Peer Support Workers

Focus Ireland's five-year strategy is underpinned by a commitment to greater customer involvement. 2023 saw the establishment of an innovative new Peer Support Worker role in the organisation. Peer Support Workers are employees who are considered experts by experience and who have a lived experience of homelessness. Focus Ireland employed six new Peer Support Workers who are now based in services across Dublin, Waterford, Cork and Limerick. Peer Support Workers are an invaluable addition to our teams and can also help bridge the gaps in policy that staff with no lived experience may miss.

Focus Ireland believes that an evidence-based understanding of the causes, impacts and solutions to homelessness provides the essential foundation for action to end homelessness.

Advocacy, communications and research

Throughout 2023, the Advocacy, Communications and Research Team sought to advance Focus Ireland's strategic objectives through evidence-based influencing of Government policy, at a national and local level, and through offering expert commentary and analysis via national and local print, broadcast, and online media. The team also continued to liaise and work with departments across the organisation to progress and support communications and advocacy aspects of their work. Some key achievements and highlights from 2023 are outlined below:

- › Focus Ireland believes that an evidence-based understanding of the causes, impacts and solutions to homelessness provides the essential foundation for action to end homelessness. In pursuit of this, the Advocacy Team continued to produce **high-quality research** on domestic homelessness and international trends and best practice, including:
 - › The research team was awarded funding from the EU's prestigious Horizon programme for the INVOLVE project to work with a marginalised group – lone parents – to help design strategies to reduce inequalities and to enhance democracy. Marginalised citizens have less access and influence in the decision-making process and this research will investigate how the welfare state together with public and social policies can engage better. There are nine countries involved in the project, and each country will work with a specific target group. The Irish project will examine barriers facing lone parents (with a history of housing precariousness) in entering employment or education.
 - › The Advocacy Team consulted 76 older Focus Housing tenants to produce a 'Growing Older at Home' report, which focused on their housing needs and aspirations. This research will help to prepare Focus Housing's existing and future housing stock.
 - › The Advocacy Team continued to advocate for **evidence-based policy changes** to improve the response to homelessness at a national level, including advocating for an extended eviction moratorium and being a leading voice throughout the winter eviction ban.
 - › The policy team continued to advocate for evidence-based recommendations to prevent and reduce homelessness through a number of policy submissions and public consultations, including: a new strategy for the Private Rented Sector; Review of Short-term Lets; Submission to the Child Poverty and Well-being Unit; Proposals to increase Retention of Small-scale Landlords in the Residential Rental Market; Review of the Housing Act 1988; the Public Consultation on Child Poverty Targets; An Garda Síochána Strategic Plan 2024–2026; Government Budget 2024.

- › Focus Ireland is strongly committed to the idea that collaboration across the homeless sector is a key component in moving towards an end to homelessness. The Advocacy Team continued to convene and support key cross-sectoral groups, including the Irish Housing First Platform, Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness and the Irish Homeless Policy Group.
- › Policy issues were raised at DCC Housing Strategic Policy Committees and the National Homeless Action Committee, convened by the Minister for Housing.
- › Following the publication of the Government’s Youth Homelessness Strategy 2023–25, for which Focus Ireland strongly advocated, the Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness were invited to join the Steering Group established by the Department of Housing to provide oversight for the implementation of the strategy. Focus Ireland’s Policy Officer Adam Spollen was nominated to represent the Coalition’s 19 member organisations on this Steering Group, closely monitoring progress made under the strategy.
- › Meanwhile, our supporters sent over 11,000 emails to TDs and Senators as part of a campaign to change legislation so that local authorities would be obliged to consider the ‘best interests of the child’ when responding to families that present as homeless. In response, the Government included this clause in preparatory documents for new legislation.
- › The Director of Advocacy, Mike Allen, also represented Irish organisations on FEANTSA (the European Federation of Homeless organisations) and was elected Vice President for the year.

Customer and tenant participation

Customer and tenant participation is a key theme of Focus Ireland’s strategy, and the LEAP and Peer Research are central to the Advocacy Team’s contribution to empower and support Focus Ireland customers.

In 2023, the LEAP saw the term of the first cohort of Lived Experience Ambassadors come to an end and the successful recruitment of four new ambassadors to seamlessly continue the work started in 2021. A progression strategy was agreed for each of the outgoing ambassadors, including roles as Peer Support Workers and continued engagement in governance processes. Focus Ireland Peer Researchers continued to support the research of our Advocacy Team and to co-produce research.

Housing and property – the Meascán Housing Model

The organisation continued to support the strategic goal of developing the Meascán Model of intentional social mix. The idea is that ‘mainstream’ households are aware in advance of moving into their home that some of their neighbours have experienced homelessness and may, from time to time, continue to experience periods of difficulty.

An external evaluation has been commissioned from Kathy Walsh to explore the experiences of Focus Ireland and Focus Housing staff involved in implementation, along with perspectives of tenants and local authority staff. In November 2023, a seminar for staff from Services and Housing, along with senior management, was organised to discuss the interim findings of the evaluation and plan the next stages of roll-out of the model.

Meascán Model developments in 2023:

- › In August, Minister for Housing Darragh O’Brien officially opened Focus Housing’s 20-unit development at Connaught Street, Dublin.
- › In March, An Tánaiste Micheál Martin officially opened a new 16-home development on Grand Parade in the heart of Cork city.

Delivery

2023 saw homeless figures continue to increase. In line with our strategic aim of prevention and in response to appeals for help at our Advice and Information (A&I) services across the country and requests from local authorities, Focus Housing worked to purchase properties where tenants were being evicted because the landlord was selling the property. We were working on some 300 properties, both one-off purchases and multi-unit developments, when funding for the scheme was declared available only for local authorities. Discussions with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage allowed us to continue with the multi-unit purchases, but the delays caused by this pushed delivery into 2024. Even so, we provided 168 homes throughout the year.

We completed the pre-qualification tender for the provision of 95 homes in Cabra. The Dominican Sisters in Cabra generously donated this site, and the legal transfer was completed in 2023. The valuation of the site is recognised as fundraising income of €4.345m. We intend to be on site in 2024.

Also during 2023, with the transfer of youth services from Home Again, Focus Housing acquired three properties with a value of €3.185m. These properties are based in Killiney, Dalkey and Templeogue. This is also recognised as fundraising income.

The year also saw the completion of upgrade and retrofitting works in George's Hill and, towards the end of the year, the beginning of two retrofitting programmes in Limerick. Our extension into Kerry and growth in Cork saw the appointment of a further Housing Officer to support our new tenants in the region.

The work of the organisation was recognised at the ICSH (Irish Council for Social Housing) Allianz Community Housing Awards, with Grand Parade being short-listed in the category of Regeneration and Renewal, and our Covid Shielding Project on the South Circular Road in Dublin winning the category for Emergency Responses.



Human resources – investing in people

Talent acquisition

Our Talent Acquisition team worked on 291 roles in 2023, which was a 50% increase in demand compared to 2022. The key drivers of recruitment include replacements due to resignations, newly funded roles, internal promotions and transfers, maternity cover and graduate recruitment.

The expansion of the organisation, in particular of our under-18 services, was a focus for the team.

During the year, the team worked with the Digital Brand Team to develop recruitment campaigns on social media and refreshed online content to capture what it is like to work in Focus Ireland.

Overall, we welcomed 148 new employees, facilitated 58 transfers and 19 promotions, and 11 relief workers converted to employment contracts.

Gender pay gap

Focus Ireland staff are the backbone of the organisation and we are committed to equity and transparency. Focus Ireland operates a pay scale system which ensures no gender differences or other disparity for the same roles. 2022 was the first year that we reported on the gender pay gap, in line with our statutory responsibilities. Our gender pay gap in 2023 was 10.81% (2022: 8.08%), based on a snapshot date of 30 June 2023.

An analysis of the figures indicates that our gender pay gap is driven by:

- › Service: On average, men have almost 1.5 years' more service than females. This has an impact on pay, as those with longer service will have progressed to higher points on the salary scales.
- › The proportion of females in the lower quartile: This increased since 2022 and included roles in our graduate programme, where all but one participant was female.
- › Time-out for family responsibilities: Maternity leave in particular, which affects the calculation regarding income, as the maternity benefit received from the State is not included in the calculation of income for gender pay gap reporting.

What will we do to improve our gender pay gap? We are at the early stages of our process to address our gender pay gap. Actions that will help us to address the gap include:

- › Using our Diversity and Equality Listening Groups to explore the gender issues that impact women's experience of working in Focus Ireland. This work, along with data from our exit and stay interviews, will also inform our recruitment processes.
- › We will consider how we can expand our flexible working practices to sustain women's participation and promotion in the organisation.
- › Where we are offering mentoring and/or coaching initiatives, we will try to have a balance of participants in these programmes to reflect the gender mix in the organisation.
- › We will examine our gender balance in terms of how leave is taken to support caring responsibilities and identify any barriers that may impact this.



Employee engagement

During the year, we continued with our employee engagement initiatives. With the support of Quality Matters, we conducted our Employee Engagement Survey for three weeks in September. The participation rate was high, with 66% of employees completing the survey and strong results across the four domains surveyed: engagement, relationship with manager, team relationships and personal experience of working in Focus Ireland. Our overall engagement score was 16.44 against a benchmark of 16.43.

Our Engagement and Wellness Group continued with monthly initiatives to support well-being in the organisation. Our Buddy Programme (peer-to-peer support for new starters) continued with new Buddies recruited during the year.

We also reviewed and updated our retirement policy to provide a more flexible approach to retirement and allow individuals to make a request to work beyond 66, within certain parameters, taking into consideration the role and department, the expressed wishes of the employee and whether the organisation can facilitate such a request at that time.

We introduced new supports for employees who may be affected by the end of the eviction moratorium and had received a notice to quit.

In December, we introduced a Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy, following the introduction of legislation to provide paid leave. Our policy goes beyond the statutory leave requirement and includes additional supports for employees along with resources.

Learning and development

The expanded training calendar included 91 training programmes rolled out across services, property and support functions. In total, there were 142 training days and 1,242 training places offered to staff. Developments in the training calendar include a 'learning outcomes' document supporting each training course, outlining target attendees and course objectives and publishing an annual as opposed to a quarterly training calendar to support teams in forward-planning. A prioritisation system was also introduced for mandatory training in our under-18 services.

Graduate programme

The 2022/2023 graduate programme concluded in August 2023. This cohort of graduates provided us with valuable feedback on ways of improving the programme. Nine out of ten participants have remained with the organisation. Due to the success of the programme, the organisation expanded its 2023/2024 graduate programme to 14 graduates who are based across the organisation.

Volunteers

There were 11 student placements across the organisation in 2023.

Diversity and equality

Continuing to place a focus on diversity and equality is not only the right thing to do from a moral point of view, but it will help to reflect the viewpoints of our staff and customers throughout our work and the organisational strategy.

As an organisation, we work with some of the most marginalised groups in our society, and developing a Diversity and Equality Policy will help us to advance further in this space. Enabling and empowering our staff by investing in diversity will increase creativity and innovation, widen talent pools, boost productivity, and positively impact organisational performance. This in turn will improve the support that we are able to give to our customers.

A working group, assembled at the beginning of 2022, continued to help steer the organisation on how we can ensure that we are a diverse and inclusive organisation for both staff and customers. The terms of reference for the group include:

- 1 gain an understanding of what we are currently doing in this area
- 2 explore the opportunities to enhance existing activities
- 3 identify new areas for development.

During 2023, the Executive team attended workshops facilitated by the Values Lab on this important area. The group drafted our Diversity and Equality Policy, with feedback and guidance from Values Lab.

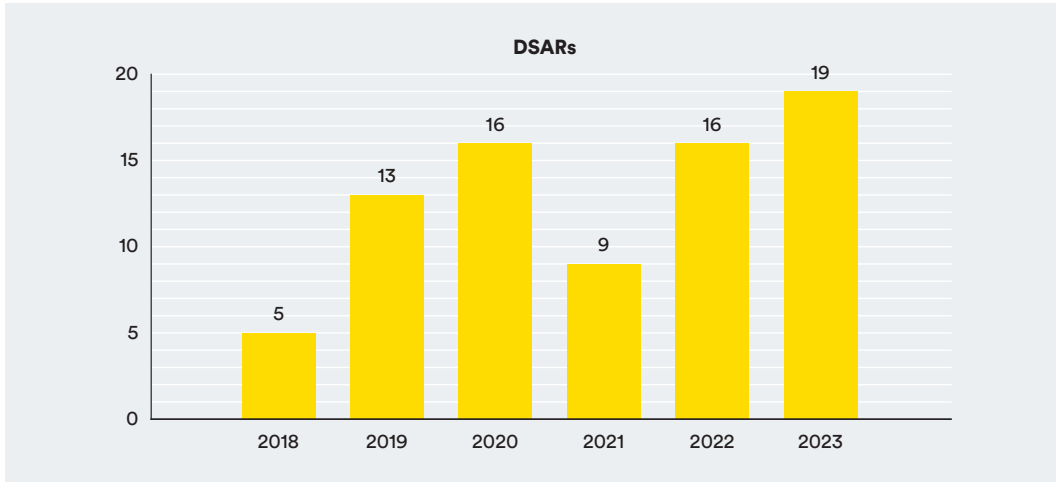
Listening groups for staff were carried out in early 2024 [Ed query: presume this should be 2023?] for the following groups: Black and minority ethnic staff, LGBT+ staff, women, older people, people with a disability. These groups will provide feedback on the policy before it is finalised and a work plan will be developed for future actions.

General data protection

The charity complies with data protection regulation. The Audit and Risk Sub-Committee reviews the area of data protection during the year, including the number and nature of Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) and data breaches.



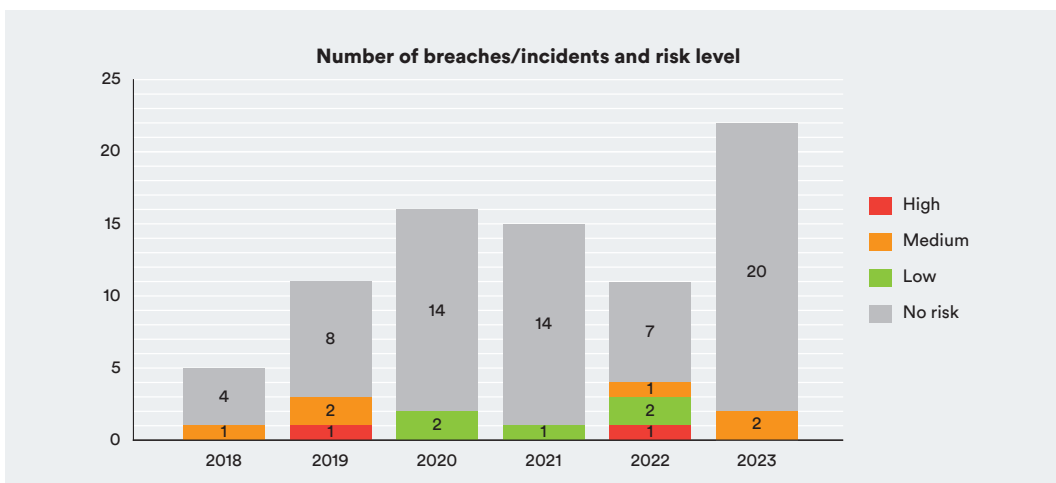
In 2023, we received 19 DSARs (2022: 16). The majority of requests came from customers and tenants of Focus Ireland. All requests were handled within the prescribed timeframe. 22% (2022: 38%) of all DSARs were not collected by the data subject. The trend for the last six years is presented below.



2023 saw 22 instances of data breaches (2022: 11). While the number of breaches increased over the year, the number of breaches that pose a risk to the rights and freedoms of the data subjects has decreased. Of the 22 incidents, 2 had to be reported to the Data Protection Commission (2022: 4 reported).

Employees are encouraged to check with the DPO (Data Protection Officer) regarding any potential breaches, so this, along with our heightened training and awareness, may be the cause of the significant jump in incidents. We take a diligent approach to recording all data incidents to ensure that we can spot any trends arising to identify risks and where we may need added controls or training.

The use of email continues to be our highest cause of data incidents and breaches. These errors relate to incorrect recipients being selected or an incorrect file being attached to the email. This is expected due to the volume of emails sent and received daily.



One complaint was submitted to the Data Protection Commissioner in 2023 against Focus Ireland (2022: 0). This was in relation to the area of consent. We co-operated fully with the Commissioner and the matter was resolved without any penalties found against Focus Ireland.

Fundraising and marketing

Fundraising activities cover a wide spectrum across the country, including cash appeals, regular giving, corporate partnerships, legacy, events, campaigns and philanthropy. Largely due to a major donation that was expected in Christmas but received in January 2024, fundraising did not achieve the target of €15.2m in 2023, raising instead €14.4m (excluding capital donations of properties and sites).

Notwithstanding that, 2023 was a more difficult year, with trends emerging, particularly in public fundraising, that we will continue to track and monitor. We remain cautious as the external environment continues to be challenging. The conflict in Gaza, the Ukrainian war and the increased cost of living are a source of uncertainty and, we believe, having an effect on our fundraising.

In 2023, Regular Giving (Direct Debit and Standing Order) income fell by 4.4% year on year from €2.71m to €2.59m, as cancellations exceeded new donors being recruited, particularly for door-to-door and DRTV (direct response television) channels. Our suppliers have also faced challenges, most notably our face-to-face fundraising suppliers, who have struggled with recruiting staff.

We also saw a decline in our appeal income at the end of the year, when our Christmas appeal failed to perform as well as in previous years. Appeals had been tracking ahead of 2022 income for the first ten months of 2023, until a sharp decline in November and December 2023 during our Christmas campaign. The Christmas appeal raised €0.9m in cash donations in November and December 2023, compared to €1.2m for the same period in 2022.



Niall Breslin and Focus Ireland CEO Pat Dennigan in Stephen's Green Shopping Centre in Dublin as part of Today FM's Big Busk for Focus Ireland, as over 300 buskers performed nationwide in March 2023 to raise vital funds to battle homelessness



Each year the generosity of our supporters amazes us. Without them we simply could not do it.

Amy Carr (Director of Fundraising, Focus Ireland), Ali Shaw (Corporate Social Responsibility committee, Horizon Therapeutics) and Catherine Keenan at the launch of On the Move for Focus Ireland, supported by Horizon Therapeutics. Catherine was previously homeless and is now housed by Focus Housing and also sits on our Services Board Sub-Committee. On the Move offers a selection of fitness and adventure challenges nationwide to be completed during the summer months to discover the natural beauty of Ireland while raising vital funds for Focus Ireland.

Conversely, our major gift campaign 'A Place called Home', which seeks to raise €30m through strategic partnerships and philanthropy, secured €27m in pledged income and had €21m in the bank at the end of 2023, well ahead of target, with two years left of the campaign. The Philanthropy Council, which is comprised of senior business leaders and philanthropists, is fully embedded.

The Bord Gáis Energy (BGE) corporate partnership continues to be a strong relationship, consisting of funding, sponsorship of Shine a Light, skill-sharing and volunteering. In 2023, we also secured new partnerships for 2024, including Coral Leisure and Musgrave MarketPlace.

2023 was the second year of our partnership with Today FM for The Big Busk, a radiothon style event. The campaign overachieved on the target of €350k. Shine a Light raised over €1.2m, reversing a declining fundraising trend since the years following the pandemic. At Christmas, Sponsor a Star generated €444k, a decline on 2022, but still an excellent performance and strong return on investment.

The Belvedere Sleepout raised more than €330k, which is split between two charities. The relationship with Belvedere College remains strong and significant to our organisation.

The Digital and Marketing Team, in addition to supporting all of our fundraising activities, launched our TikTok channel, completed the website accessibility project, created a new brand image portfolio, and developed a content library for the organisation. Working across the organisation, they also created an 'always on' digital recruitment strategy for the HR team to better attract talent to the organisation, including staff video testimonials. They also began work on a talent management programme for our celebrity and sports supporters.

Each year the generosity of our supporters amazes us. Without them we simply could not do it. The level of fundraising received over the course of 2023 was a great achievement, and the impact was huge in allowing us to continue to grow and adapt our services in line with the needs of our customers.

Financial review

The financial results for the year are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 125.

The surplus achieved in the year was €7.9m (2022: €3.4m). The key driver behind the increase was the site in Cabra, worth €4.3m, and gifted by the Dominican Sisters, as well as three properties with a value of €3.2m, which were acquired as part of the Home Again acquisition. Both of these were recorded as fundraising income. No capital asset scheme (CAS) mortgages expired during the year (2022: €1.1m).

Grant income increased by 18% over 2022 levels; this is predominantly related to the new under-18 services opened during 2023 in Dalkey, Templeogue and Clonmel. These services are funded by Tusla. Grant income now accounts for almost 36% (2022: 39%) of total income. Expenditure on charitable activities increased by €5.7m in 2023; this was largely due to the new services as referenced already. We continue to advocate for cost-of-living increases in grant income with our State funders, with success in some areas, especially in new tenders. This is of extreme importance, as we have seen costs continue to rise and we need to ensure a sustainable funding stream for our services.

Plans for the future

The organisation will continue with its *Strategy 2021–2025: Challenging homelessness. Changing Lives*, staying true to our values and ethos of treating our customers with fairness, dignity and respect.

We will need to adapt to the challenges that may lie ahead as a result of the Ukrainian war and the significant increase of International Protection applicants and asylum seekers arriving in Ireland and the impact these may have on our services and our fundraising.

Finally, we will continue with our high standards in transparency and strong governance to maintain a financially stable organisation, which is vital to deliver this strategy.

Cash reserves

In the past number of years, the organisation has been focusing on replenishing cash reserves in order to ensure organisational stability and sustainability. In line with our strategy, we have worked to build up the cash reserves to a best-practice level of 13 weeks' reserves. The way the organisation calculates the level of reserves required is based on 13 times the budgeted weekly cost of running the organisation. The budgeted weekly cost for 2023 amounted to approximately €775k (2022: €724k). The aim was to finish the year with approximately €10.1m (13 weeks). The cash balance at the 31 December 2023 was €18.9m, which represented 24 weeks. The additional cash at the end of the year relates to a strong performance in fundraising, coupled with continued strong controls over spending. The organisation is considering the best way these funds can be utilised to have a meaningful impact on the services we provide for our customers as well as strengthening the future viability of our organisation.

Both Focus Ireland and Focus Housing have a treasury management policy in place which outlines the Board's appetite for minimum cash levels thresholds. If cash looks like it could dip below this threshold, then it needs to be reported to the Finance Sub-Committee and the Board and taken onto our risk register, where agreed actions will be carried out in line with the Board's advice.



Grant income increased by 18% over 2022 levels; this is predominantly related to the new under-18 services opened during 2023 in Dalkey, Templeogue and Clonmel.

The total reserves of the organisation at 31 December 2023 amounted to €43.0m (2022: €35.1m), of which €18.2m (2022: €9.2m) was restricted.

Dividends and retention

The Group is precluded by its constitution from paying dividends, either as part of normal operations or on a distribution of its assets in the event of a winding-up.

Pensions

Focus Ireland operates a defined contribution scheme, open to all permanent staff. The company contributions are 7% of pensionable salary, while employee contributions are 5% of pensionable salary.

Health and safety

Health and Safety compliance and best practice are central to ensuring that employees and customers work and live in safe environments. The Health and Safety Officer provided support and advice to line management and their teams in relation to best practice and legislative compliance. The Health and Safety Committee completed safety inspections of all sites and also ran a number of events during the year. Events included several programmes during Health and Safety Week to highlight healthy eating/lifestyle, self-care and welfare, which are so important in supporting our employees.

Environment

The Group has a proactive approach to assisting all personnel to conduct our business in a manner that protects the environment of our customers, employees and the community. Some of the sustainable initiatives that the organisation has in place include:

- › Hybrid working – the pandemic highlighted that we can reduce our carbon emissions in a way that does not need to compromise our work or the way we communicate. The organisation has started to roll out proper video conferencing equipment in our key hub locations nationally. This has led to a reduced need for staff travel as more meetings were held online rather than in-person.
- › Remote working and the use of digital signatures have significantly reduced our use of paper.
- › Our Learning and Development Team has moved to a more hybrid approach to training, with some training courses now completed online, again saving staff travel time.
- › Energy retrofits carried out by our property team are ongoing, with 2023 seeing significant works carried out in our George's Hill complex, which included new windows and heating systems for our properties. This has led to an improvement in our customers' quality of life.

Post-balance sheet events

There have been no post-balance sheet events which would materially affect the financial statements.

Political contributions

There were no political contributions made by the Group during the financial year (2022: €Nil).

Principal risks and uncertainties

Focus Ireland operates a risk-management process, culminating in a corporate risk register that identifies the top risks, their likelihood and impact, and the consequent actions necessary to manage them effectively.

The risk appetite sets the approach that Focus Ireland takes to managing our risks. The Board views risk appetite as the amount of risk Focus Ireland is willing to take or accept to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives.

The Board, together with the Audit and Risk Sub-Committee, have been actively engaged in enhancing the risk-management process in 2023. Our Key Risk Indicator reporting system for each area of the organisation has helped risk to become more embedded across the organisation. It helps to highlight trends and patterns over the year and identifies where the main challenges are. This, in turn, feeds back into our risk register to ensure that we have a robust 'live' risk-management system.

Corporate risks and mitigating actions are regularly scrutinised by the Board and Executive team. The principal risks identified that could have a serious impact on performance are as follows:

Primary risk area	Risk outcomes	Mitigating actions
Insufficient funding	Funds may not be available for organisational growth plans as cost inflation adds to deficits of services. This could impact the quality of service delivered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Maintaining 13 weeks' reserve gives financial stability to the organisation › Annual preparation of budgets and close monitoring of cash are key financial controls to ensure that adequate resources are available to deliver a quality service
Tendering	Risk of Focus Ireland being forced to tender for services at an unsustainable deficit to funding. The current process of Government bodies tendering is heavily weighted on cost over quality of service. This is having a significant impact on our organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › We continue to work with the relevant bodies regarding our concerns about the current procurement model
Recruitment	The ability to recruit suitably qualified and experienced staff to fill vacant positions can be challenging. This can impact service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Committed to maintaining good terms and conditions to ensure that we can offer competitive salaries within the sector › Additional resources allocated in 2023 to the HR team in the area of recruitment
Safeguarding	The risk of any types of inappropriate behaviour that negatively impact the people with whom we work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Development and enforcement of strong policies › Good recruitment practices › Ongoing training and guidance
Housing supply	The availability of the right type of property in the right location is a significant risk in our ability to deliver on our strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Establish working relationships with developers and landlords to help generate a pipeline for future supply › Collaborate with local authorities to find solutions in particularly difficult locations
Building costs inflation and rising interest rates	The rising cost of inflation on all building materials and the potential for further interest rate increases are significant challenges. The impact is resulting in delays and challenges for our development pipeline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Financial viability review completed on all potential acquisitions › Work with developers to agree contract terms that mitigate the risks as far as possible
Data protection/ cyber security	The risk of reputational damage and/or fines from the Data Protection Commissioner because of data breaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Advanced Threat Protection and Multi-Factorial Authentication in place › Monthly staff training programme which focuses on cyber threats and GDPR-related issues

Going concern

The company meets its day-to-day working capital requirements through its cash reserves. The current economic conditions continue to create uncertainty over the ability of the company to maintain the level of donations received. The company's forecasts and projections, taking account of reasonably possible changes in trading performance, show that the company will be able to operate for the foreseeable future. Therefore, these financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. Further details concerning the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in Note 1(b) to the financial statements.

Governance and management

The Directors and Secretary who currently hold office and who held office during the year are listed on page 74. Focus Ireland has been a long-term advocate for rigorous statutory regulation of governance and fundraising in registered charities and approved housing bodies.

We have a proud track record of governance. Focus Ireland is signed up to and compliant with the full range of best practice codes in the Irish Charity sector, as follows:

- › The Charities Governance code
- › The new standards issued by the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA)
- › The voluntary ICTR Guiding Principles of Fundraising, which are reflected in our own Donor's Charter
- › The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government's Regulation Code for Approved Housing Bodies
- › Triple Locked – member of Charities Institute Ireland.





The Board

Directors and Company Secretary

The Directors and Secretary who currently hold office, or who held office during 2023 are:

Focus Ireland Board

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy (Founder and Life President)

Mr Michael Layde (Chairman)

Mr Tony Fahey

Mr Conor Jones

Mr Andrew Gunne

Ms Susan O'Connell

Mr Niall Keane (resigned 19 April 2024)

Ms Katie Burke (appointed 29 September 2023)

Focus Housing Association Board

Mr Diarmuid Burke (Chairman) (resigned 26 March 2024)

Mr Fergal O'Dwyer (Chairman) (appointed 26 March 2024)

Ms Patricia Crisp

Mr Mark Dunleavy

Ms Anne Fletcher

Mr Lonan McDowell

Ms Gloria Kirwan (appointed 27 January 2024)

Members of both Boards

Mr David Kelly (appointed 27 January 2024)

Ms Anna Lee (resigned 29 September 2023)

Ms Fionnuala Meehan

Secretary

Ms Pamela Branagan

The Board is responsible for providing leadership, setting strategy and ensuring control. It comprises 11 Non-Executive Directors, including one Employee Director.

The Board is responsible for providing leadership, setting strategy and ensuring control. It comprises 11 Non-Executive Directors, including one Employee Director. The Board's Non-Executive Directors are drawn from diverse backgrounds in business and the professions, who bring to Board deliberations their significant business and decision-making skills, achieved in their respective fields, together with a broad range of experience and views.

There is a clear division of responsibility at the company, with the Board retaining control of major decisions under a formal schedule of matters reserved to the Board for decision, and with the Chief Executive responsible for devising strategy and policy within the authorities delegated to the Chief Executive by the Board. The Chief Executive is not a member of the Board.

The company has a comprehensive process for reporting management information to the Board. The Board is provided with regular information, which includes key performance and risk indicators for all aspects of the organisation. The Board meets regularly as required and met six times during 2023 (2022: 8).

The recruitment of Board members is managed by the HR and Nomination Sub-Committee. A Board skills matrix is also maintained to ensure that we have sufficient knowledge and experience on the Board. The HR and Nomination Sub-Committee reviews the skills and experience matrix and identifies potential Board members for consideration by the Board, taking into consideration alignment with the organisational values and avoidance of conflict of interest.

On appointment, Directors go through an induction process, with briefing sessions and comprehensive briefing documents designed to familiarise them with the company's operations, management and governance structures. All Non-Executive Directors are appointed for an initial three-year term, which may be renewed for two further three-year periods, giving a maximum of nine continuous years for any Director.

One-third of Directors are required to retire annually by rotation and, if eligible, may offer themselves for re-election. The roles of Chairman and Chief Executive are separate, as is the role of Company Secretary, and all Directors are independent of the management of the company.

The Board of Directors retains overall responsibility for the strategic development of the company in close liaison with the Executive Officers.

Our Board members are as follows:

Board members – Focus Ireland (only)

Name	Brief profile	Board term
Sister Stanislaus Kennedy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Sister Stanislaus Kennedy is an Irish Sister of Charity and one of Ireland’s best-known social innovators. Sister Stan founded Focus Ireland in 1985 and is Life President of the organisation. 	Life member
Michael Layde	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Michael joined the Focus Ireland Board as Director in April 2016, having retired as Assistant Secretary in the Housing and Planning division of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. Prior to this, Michael was Assistant Secretary in charge of the Department’s Environment division. He previously served as Principal Officer in a number of the Department’s areas of activity, most recently as Principal Officer, Waste Policy, where he dealt with the review and regulation of the sector. He has been a member of the Department since 1995, having previously worked in the Department of Health. Michael was appointed Chairman of Focus Ireland in November 2018. 	3/3
Tony Fahey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Tony is Professor Emeritus of Social Policy in University College Dublin. He is a sociologist by training and, before joining UCD in 2007, spent 15 years as a social researcher in the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin. He has published on a range of topics connected with social policy and social trends in Ireland, the European Union and the United States. 	2/3
Conor Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Conor joined Wayflyer, an early-stage global fintech headquartered in Dublin, as Chief Business Officer in early 2024. › He trained initially as an electronic engineer and designed microchips for mobile applications for four years with Nasdaq-listed semiconductor intellectual property company ParthusCeva, Inc., where his team delivered the world’s first commercially licensed Bluetooth IP. After obtaining his MBA at MIT Sloan, he transitioned into Management Consulting, spending ten years with McKinsey & Company, with the last five spent as leader of the Irish practice. Conor went on to spend eight years at Google where he led the global Strategy and Operations team for SMB Ads Services for three years, before becoming the Managing Director for the UK and Ireland Large Customer Sales team for five years. 	2/3
Susan O’Connell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Susan studied at University College Dublin, trained in McCann FitzGerald and qualified as a solicitor in 1996. Susan became a partner in McCann FitzGerald in 2002, leading the Private Client department of the firm for the following ten years, until the establishment of O’Connell Brennan Solicitors in 2012. Susan specialises in personal estate and tax planning and also advises charities and non-profit organisations and donors in relation to philanthropic giving. Susan is a former Chairperson of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP) Ireland. She is also an Associate of the Irish Taxation Institute, a Chartered Tax Adviser (CTA) and a member of the International Academy of Trust and Estate Law. 	3/3
Andrew Gunne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Andrew has a 25-year career in the European real estate sector. He has co-founded and held various senior positions in property and finance companies involved with investment, corporate finance and real estate development. He has overseen more than €3 billion of real estate and real estate financing transactions. 	2/3
Katie Burke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Katie is Chief Operating Officer at The Corporate Governance Institute, a global educational technology company based in Ireland, specialising in training and educating the next generation of Company Directors and Board members. Katie leads the development of new online educational programmes, develops and engages with faculty and oversees the operations team responsible for learner support and assessments. She is also responsible for talent development and management. Katie is an experienced Board member of Irish and international organisations. She is currently a Board member of Libraries without Borders, a French/international non-profit organisation. 	1/3

Board members – Focus Housing Board (only)

Name	Brief profile	Board term
Fergal O'Dwyer	<p>› Fergal joined the Board of Focus Housing Association in 2019, assuming the role of Chair of the Board on 26 March 2024. Fergal is a Chartered Accountant with significant experience in financial management, treasury, strategy, capital deployment and development. Fergal retired in 2020 from DCC plc, the Irish-headquartered international sales, marketing and business support services group, which is a FTSE100 constituent company, where he was Chief Financial Officer from 1992, and an Executive Director from 2000. He now also sits on the boards of AIB plc and Goodbody Stockbrokers.</p>	FHA 2/3
Patricia Crisp	<p>› Patricia has over 30 years' experience in all aspects of commercial and residential property, including professional services and agency. A former Executive Director of Corcoran Jennison Europe Ltd, she is experienced in advising companies and institutions on their property holdings in relation to their company or institutional strategy. Patricia specialises in Corporate Property Services, providing strategic property advice to corporate and institutional clients regarding all aspects of their property portfolio, such as relocation, sales and leaseback, development projects, fit-out, facilities management, project management and landlord and tenant issues.</p>	2/3
Mark Dunleavy	<p>› Mark is Managing Director of MD Property, which he established in 2004. MD Property is one of Ireland's largest management and leasing firms. They currently manage over €1.8bn worth of assets containing 4,500 units across 75 developments. Mark is a Chartered Surveyor and is Chairman of the Society of Chartered Surveyors of Ireland Residential Committee.</p>	2/3
Anne Fletcher	<p>› Anne is a founder and former Managing Director of Coady Architects, with over 40 years' experience as a practising architect.</p>	2/3
Lonan McDowell	<p>› Lonan qualified as a solicitor with McCann FitzGerald in 1980, giving more than 40 years to the practice. His area of expertise is in commercial property. Working as partner for 30 years, Lonan retired from McCann FitzGerald in 2017. He continued to work with the practice as a consultant until April 2022.</p>	1/3
Gloria Kirwan	<p>› Gloria is a registered social worker and academic. She has previously served as Social Work Course Director in Trinity College Dublin and Maynooth University, Ireland. She is currently Senior Lecturer in the Graduate School of Healthcare Management at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, where her work focuses on leadership and management education for health and social care providers. Gloria has supported the work of Focus Ireland for many years through her membership of the Services Sub-Committee.</p>	1/3

Members of Boards of both Focus Ireland and Focus Housing Association

Name	Brief profile	Board term
David Kelly	<p>› David is a financial consultant, sometimes undertaking assignments as an interim Finance Director/CFO. In the past he has acted as interim Finance Director of Circle VHA. David was previously Board Secretary to NAMA; General Manager – Operations and Head of Finance in AIB (Allied Irish Bank); and Managing Director of AIB Mortgage Bank. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and an Associate Member of the Institute of Taxation.</p>	<p>FI 1/3 FHA 1/3</p>
Fionnuala Meehan	<p>› Fionnuala has a 25-year career working with multinationals in the tourism and technology sectors, spending her formative years at Best Western International before working for AOL (America Online) Europe/UK and, most recently, Google. Joining Google in 2005, Fionnuala was instrumental in the growth of the Advertising Sales and Operations organisation, holding a number of roles, including Vice President of Google Customer Solutions EMEA, leading a team of 1,000 people working with SMBs across the region. For her last three years at Google, Fionnuala was also the Head of Google in Ireland, responsible for all aspects of the site of more than 8,000 Googlers, interns and vendors, ensuring that operations continued to flourish and securing future investment for the Irish site, the fifth largest for Google worldwide. Fionnuala is currently working as an independent business adviser.</p>	<p>FI 2/3 FHA 2/3</p>

Meeting and Sub-Committee attendance 2023

Board Member	FI Board	FHA Board	Research Advisory	Public Affairs	HR and Nominations	Finance	Audit	Funding and Branding	Services	Development	Joined Board
Focus Ireland (FI)											
Sister Stanislaus Kennedy	6/6				3/3				5/6		Sept 1985
Michael Layde (Chair FI)	6/6			1/1	3/3	8/10					April 2016
Conor Jones	5/6							5/6			Jan 2019
Katie Burke	2/2								6/6		Sept 2023
Niall Keane	5/6								5/6		July 2022
Susan O'Connell	6/6				2/3		5/6				May 2016
Tony Fahey	4/6		4/4								March 2019
Focus Housing Association (FHA)											
Diarmuid Burke (Chair FHA)		6/6			3/3	9/10	5/6				May 2015
Anne Fletcher		6/6								7/7	Dec 2020
David Kelly		4/4				9/10	6/6				May 2023
Lonan McDowell		6/6								5/7	Oct 2021
Mark Dunleavy		5/6									Feb 2019
Patricia Crisp		6/6									Feb 2019
FI and FHA											
Anna Lee	4/5	5/6							4/6		May 2015
Andrew Gunne	6/6	1/2									Feb 2019
Fergal O'Dwyer	4/6	1/6			1/1	9/10				7/7	July 2019
Fionnuala Meehan	6/6	6/6		3/3							Sept 2020

Board member	FI Board	FHA Board	Research Advisory	Public Affairs	HR and Nominations	Finance	Audit	Funding and Branding	Services	Development
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Sub-Committee Volunteer Members

Brendan Kenny										5/7
Caroline Godsil							2/2			
Claire Smith				0/3						
Dave Kirwan								3/3		
Donnchadh Casey								4/4		
Dr Helen Johnson			3/3							
Dr Kate Frazer			3/4							
Dr Kathy Reilly			2/4							
Fiona Scott				3/3				5/6		
Francis Chance									5/6	
Gerry Cahill										2/7
Gloria Kirwan									5/6	
Jacqui Lynskey (Horan)									5/6	
Joe Little				3/3						
John Gallagher				1/3						
Michael McGowan										7/7
Niall O'Driscoll								5/6		
Orla Gallagher								3/4		
Patrick Farrell							4/4			
Padraig Breen										5/7
Professor Eoin O'Sullivan			4/4							

The Executive team

Name	Division	Profile
Pat Dennigan	Chief Executive Officer	<p>➤ Pat joined Focus Ireland in 2014 as head of the Finance Function, adding responsibility for Property in 2016. He was appointed Chief Executive in March 2018. Pat is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Ireland. Prior to joining Focus Ireland, Pat held several senior Finance and Operations roles in companies such as Nortel Networks and Boston Scientific. He is a past president of Galway Lions Club and is a past member of the Charity SORP Committee.</p>
Ciara Carty	Services	<p>➤ Ciara joined Focus Ireland in October 2019 and has been working in the NGO sector for over a decade, occupying several key leadership roles in Crosscare, the social care agency of the Dublin Archdiocese. Prior to this, Ciara worked in Corporate Banking with Bank of Ireland. Ciara holds an MSc in Management (Organisational Behavioural) from Trinity College Dublin, along with a Post-Graduate Diploma in Systemic Psychotherapy from University College Dublin. She has been a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) since 2015.</p>
Pamela Branagan	Finance, IT and Administration	<p>➤ Pamela has been with Focus Ireland since 2013, starting out as a Finance Manager and taking up the position of Director of Finance, IT and Administration in 2018. Pamela is a graduate of NUI Galway and a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. She has over 20 years' experience in finance and operational roles across sectors, including practice, retail and hospitality.</p>
Mike Allen	Advocacy, Research, Policy, Communication and Education	<p>➤ Mike joined Focus Ireland in 2010. He previously spent eight years as the General Secretary of the Labour Party. Prior to that he was the General Secretary of the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE). He is a former member of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) and other social partnership bodies. He is currently the President of FEANTSA (the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless).</p>
Barbara Dempsey	Human Resources	<p>➤ Barbara joined Focus Ireland in March 2022, with more than 20 years' experience in Human Resources in the not-for-profit and aviation sectors. Barbara holds a Bachelor of Social Science, Post-Graduate Diploma in Business Studies, and National Diploma in Human Resources. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.</p>
Amy Carr	Fundraising and Marketing	<p>➤ Amy was appointed Director of Fundraising and Marketing in January 2020, having worked with Focus Ireland as the Trusts and Major Donor Officer and Head of Partnerships and Philanthropy. Amy brings a wealth of experience from the NGO sector, having worked in Our Lady's Hospice, the ISPCA and Barnardos. A graduate of NUI Galway and Anglia Ruskin University, she holds an MSc in Marketing, a Higher Diploma in Business Studies, and a Post-Grad in Digital Marketing.</p>
Jan Mingle	Property and Development	<p>➤ Jan has more than 30 years' social housing experience, having previously worked in both general and special needs housing. Jan joined Focus Ireland from Co-operative Housing Ireland, where she was the Director of Housing and Quality Systems. Jan holds qualifications in Housing Management, Communications, Corporate Governance, Internal Auditing, and Volunteer Management, amongst others.</p>

Board committees

Committees of the Boards are established for good governance under the code of practice as follows. The committees have members of both Focus Ireland and Focus Housing and they cover the activities of both Boards.

Finance Committee

This committee monitors and reviews financial performance. The committee should meet six times per year (2023: 10, 2022: 6) and consists of Non-Executive Directors and Focus Ireland Executives.

Functions of the Committee

- › Monitor and review financial performance.
- › Review internal financial controls policies and risk-management processes.
- › Offer advice and assistance to the Executive team to ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation.
- › Provide specialist financial expertise and perspective to enable Focus Ireland and Focus Housing to carry out their work effectively.
- › Report findings and recommendations from its review directly to the relevant Board.
- › Provide oversight of the finance procedures suited to the agency's activities.
- › Provide oversight of the procurement procedures suited to the agency's purchasing profile.
- › Authorise expenditure greater than €100k.
- › Authorise property acquisitions requiring the use of the Agile Acquisition Fund.
- › Act as a point of escalation for the Focus Ireland Executive.
- › Provide a forum where relevant issues/controls and financial or sustainability concerns can be discussed, and appropriate solutions devised.

Audit and Risk Committee

This committee reviews internal financial controls and risk management. The committee liaises with internal and external auditors and reports to the Board. The committee should meet at least six times yearly (2023: 6; 2022: 6) and consists of Non-Executive Directors and Focus Ireland Executives.

Functions of the Committee

- › Advise the Board on the risk-management framework and its effectiveness in supporting the arrangements for risk management, internal control and governance.
- › Consider the organisation's risk register, including an assessment of its principal risks and the mitigating controls in place or being put in place.
- › Provide oversight of the organisation's internal financial controls.
- › Consider and approve the remit of any internal audit function.
- › Monitor the integrity of the financial statements of Focus Ireland and Focus Housing and any formal announcements about the organisation's financial performance.
- › Promote best practice in terms of financial reporting and governance throughout the organisations.
- › Liaise directly, and independently of Focus Ireland Executive, with internal and external auditors.
- › Meet the external auditors at least once a year without any employees of Focus Ireland present to ensure that there are no unresolved issues of concerns.
- › Report findings and recommendations from the external audit review directly to the Board.
- › Review and advise on choice of external and internal auditors as appointed every 5–7 years.
- › Review the outcome of any audits or review processes carried out by external regulatory bodies and report any issues to the Board to ensure compliance with the reporting requirements of the relevant regulatory bodies.
- › Review annually all insurance claims and cover to ensure that an appropriate level of protection is maintained.
- › Review periodically the Health and Safety policy of the organisation and monitor compliance with our obligations.
- › Review any investigations required and work with the Executive to complete any actions arising from such investigations.
- › Offer advice and assistance to Focus Ireland's Executive team on the development of robust processes and on the protection of Focus Ireland's and Focus Housing's reputation.
- › Act as a point of escalation for the Focus Ireland Executive and undertake actions agreed at the Audit and Risk Sub-Committee meetings.

Human Resources and Nomination Committee

The function of this committee is to ensure successional planning and that the composition of the Board has appropriate skills, knowledge and experience, as well as to approve and determine remuneration for Executive Management. The committee should meet at least three times yearly (2023: 3, 2022: 3) or when required, and consists of Non-Executive Directors and Focus Ireland Executives.

Functions of the Committee – Nomination

- › The Board of Directors need to have the skills, experience, expertise and time to fulfil their role and responsibility on the Board, as detailed in the Terms of Reference for the Board.
- › There needs to be certain Board Directors with the necessary experience to chair and/or participate in the Sub-Committees of the Board, e.g. Research, Funding, Audit, Finance, Services, Housing Development and Maintenance, Remuneration and Regions.
- › Board Directors are appointed initially for a three-year term. In general, they will be asked to stay for a second three-year term by the Chairperson of the Board, and the decision will be endorsed by the full Board. The Chairperson will decide whether a Director should stand down from the Board, and the decision will be endorsed by the full Board.
- › The HR and Nomination Sub-Committee will make recommendations to the Board to ensure there is sufficient rotation of Directors on the Board to allow new perspectives to be brought in while balancing the continuity of the Board and recognising the knowledge and experience of Focus Ireland built up over time.
- › The HR and Nomination Sub-Committee endeavours to ensure that chosen nominees are integrated into the Board seamlessly and will assist in the induction of new Directors.
- › The HR and Nomination Sub-Committee will ensure that all Directors nominated to the Board for approval will:
 - › Be key individuals who act at a senior level in their area of expertise
 - › Act as champions for Focus Ireland and be able to influence key stakeholders in the statutory, business and community sector
 - › Operate in the interest of Focus Ireland and Focus Housing and in line with their mission, vision and values.

Functions of the Committee – Remuneration

- › The HR and Nomination Sub-Committee has been formed to assist the Board with the appointment of the CEO, the determination and approval of the remuneration of the CEO and changes to the remuneration of the Executive team reporting directly to the CEO.
- › The Chairperson of the Board will be Chairperson of the HR and Nomination Sub-Committee.
- › The Life President and Chairperson of Focus Housing will be members of the HR and Nomination Sub-Committee and one other Board Director (e.g. a person who brings HR/finance/business experience to the Board).

- › The CEO will be responsible for monitoring and assessing the performance of the Executive team.
- › The CEO will make recommendations to the HR and Nomination Sub-Committee for endorsement in relation to remuneration of the Executive team.
- › The Chairperson of the Board will be responsible for monitoring and assessing the performance of the CEO in accordance with Focus Ireland’s performance management policy and procedures.
- › Meetings will aim to reach consensus decision, but, if necessary, a vote will be taken. The Chairperson will hold the deciding vote.

Research Committee

The Research Committee is a committee of the Focus Ireland Board. Its aim is to provide advice, guidance and recommendations in relation to research on the causes of and solutions to homelessness, and to support the organisational aim of ending homelessness in Ireland.

The committee will meet at least three times a year (2023: 4, 2022: 4). It comprises Non-Executive members of the Board, volunteer experts, leading academics and Focus Ireland Executives. The Chair of the Sub-Committee is a member of the Focus Ireland Board. The Director of Advocacy, Research and Communications will act as the Executive Officer of the Sub-Committee, with the support of the Research Co-ordinator.

Functions of the Committee

- › Advise Focus Ireland on a programme of research and evaluation in the context of the organisation’s Strategic Plan and objectives.
- › Contribute to and advise Focus Ireland on the development of its research strategy.
- › Monitor the progress of the research programme and advise the Director of Advocacy, Research and Communications (DARC) and/or the Research Co-ordinator in relation to particular research projects.
- › Review, critically analyse and comment on draft research reports prior to publication.
- › Advise in relation to the dissemination of research reports and the most effective means to influence public policy.
- › Establish a Research Ethics Sub-Committee and be responsible for ensuring that Focus Ireland’s Ethical Research Guidelines are adhered to.
- › Participate in the development of the organisation’s multi-annual Strategic Plan, with particular reference to emerging areas of research and evidence of effective practice and policy.
- › Advise on relevant external experts and leading academics to be members of the Research Sub-Committee to ensure that expertise on all relevant areas is available.
- › Advise regarding any other matters of common interest that the Chairs and/or the CEO believe would contribute to the objectives of Focus Ireland.
- › The Research Sub-Committee will hold periodic joint meetings with the Services Sub-Committee, as decided by the Chairs of the two committees, in relation to:
 - › Evaluations and impact assessments of Focus Ireland services
 - › Assessment of the emerging trends in the scale and nature of homelessness
 - › Discussions of emerging innovations in policy and practice.

Services Committee

This committee provides advice and guidance on available models of services and good practices associated with service delivery. The committee should meet four times each year (2023: 6, 2022: 6) and consists of Non-Executive Directors, Volunteer Experts and Focus Ireland Executives.

Functions of the Committee

- › Advise Focus Ireland on available models of services and good practices associated with service delivery within the context of the organisation's Strategic Plan.
- › Contribute to and advise Focus Ireland on the development of its services strategy.
- › Participate in a think tank on services every three to five years, taking into account future demand and policy over the following five to ten years.
- › Provide a forum where relevant issues/challenges can be discussed relating to services in meeting demands and needs and provide recommendations.
- › Advise on external experts to invite to join the Services Sub-Committee.
- › Introduce Focus Ireland Executive and Management to key influencers and decision makers in statutory, business and community sectors to improve policies, services and strategy to eliminate long-term homelessness in Ireland.

Funding and Branding Committee

The function of this committee is to advise on brand, digital and marketing development, fundraising and retail development in the context of the Focus Ireland Strategic Plan.

This committee meets up to six times per year (2023: 6, 2022: 6). It consists of Non-Executive Directors and Focus Ireland Executives.

Functions of the Committee

- › Offer advice and assistance to Focus Ireland on brand development and raising funds within the context of Focus Ireland's Strategic Plan.
- › Contribute to and provide advice on the development of Focus Ireland's sustainable growth and investment strategy, including development of partnerships, channels and strategies that will help raise awareness.
- › Consider proposals made, approaches adopted and contribute to discussions on lobbying, campaigning, fundraising and how to overcome challenges.
- › Provide a forum where relevant issues can be discussed and solutions devised, appropriate for specific regions.
- › Introduce the Focus Ireland Executive, fundraising staff and regional managers to key high-worth individuals, philanthropists, corporate stakeholders, media and branding specialists, influencers and decision makers.
- › Actively engage stakeholders in the statutory, business and community sectors to improve policy and services to eliminate homelessness in the region.
- › Provide specialist expertise and perspective to enable Focus Ireland to raise funds to carry out its work effectively.
- › Contribute to and provide advice on the development of Focus Ireland's funding strategy every three to five years.
- › Provide a strong voice for Focus Ireland within its own community/region, and provide specialist expertise and perspective to help us carry out our work and fundraising effectively.

Public Affairs Committee

The function of this committee is to provide advice, guidance and recommendations in relation to good practice in all aspects of Focus Ireland's work related to public affairs to support the organisational aim of ending homelessness in Ireland.

This committee will meet at least three times per year (2023: 3, 2022: 3). It consists of Non-Executive Directors, Volunteer Experts and Focus Ireland Executives.

Functions of the Committee

- › Advise Focus Ireland on good practices in relation to all aspects of the organisation's public affairs work, including policy development, public policy advocacy and related communications, within the context of the organisation's Strategic Plan and objectives.
- › Contribute to and advise Focus Ireland on the development of its public affairs and policy advocacy strategy.
- › Provide a forum where relevant issues/challenges can be discussed relating to public policy advocacy and communications issues, and to provide recommendations in relation to these.
- › Support the relationships of Focus Ireland Executives and Managers with key influencers in all sections of the public realm and media.
- › Attend and represent Focus Ireland at relevant events.
- › Play an active role in promoting our key messages.
- › Participate in the development of the organisation's multi-annual Strategic Plan, with particular reference to public policy formation, key audiences, public perceptions and emerging media trends.
- › Advise on relevant external experts to be members of the Sub-Committee to ensure expertise on all relevant areas is available.



Laura Whitmore, who once again hosted Rock Against Homelessness 2023, said: 'I have to say it made me angry to hear the rising number of people homeless and it's disgraceful that over 4,000 of these are children.' Photo courtesy of Chris Davis

Development and Acquisition Committee

The function of this committee is to provide advice, guidance and recommendations in relation to good practice in all aspects of Focus Housing's work related to Housing Development and Acquisition within the context of the organisation's Strategic Plan.

This committee will meet at least six times per year (2023: 6). It consists of Non-Executive Directors, Volunteer Experts and Focus Housing Executives.

Functions of the Committee

- › Offer advice and assistance to Focus Housing on housing development and acquisition within the context of the organisation's Strategic Plan.
- › Review and consider all of Focus Housing's strategic proposals and developments.
- › Contribute to and provide advice on the development of the Housing Development and Acquisition strategy to ensure that our efforts in the area of development and acquisition are fully aligned with the strategies of Focus Ireland for service delivery to its staff, clients and other stakeholders.
- › Contribute to the development of new mechanisms and models of delivery of housing to Focus Housing.
- › Advise the Board regarding the most appropriate and efficient use of resources and the management and mitigation of risk.
- › Advise the Board on the purchase, sale, construction, or other application of funds on properties owned or to be acquired or developed by Focus Housing.
- › Recommend to the Board the approval or otherwise of specific projects brought to the Sub-Committee by the Executive Team. This will include the review and examination of schemes at agreed milestones on agreed criteria. In particular, any acquisitions, disposals, leasing or construction projects involving combined expenditure over €500K will be first approved by the Development and Acquisition Sub-Committee.
- › Provide guidance to the Executive Team on all aspects of housing development and acquisition as required.
- › Provide a forum where relevant issues can be discussed and solutions appropriate to development and acquisition for Focus Housing can be brought forward.

Internal controls

The Directors acknowledge their overall responsibility for the Group's systems of internal control and for reviewing its effectiveness. They have delegated responsibility for the implementation of this system to the Executive Management. This system includes financial controls, which enable the Board to meet its responsibilities for the integrity and accuracy of the Group's accounting records.

The Board has also established a process of compliance which addresses the Board's wider responsibility to maintain, review and report on all internal controls, including financial, operational and compliance risk management.

The key elements of internal control systems

- 1 The Group has strict policies and procedures in place for the receipt, recording and control of donations received from private individuals and the corporate sector. These procedures are regularly reviewed and independently audited.
- 2 The Group has an established risk-management programme. A detailed risk register is in place and risk is owned and monitored by an Executive. Risk is regularly discussed and reviewed in Executive meetings, and risks are regularly reviewed by the Audit and Risk Sub-Committee.
- 3 An independent internal audit is conducted periodically to evaluate the internal financial controls and assessment of business risk. In 2023, an external consultant conducted a penetration testing and vulnerability scan on our network and internet sites. The findings were presented to the Audit and Risk Committee. The recommendations and feedback identified were implemented where appropriate.
- 4 The Audit and Risk Sub-Committee reports independently to the Board on all aspects of controls and risks.
- 5 There is a formal organisational structure in place with clearly defined lines of responsibility, division of duties and delegation of authority.
- 6 Detailed budgets are prepared annually, in line with the Strategic Plan. Budgets are reviewed by the Finance Sub-Committee and further reviewed and approved by the Board. Actual results and service outcomes are regularly compared against these budgets to ensure alignment with the Strategic Plan, tight budgetary control and value for money.
- 7 As part of the reserve policy, we will endeavour to maintain reserve levels to mitigate risks and to ensure sustainability of our services.

The Board has also established a process of compliance which addresses the Board's wider responsibility to maintain, review and report on all internal controls, including financial, operational and compliance risk management.

Conflicts of interest

In line with the requirements of the Charities Governance code, the organisation has a conflict of interest policy in place which is circulated to each Board member. There is also a declaration of interest statement which is completed by each Board member on an annual basis where they declare and note any conflicts they may have. This policy is reviewed by the Board every three years.

Agendas for each Board meeting are circulated in advance for review. The Chairperson on each Board asks at the start of each Board meeting if anyone has a conflict of interest that needs to be declared. Any conflicts are recorded in our conflicts of interest register and this is reviewed annually by our Audit and Risk Sub-Committee.

Accounting records

The measures taken by the Directors to secure compliance with the requirements of sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014 with regard to the keeping of accounting records are the engagement of appropriately qualified accounting personnel and the maintenance of computerised accounting systems. The Group's accounting records are maintained at the Group's registered office at 9/12 High Street, Dublin 8.

Statement of disclosure of information to auditors

Each person who is a Director at the date of approval of these financial statements confirms that:

- 1 so far as the Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Group's Auditors are unaware, and
- 2 the Director has taken all the steps that he/she ought to have taken as a Director in order to make him/herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Group's auditors are aware of that information.

This confirmation is given and should be interpreted in accordance with the provisions of Section 350 of the Companies Act 2014.

Statement of Directors' responsibilities

The Directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with Irish law.

Irish law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year, giving a true and fair view of the company's assets, liabilities and financial position at the end of the financial year and the profit or loss of the company for the financial year. Under that law, the Directors have prepared the financial statements in accordance with Irish Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (accounting standards issued by the UK Financial Reporting Council, including Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and Irish law).

Under Irish law, the Directors shall not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the company's assets, liabilities and financial position as at the end of the financial year and the profit or loss of the company for the financial year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- › select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- › make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- › state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and identify the standards in question, subject to any material departures from those standards being disclosed and explained in the notes to the financial statements
- › prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to:

- › correctly record and explain the transactions of the company
- › enable, at any time, the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the company to be determined with reasonable accuracy
- › enable the Directors to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2014 and enable those financial statements to be audited.

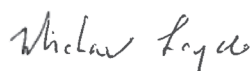
The Directors are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps in the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Independent auditors

The statutory auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers were appointed in 2019 and have indicated their willingness to remain in office, and a resolution that they be reappointed will be proposed at the AGM.

On behalf of the Board:



Michael Layde

Director



Susan O'Connell

Director

Date: 28 June 2024



Focus Ireland has an audience of well over 250,000 people across social media platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn and Tik Tok. We communicate with our audiences about our work and put forward solutions to the homeless crisis. We also post content that aligns with our core values, such as this post featuring a well-known Irish rock legend. A very striking anti-racism poster hangs at Unite the Union, as Phil Lynott would have been 74 in September 2023. #notoracism

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of Focus Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

In our opinion, Focus Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee's consolidated financial statements and company financial statements (the 'financial statements'):

- › give a true and fair view of the Group's and the company's assets, liabilities and financial position as at 31 December 2023 and of the Group's net income and the Group's and the company's cash flows for the year then ended;
- › have been properly prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland (Irish GAAP) (accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council of the UK, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and Irish law); and
- › have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

We have audited the financial statements, included within the Reports and Consolidated Financial Statements (the 'Annual Report'), which comprise:

- › the Consolidated and Company Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2023;
- › the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for the year then ended;
- › the Consolidated and Company Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended;
- › the Consolidated and Company Statement of Changes in Reserves for the year then ended; and
- › the notes to the financial statements, which include a description of the significant accounting policies.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) ('ISAs (Ireland)') and applicable law. Our responsibilities under ISAs (Ireland) are further described in the auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Independence

We remained independent of the Group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, which includes IAASA's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

Conclusions relating to going concern

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 Group's or the company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue.

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.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the Group's or the company's ability to continue as a going concern.

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

Reporting on other information

The other information comprises all of the information in the Reports and Consolidated Financial Statements other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The Directors are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

With respect to the Directors' Report, we also considered whether the disclosures required by the Companies Act 2014 have been included.

Based on the responsibilities described above and our work undertaken in the course of the audit, ISAs (Ireland) and the Companies Act 2014 require us to also report certain opinions and matters as described below:

- › In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, the information given in the Directors' Report for the year ended 31 December 2023 is consistent with the financial statements and has been prepared in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.
- › Based on our knowledge and understanding of the Group and company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the Directors' Report.

Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit

Responsibilities of the Directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities set out on page 117, the Directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

The Directors are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Directors are responsible for assessing the Group's and the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Directors either intend to liquidate the Group or the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Our audit testing might include testing complete populations of certain transactions and balances, possibly using data auditing techniques. However, it typically involves selecting a limited number of items for testing, rather than testing complete populations. We will often seek to target particular items for testing based on their size or risk characteristics. In other cases, we will use audit sampling to enable us to draw a conclusion about the population from which the sample is selected.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA website at: https://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf

This description forms part of our auditors' report.

Use of this report

This report, including the opinions, has been prepared for and only for the company's members as a body in accordance with section 391 of the Companies Act 2014 and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving these opinions, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

Other required reporting

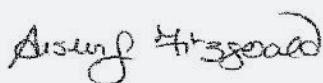
Companies Act 2014 opinions on other matters

- › We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.
- › In our opinion, the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the company financial statements to be readily and properly audited.
- › The Company Balance Sheet is in agreement with the accounting records.

Other exception reporting

Directors' remuneration and transactions

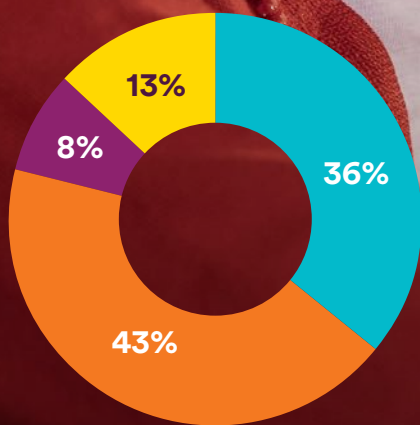
Under the Companies Act 2014 we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of Directors' remuneration and transactions specified by sections 305 to 312 of that Act have not been made. We have no exceptions to report arising from this responsibility.



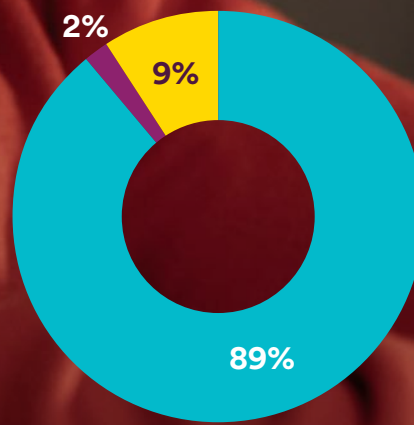
Aisling Fitzgerald

for and on behalf of PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm
Dublin

June 2024



2023: Mix of income	€m
Grant income	18.65
Fundraising income	21.99
Rental income	4.28
Other income	6.73
Total income	51.65



2023: Mix of expenditure	€m
Direct charitable activities costs	38.85
Governance and support costs	0.99
Fundraising and events costs	3.89
Operational expenditure	43.73

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

		2023 Unrestricted funds	2023 Restricted funds	2023 Total	2022 Unrestricted funds	2022 Restricted funds	2022 Total
	Notes	€	€	€	€	€	€
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	4	12,036,473	9,957,975	21,994,448	13,018,393	1,829,765	14,848,158
Charitable activities	5	–	18,647,879	18,647,879	–	15,833,733	15,833,733
Other	6	11,010,917	–	11,010,917	10,221,446	–	10,221,446
Total income		23,047,390	28,605,854	51,653,244	23,239,839	17,663,498	40,903,337
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	4	3,895,861	–	3,895,861	3,706,618	–	3,706,618
Charitable activities	7	18,523,110	19,553,647	38,076,757	16,061,947	16,322,545	32,384,492
Interest on borrowings	8	1,761,132	–	1,761,132	1,402,338	–	1,402,338
Total expenditure		24,180,103	19,553,647	43,733,750	21,170,903	16,322,545	37,493,448
Net income/ (expenditure) before taxation		(1,132,713)	9,052,207	7,919,494	2,068,936	1,340,953	3,409,889
Taxation	13	–	–	–	–	–	–
Net movement in funds for the year		(1,132,713)	9,052,207	7,919,494	2,068,936	1,340,953	3,409,889

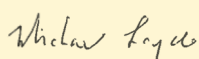
There are no other recognised gains or losses other than those listed above and the net movement for the financial year. All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

Consolidated Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2023

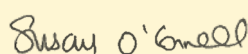
	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
Fixed assets			
Fixed assets – properties	15	234,015,538	188,145,343
Other tangible assets	16	863,866	926,861
Total fixed assets		234,879,404	189,072,204
Current assets			
Cash at bank and in hand		18,982,232	14,996,861
Debtors	17	4,989,652	3,468,691
Total current assets		23,971,884	18,465,552
Creditors:			
amounts falling due within one financial year	18	(12,480,971)	(9,111,663)
Net current assets		11,490,913	9,353,889
Total assets less current liabilities		246,370,317	198,426,093
Creditors:			
amounts falling due after more than one financial year			
Capital Assistance Scheme loans	19	(115,733,276)	(98,079,832)
Capital Advanced Leasing Facility loans	20	(26,451,495)	(17,491,849)
Bank loans	21	(61,142,013)	(47,730,373)
Total creditors falling due after more than one year	22	(203,326,784)	(163,302,054)
Net assets		43,043,533	35,124,039
The funds of the charity			
Restricted income funds	23	18,292,884	9,240,677
Unrestricted funds	24	18,949,627	20,071,723
Capital grants and donations	25	3,210,757	3,221,374
Unrestricted capital reserves	26	2,590,265	2,590,265
		43,043,533	35,124,039

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 28 June 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Michael Layde

Director



Susan O'Connell

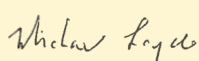
Director

Company Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2023

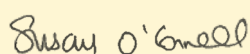
	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
Fixed assets			
Other tangible assets	16	863,866	926,861
Current assets			
Cash at bank and in hand		10,193,655	11,642,928
Debtors	17	5,018,491	3,678,273
Total current assets		15,212,146	15,321,201
Liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one financial year	18	(3,408,721)	(3,296,143)
Net current assets		11,803,425	12,025,058
Net assets		12,667,291	12,951,919
The funds of the charity			
Restricted income funds	23	2,026,103	2,026,103
Unrestricted funds	24	10,267,202	10,541,213
Capital grants and donations	25	373,986	384,603
		12,667,291	12,951,919

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 28 June 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Michael Layde

Director



Susan O'Connell

Director

Consolidated Statement of Changes in Reserves

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	Restricted accumulated reserves €	Unrestricted accumulated reserves €	Designated reserves €	Capital grants and donations €	Unrestricted capital reserve €	Total €
Group							
At 1 January 2023		9,240,677	20,071,723	–	3,221,374	2,590,265	35,124,039
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the financial year		9,052,207	(1,132,713)	–	–	–	7,919,494
Amortisation of Capital Grant	25	–	10,617	–	(10,617)	–	–
At 31 December 2023		18,292,884	18,949,627	–	3,210,757	2,590,265	43,043,533

In respect of the prior year

	Notes	Restricted accumulated reserves €	Unrestricted accumulated reserves €	Designated reserves €	Capital grants and donations €	Unrestricted capital reserve €	Total €
Group							
At 1 January 2022		7,899,724	17,982,718	–	3,241,443	2,590,265	31,714,150
Surplus for the financial year		1,340,953	2,068,936	–	–	–	3,409,889
Transfer of reserves		–	–	–	–	–	–
Amortisation of Capital Grant	25	–	20,069	–	(20,069)	–	–
At 31 December 2022		9,240,677	20,071,723	–	3,221,374	2,590,265	35,124,039

Company Statement of Changes in Reserves

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	Restricted accumulated reserves €	Unrestricted accumulated reserves €	Designated reserves €	Capital grants and donations €	Unrestricted capital reserve €	Total €
At 1 January 2023		2,026,103	10,541,213	–	384,603	–	12,951,919
Deficit for the financial year		–	(284,628)	–	–	–	(284,628)
Amortisation of Capital Grant	25	–	10,617	–	(10,617)	–	–
At 31 December 2023		2,026,103	10,267,202	–	373,986	–	12,667,291

In respect of the prior year

	Notes	Restricted accumulated reserves €	Unrestricted accumulated reserves €	Designated reserves €	Capital grants and donations €	Unrestricted capital reserve €	Total €
At 1 January 2022		2,026,103	9,534,168	–	395,220	–	11,955,491
Surplus for the financial year		–	996,428	–	–	–	996,428
Amortisation of Capital Grant	25	–	10,617	–	(10,617)	–	–
At 31 December 2022		2,026,103	10,541,213	–	384,603	–	12,951,919

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	<i>Notes</i>	2023 €	2022 €
Cash flows generated from charitable activities	<i>27</i>	10,319,942	3,702,586
Cash flows used in investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	<i>15</i>	(47,342,461)	(34,601,049)
Disposals of tangible fixed assets		–	–
Net cash used in investing activities		(47,342,461)	(34,601,049)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Interest paid		(1,324,124)	(1,060,071)
Increase in bank loans		15,718,923	14,885,128
Increase in Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) housing loans		17,653,444	9,041,354
Increase in Capital Advanced Leasing Facility (CALF) loans		8,959,647	9,174,420
Net cash generated from financing activities		41,007,890	32,040,831
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the financial year		3,985,371	1,142,368
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		14,996,861	13,854,493
Total cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		18,982,232	14,996,861

Company Statement of Cash Flows

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	<i>Notes</i>	2023 €	2022 €
Cash flows (used in)/generated from charitable activities	<i>27</i>	(1,449,273)	427,980
Cash flows generated from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	<i>16</i>	–	–
Disposals of tangible fixed assets		–	–
Net cash generated from investing activities		–	–
Cash flows from financing activities			
Cash inflows from new borrowings		–	–
Cash inflows from capital donations		–	–
Net cash generated from financing activities		–	–
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the financial year		(1,449,273)	427,980
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		11,642,928	11,214,948
Total cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		10,193,655	11,642,928

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

1 Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

(a) General information and basis of preparation

The nature of the Group's operations and its principal activities are set out in the Directors' Report on pages 75 to 118. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102) and Irish statute comprising the Companies Acts 2014 as applied in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (FRS102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities', as jointly published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, who are recognised by the UK Accounting Standards Board (ASB) as the appropriate body to issue SORPs for the charity sector in the UK. Financial reporting in line with the SORP is considered best practice for charities in Ireland. As noted above, the Directors consider that the adoption of the SORP requirements is the most appropriate accounting practice and presentation to properly reflect and disclose the activities of the organisation.

The functional currency of Focus Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee is considered to be the Euro because that is the currency of the primary economic environment in which the company operates.

(b) Going concern

The company meets its day-to-day working capital requirements through its cash reserves. General economic conditions, the ongoing impact of the war in Ukraine and current economic conditions continue to create uncertainty over the ability of the company to maintain the level of donations received. The company's forecasts and projections, taking account of reasonably possible changes in trading performance, show that the company should be able to operate for the foreseeable future. The Directors are comfortable that the forecasts prepared have considered a number of sensitivities, including a range of outcomes, and that in all cases there remains sufficient mitigation

measures available to the Directors to ensure that cash flows are managed and that the organisation can continue to meet its obligations as they fall due for the period of at least 12 months from signing the financial statements. Therefore, these financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

(c) Group financial statements

The financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its subsidiaries, Focus Housing Association and Excellent Common Areas Owner Management Limited.

(d) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, and performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies income represents the gross money raised, including all gross income from events held. In accordance with best practice, donations and legacies income is shown gross without deduction of any overhead costs involved in raising such funds.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the Trust that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution. Where legacies have been notified to the charity or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, and the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material.

Income from Government and other grants, whether 'capital' or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Other trading activities income includes rental income, Payment and Availability (PAA) income and restaurant income. Rental income and PAA income is recorded on a receivable basis. Restaurant income is recorded on a cash receipts basis.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Other income includes parents' contributions towards childcare centres, restaurant sales, capital management income for properties, PAA income and other miscellaneous income.

Income received in respect of future specified service provision is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

Gifts in kind for use by the Group are included as incoming resources when received. Gifts are valued at open market value or at a reasonable estimate of the gross value to the Group. Donated goods received for resale in our retail stores are recorded as income when sold.

(e) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Restricted funds relate to donations or a grant which the donor or funder has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work. Designated funds relate to funds which have been allocated for specific spend.

(f) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- › Costs of raising funds include staff, direct, indirect overheads and event costs. Costs are recorded on a receipts basis.
- › Expenditure on charitable activities includes staff, direct, indirect overheads and support costs incurred in furthering the purposes of the charity.
- › Expenditure on advocacy includes staff and campaign costs.
- › Governance costs.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

(g) Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include headquarter costs, finance, personnel, payroll and other costs which support the charity's programme and activities. These costs have been allocated between costs of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities based on staff headcount.

Governance cost policy

The resources expended on charitable activities have been classified to comply with SORP. Such costs include the direct costs of the charitable activities together with those support costs (finance and administration cost) incurred that enable these activities to be undertaken. These support costs have been allocated across the activities based on headcount and floor space occupied.

Fundraising costs cover all costs incurred in raising funds, including staff and event costs.

(h) Leases

All operating lease rentals are charged to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis.

(i) Fixed assets

From 1 January 2014, fixed assets (properties) are capitalised at cost and are depreciated according to the estimated useful economic lives of their relevant components and on a straight line basis in order to bring the assets to their residual value. All fixed assets as at 31 December 2013 are included in land and buildings (main fabric).

In addition, under the terms of our loan agreements with respective local authorities, the Group is required to keep the mortgaged properties in good structural order, repair and condition and not to permit the mortgaged properties to depreciate by neglect or mismanagement. Detailed reviews for impairment are therefore only carried out if the Directors are satisfied that there are definite indications that impairment has occurred. The Directors are satisfied that an annual charge for depreciation would be inappropriate.

In relation to the main fabric of land and buildings, in order to ensure the property is fit for purpose, all initial expenditure is capitalised at cost. Depreciation is not provided on the main fabric of land and buildings on the grounds that the estimated useful lives of these properties exceed 50 years.

The components of each fixed asset (property) are depreciated as follows:

Component	Annual rate
Land and buildings (main fabric)	0%
Roof structure and coverings	1.43%
Windows and external doors	3.33%
Gas boilers/fires	6.66%
Kitchen	5%
Bathroom/WCs	3.33%
Mechanical systems	3.33%
Electrics	2.5%
Lift	5%

Other tangible assets are capitalised at cost and are depreciated over their estimated useful economic lives on a straight line basis as follows:

Asset category	Annual rate
Office furniture and equipment	25%
Housing furniture and equipment	25%
Motor vehicles	20%

(j) Financial instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the charitable company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Financial liabilities are classified according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into.

Financial assets and liabilities

All financial assets and liabilities are initially measured at transaction price (including transaction costs), unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction. If an arrangement constitutes a finance transaction, the financial asset or financial liability is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Financial assets are derecognised when and only when (a) the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire or are settled, (b) the company transfers to another party substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership of the financial asset, or (c) the company, despite having retained some significant risks and rewards of ownership, has transferred control of the asset to another party and the other party has the practical ability to sell the asset in its entirety to an unrelated third party and is able to exercise that ability unilaterally and without needing to impose additional restrictions on the transfer.

Financial liabilities are derecognised only when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged, cancelled or expires. Balances that are classified as payable or receivable within one year on initial recognition are measured at the undiscounted amount of the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received, net of impairment.

(k) Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) loans and Capital Advanced Leasing Facility (CALF) loans

Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) loans and Capital Advanced Leasing Facility (CALF) loans are recognised as creditors falling due for repayment after more than one year. CAS and CALF loans received for the acquisition of property are released to the Unrestricted Income Funds when the term of the relevant CAS or CALF mortgage is completed.

CAS loans received for the acquisition of property are released to the Unrestricted Income Funds when the terms of the relevant CAS mortgages are completed; CALF loans received for the acquisition of property are repayable when the terms of the relevant CALF mortgages are completed.

On completion of the loan period, provided certain conditions are met, the loans and interest, if applicable, are relieved in full and will be released to Unrestricted Capital Reserves and not amortised.

(l) Capital Grants and Donations

Capital Grants and Donations, received in relation to housing properties, were historically taken directly to Restricted Income Funds and were not recognised as income in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities.

The Charities SORP recognises such grants as restricted income in the SOFA (Statement of Financial Activities).

Grants received to fund other capital expenditure are taken to Capital Grants and Donations and amortised to income over the estimated useful lives of the related fixed assets.

(m) Reserves policy

Focus Ireland needs reserves to:

- › Ensure that the charity can continue to provide a stable and quality service to those who need it.
- › Meet contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close. This includes redundancy pay, amounts due to creditors and commitments under leases.

- › Meet unexpected costs, e.g. breakdown of essential office machinery, staff cover re: illness, maternity leave, parental leave, and legal costs defending the charity's interest.
- › Provide working capital when funding is paid in arrears and place the charity in a position where it could bid for funding which can be paid in arrears.
- › Meet the costs of winding up the organisation in the event that this was necessary.
- › Act as a buttress when our advocacy voice puts us into conflict with our funders.
- › Be adequate to cover 13 weeks of current expenditure for Focus Ireland.

Restricted Income Funds

Restricted funds are funds subject to specific trusts, which may be declared by the donor(s) or with their authority or created through legal process, but still within the wider objectives of the charity. Restricted funds may be Restricted Income Funds, which are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of some particular aspect(s) of the objectives of the charity, or they may be capital funds, where the assets are required to be invested, or retained for actual use, rather than expended.

Unrestricted Income Funds

Unrestricted funds are expendable at the discretion of the Board in furtherance of the charity's objectives. The Directors can designate part or all of the Unrestricted Funds for specific purposes. These designations have an administrative purpose only, and do not legally restrict the Board's discretion to apply the fund.

Designated Income Funds

Designated funds are those that are allocated from unrestricted reserves to spend on a specific purpose/area.

(n) Comparative figures

Comparative figures have been classified on the same basis as the current financial year.

2 Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation and uncertainty

In the application of the company's accounting policies, which are described in Note 1, the Directors are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

Critical judgements in applying the company's accounting policies:

The following are the critical judgements, apart from those involving estimations (which are dealt with separately below), that the Directors have made in the process of applying the company's accounting policies and that have the most significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Properties

All initial expenditure, to ensure the property is fit for purpose, is capitalised at cost. Under the terms of our loan agreements with respective local authorities, the company is required to keep the mortgaged properties in good structural order, repair and condition and not to permit the mortgaged properties to depreciate by neglect or mismanagement. To ensure this is the case, the company engages in a comprehensive management and maintenance programme involving annual condition surveys which are externally assessed by rotation. When properties are donated, they are included in the financial statements based on the valuation provided by an external valuer.

Depreciation is not provided on the cost of land and main fabric of housing properties on the grounds that the estimated residual value after 50 years is at least equal to the capitalised cost.

Depreciation is provided on the cost of other component parts of housing properties to bring them to their residual value at the end of their estimated useful life, as follows:

Asset category	Estimated Useful Life – years
Windows and external doors	30
Gas boilers/fires	15
Kitchen	20
Bathroom/WCs	30
Mechanical systems	30
Electrics	40
Lift	25

All additions to housing units have been accounted for on the basis of their component parts.

The majority of housing properties acquired by Focus Ireland CLG have been financed by way of Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) loans, which are repayable in full for 20 years (purchases prior to 2002) or 30 years (purchases post 2002). Loans under CAS have not been amortised on the basis that the loans remain repayable in full, for the terms noted above, if certain conditions are not met during the loan term.

On completion of the loan period, provided certain conditions are met, the loans and interest, if applicable, are credited in full to the Statement of Financial Activities.

Major works maintenance (e.g. replacement of kitchens, bathrooms, boilers) in existing housing units will be capitalised and written off over the estimated useful life of the expenditure.

Recoverability of debtors

In assessing the recoverability of debtors, amounts falling due within one year, the Directors have made the assumption that any impairment resulting from the non-recoverability of the debtors owed to the Group and company will not be in excess of the bad debt provision that has been put in place. The Directors believe that no further provisioning is required.

Grant income is generally recognised upon receipt or when the entity becomes entitled to it, but in certain circumstances it may be subject to payback where certain conditions (some of which are outside the direct control of the company) are not fulfilled. Where there is a doubt about fulfilment of such conditions, which is not satisfactorily resolved within a year of receipt of the monies, the company includes a provision to reflect the risk that the monies in question may have to be repaid.

3 Financial performance of the charity

The Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities includes the results of the charity's subsidiaries Focus Housing Association CLG and Excellent Common Areas Owner Management Limited.

The summary financial performance of Focus Ireland CLG alone is as follows:

	2023 €	2022 €
Income	32,673,365	29,722,433
Expenditure	(32,957,993)	(28,726,005)
Net (deficit)/surplus	(284,628)	996,428
Total accumulated funds brought forward	12,951,919	11,955,491
Total accumulated funds carried forward	12,667,291	12,951,919
The funds of the charity:		
Restricted income funds	2,026,103	2,026,103
Unrestricted income funds	10,267,202	10,541,213
Capital grants and donations	373,986	384,603
Designated funds	–	–
Total accumulated funds	12,667,291	12,951,919

Details of Excellent Common Areas Owner Management Limited are outlined in Note 14.

4 Income from donations and legacies and expenditure on raising funds

	2023	2022
	€	€
Public funding	6,750,897	7,039,101
Partnership and philanthropy	3,540,672	4,072,870
Corporate and campaigns	3,762,482	2,867,273
Capital donations	7,940,397	868,914
	21,994,448	14,848,158

The following is a selection of donors who generously donated to us over the year:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Bord Gáis Energy	779,351	598,440
Little Company of Mary	245,000	240,000
Revolut	223,562	145,103
Specsavers	212,000	–
LinkedIn	107,878	157,106
Amgen (Horizon Therapeutics)	100,000	105,040
Community Foundation Ireland	93,000	9,445

Costs associated with raising funds were €3,895,861, which was 18% of funds raised in 2023 (2022: €3,706,618, 25% of funds raised).

	2023	2022
	€	€
Staff costs (including training and pension costs)	1,876,590	1,603,825
Administration	1,836,427	1,929,802
Programme activities	74,804	69,038
Premises costs	108,040	103,953
Total	3,895,861	3,706,618

5 Income from charitable activities

	2023	2022
	€	€
DRHE – local authority	5,282,020	4,790,772
HSE	1,203,809	1,208,234
TUSLA	6,042,532	4,207,383
HSE – other areas	937,015	1,133,755
South-East	178,265	167,950
Mid-West	332,133	129,000
Limerick City and County Council	1,495,188	1,164,512
Department of Social Protection	57,306	90,242
Waterford City Council	530,461	446,470
Monaghan County Council	51,070	47,515
Clare County Council	285,534	311,827
Cork County Council	286,600	300,079
Carlow County Council	188,770	112,541
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	58,333	60,000
Sligo County Council	187,338	163,826
Irish Prison Service	197,434	197,434
Irish Probation Service	197,434	197,434
Wexford County Council	137,431	97,918
Kilkenny County Council	130,804	133,645
Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government as administered by Pobal	85,604	77,310
DFHERIS/SOLAS/City of Dublin ETB/ALCE Grant	13,950	13,950
DFHERIS/SOLAS/City of Dublin ETB/REACH Fund	2,600	6,364
DCEDIY/CDETB/CDYS – UBU	429,374	433,143
Tipperary County Council	120,214	194,221
Leitrim County Council	30,000	–
Miscellaneous other	186,660	148,208
	18,647,879	15,833,733

All income from charitable activities is restricted.

6 Other income

Other income includes trading income (rental income, PAA income and restaurant sales), deposit interest earned and other miscellaneous income).

	2023	2022
	€	€
Income from trading activities	10,149,640	8,828,170
CAS mortgages released in the period	–	1,077,956
Income from other activities	861,277	315,320
	11,010,917	10,221,446

7 Charitable activities

	Sustained exits	Prevention services	Total 2023	Total 2022
	€	€	€	€
Direct costs				
Staff costs	12,313,422	8,179,568	20,492,990	18,086,196
Administration	2,230,655	258,192	2,488,847	2,065,112
Programme activities	782,142	767,714	1,549,856	1,079,434
Premises costs	6,711,573	1,478,061	8,189,634	6,468,692
Total direct costs	22,037,792	10,683,535	32,721,327	27,699,434
Support costs (a)	2,662,566	1,497,693	4,160,259	3,350,342
Advocacy costs	702,818	395,335	1,098,153	1,267,327
Governance costs	62,092	34,926	97,018	67,389
Total expenditure	25,465,268	12,611,489	38,076,757	32,384,492

(a) Support costs

Where support costs are attributable to a particular activity, the costs are allocated directly to that activity. Where support costs are incurred to further more than one activity, they are apportioned between the relevant activities based on the amount of staff time which each activity absorbs. The allocation of the main types of support costs is detailed below:

	Sustained exits	Prevention services	Total 2023	Total 2022
	€	€	€	€
Function				
Finance	718,152	403,960	1,122,112	822,688
HQ	278,072	156,415	434,487	362,111
Human resources	749,292	421,477	1,170,769	822,907
IT	496,202	279,114	775,316	742,059
Other support costs	420,848	236,727	657,575	600,577
Total expenditure	2,662,566	1,497,693	4,160,259	3,350,342

Other support costs relate to development, property management, head office and service resource costs.

8 Interest on borrowings

	2023	2022
	€	€
Loan interest	1,761,132	1,402,338

9 Income and expenditure on Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth/City of Dublin Youth Services

	2023	2022
	€	€
Income		
DCEDIY/CDETB/CDYS – UBU	450,469	433,143
Expenditure		
Staff costs	(350,901)	(382,966)
Programme and admin costs	(78,471)	(42,134)
Surplus	21,097	8,043

10 Employees and key management remuneration

Included in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities are staff costs in the sum of €25,268,299 (2022: €22,116,813), made up as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Included in resources expended are wages and salary costs, including associated social welfare costs, comprising:		
Wages and salaries – Raising funds	1,808,826	1,559,351
Wages and salaries – Charitable activities	22,056,425	19,264,998
Wages and salaries – Advocacy	614,582	594,840
Pension costs	788,466	697,624
	25,268,299	22,116,813

Employer PRSI costs incurred during the year, and included in the above, totalled €2,374,623 (2022: €2,103,015).

The company operates a defined contribution scheme, which is an independent scheme of the company. Company contributions were 7% of pensionable salary and employee contributions were 5% of pensionable salary. Amounts outstanding at year end in respect of employer pension contributions were €132,128 (2022: €107,682) and were paid within 30 days of the year end.

The average number of persons employed by the Group during the year was 517 (2022: 462). In addition to this, the company employed relief staff, which equate to 22 full-time equivalents in 2023 (2022: 25).

The number of higher paid employees (including key management personnel) was:

Salary range paid in the financial year:

	2023	2022
	No of employees	No of employees
€130,001–€140,000	1	1
€120,001–€130,000	–	–
€110,001–€120,000	–	–
€100,001–€110,000	–	–
€90,001–€100,000	6	5
€80,001–€90,000	–	–
€70,000–€80,000	14	8
€60,000–€70,000	12	15

During 2023, the Chief Executive in place, Pat Dennigan, earned a salary of €137,307 plus €5,000 medical insurance. The total remuneration packages of the key management personnel (including employer PRSI and pension) for the Group for the financial year ended 31 December 2023 was €848,361 (2022: €800,510). During 2023, Focus Ireland staff received a salary increase in order to combat cost-of-living increases.

11 Directors' remuneration

No salaries or fees are payable to the Directors of the company for their services as Directors. For many years, the company has operated a policy of allowing staff to elect a Worker Director to the Board on a three-year term. No allowance, increased salary or other remuneration is payable to the staff member holding this position. This person is paid a salary for their normal work within Focus Ireland.

12 Net income and net movement in funds for the year

	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
The net income for the year is stated after charging:	11	–	–
Directors remuneration			
Fees paid to auditors (inclusive of VAT)			
Audit fees		86,100	39,471
Other assurance services		11,070	5,712
Other items			
Operating lease payments		698,056	1,959,131
Depreciation		1,535,261	1,229,927
Deposit interest		–	–

13 Taxation

Focus Ireland CLG and its subsidiaries have been granted charitable tax exemption by the Revenue Commissioners and as a result no charge to Corporation Tax arises.

14 Financial assets

Excellent Common Areas Owner Management Limited results for 2023 are summarised as follows:

	2023 €	2022 €
Balance sheet		
Debtors	7	7
Net assets	7	7
The funds of the charity		
Reserves brought forward	7	7
Surplus for the year	–	–
Total accumulated funds	7	7

15 Fixed assets – properties

	Land and buildings (main fabric)	Roof structure and coverings	Windows and external doors	Gas boilers/ fires	Kitchen	Bathroom/ WCs	Mechanical systems	Electrics	Lifts	Total
	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
Cost										
At beginning of year	167,542,178	5,948,547	2,920,067	2,137,615	4,419,353	2,800,457	2,672,567	2,478,558	1,364,795	192,284,137
Additions	37,914,605	2,315,046	1,109,710	785,189	1,732,638	1,043,350	1,047,775	947,449	447,027	47,342,789
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At end of year	205,456,783	8,263,593	4,029,777	2,922,804	6,151,991	3,843,807	3,720,342	3,426,007	1,811,822	239,626,926
Accumulated depreciation										
At beginning of year	-	411,001	468,763	699,749	1,074,971	457,665	436,305	298,934	291,406	4,138,794
Charge for year	-	151,608	167,855	248,421	393,041	164,961	160,609	108,378	77,721	1,472,594
At end of year	-	562,609	636,618	948,170	1,468,012	622,626	596,914	407,312	369,127	5,611,388
Carrying value										
At 31/12/23	205,456,783	7,700,984	3,393,159	1,974,634	4,683,979	3,221,181	3,123,428	3,018,695	1,442,695	234,015,538
At 31/12/22	167,542,178	5,537,546	2,451,304	1,437,866	3,344,382	2,342,792	2,236,262	2,179,624	1,073,389	188,145,343

16 Other tangible assets

Company	Land and buildings (main fabric) €	Leasehold improvements €	Office furniture and equipment €	Motor vehicles €	Total €
Cost					
At beginning of financial year	361,763	1,452,270	610,311	139,780	2,564,124
Additions	–	–	–	–	–
Disposals	–	–	–	–	–
At end of financial year	361,763	1,452,270	610,311	139,780	2,564,124
Accumulated depreciation					
At beginning of financial year	16,500	882,855	608,128	129,780	1,637,263
Charge for financial year	16,500	41,495	–	5,000	62,995
At end of financial year	33,000	924,350	608,128	134,780	1,700,258
Carrying amount					
At 31/12/23	328,763	527,920	2,183	5,000	863,866
At 31/12/22	345,263	569,415	2,183	10,000	926,861

Company

All the other fixed assets above, with the exception of housing furniture and equipment, are held within the holding company, Focus Ireland CLG. The housing furniture and equipment is held in the subsidiary company, Focus Housing Association CLG. The net book value of other assets in the holding company at 31 December 2023 was €863,866 (2022: €926,861).

17 Debtors

	Focus Ireland Group		Focus Ireland Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Other debtors	4,059,522	2,139,805	959,241	520,110
Grants receivable	434,889	402,725	482,736	454,401
Prepayments	495,241	926,161	492,858	257,593
Amount due from subsidiaries	–	–	3,083,656	2,446,169
	4,989,652	3,468,691	5,018,491	3,678,273

18 Creditors: Amounts falling due within one financial year

	Focus Ireland Group		Focus Ireland Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Trade creditors	2,160,921	386,545	571,140	125,610
Accruals	2,880,619	3,457,645	1,770,177	1,967,631
Other creditors	910,810	515,093	267,450	124,547
Deferred income	209,187	147,528	209,187	114,187
PAYE, PRSI and USC	587,076	962,808	587,076	962,807
VAT	3,691	220,661	3,691	1,361
Bank loans (Note 21)	5,728,667	3,421,383	–	–
	12,480,971	9,111,663	3,408,721	3,296,143

Deferred income relates to funds received in 2023 that were unspent at year end.

19 Capital Assistance Scheme loans

	Focus Ireland Group		Focus Ireland Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
George's Hill	–	–	–	–
Buckingham Street	93,987	93,987	–	–
Finglas	4,895,398	4,895,398	–	–
Grange Cohen, Waterford	3,252,215	3,252,215	–	–
Corbrac House, Limerick	1,129,429	1,129,429	–	–
Waterford units	18,933,923	18,639,873	–	–
Belmont, Waterford	8,516,913	8,516,913	–	–
Dublin units	34,645,860	29,190,635	–	–
Limerick units	10,221,056	6,459,513	–	–
Cork units	7,455,298	5,318,357	–	–
Kilkenny units	5,053,636	4,232,130	–	–
Sligo units	3,613,510	2,940,282	–	–
Aftercare, North Circular Road, Dublin 7	2,403,121	2,403,121	–	–
Tipperary units	2,712,607	1,075,607	–	–
Clare units	2,572,061	2,162,155	–	–
Wexford units	3,903,303	3,616,068	–	–
Carlow units	4,551,276	2,566,554	–	–
Kildare units	640,595	640,595	–	–
Mayo units	1,139,088	947,000	–	–
Total	115,733,276	98,079,832	–	–

Loans advanced by municipal (housing) authorities have a 20-year repayment period for those advanced prior to 2002, and a 30-year repayment period for those advanced post 2002. However, the subsidiary company is relieved in full of repayments of capital and interest so long as the housing authority is satisfied that the accommodation continues to be properly maintained and to be let to eligible categories of persons at reasonable rent levels.

In the event of the accommodation not continuing to be let in accordance with the terms of the scheme, the subsidiary company will become liable for repaying the outstanding balance of the loan together with any accrued interest. In the event of default of repayments, the housing authorities may take appropriate steps to secure redemption of the loan. The subsidiary company may not, if there is any balance outstanding on the loans, dispose of the accommodation without the consent of the housing authorities.

20 Capital Advanced Leasing Facility loans

	Focus Ireland Group		Focus Ireland Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Stanhope Green	337,798	331,175	–	–
Bremore Pastures	118,970	116,637	–	–
Harold's Cross	764,941	749,942	–	–
John's Lane West	1,943,287	1,905,184	–	–
Abigail	432,103	423,630	–	–
Barney	148,195	145,289	–	–
Dublin Units	9,048,413	6,581,859	–	–
Cork Units	7,461,411	4,046,456	–	–
Tipperary Units	1,608,626	1,486,191	–	–
Limerick Units	2,146,770	1,580,558	–	–
Sligo Units	127,426	124,928	–	–
Clare Units	192,780	–	–	–
Kerry Units	2,120,775	–	–	–
At end of year	26,451,495	17,491,849	–	–

Loans advanced by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government have a repayment period of between 20 and 30 years, specific to the loan. Interest charged on the outstanding amount up to 31 December 2023 was €517,981 (2022: €342,977).

21 Bank loans

	Focus Ireland Group		Focus Ireland Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Falling due within one financial year	5,728,667	3,421,383	–	–
Falling due between 1 and 2 financial years	4,049,515	3,421,383	–	–
Falling due between 2 and 5 financial years	11,969,997	13,508,021	–	–
Falling due after 5 financial years	45,122,501	30,800,969	–	–
Total falling due after more than one financial year	61,142,013	47,730,373	–	–
Total bank loans	66,870,680	51,151,756	–	–

In 2023, Focus Housing Association Company Limited by Guarantee loans comprised:

Purpose	Loan provider	Year of drawdown	Term	Interest rate	Balance at 31/12/2023 €
Bremore Pastures properties	Bank of Ireland	2015	15 years	4.24%	50,206
Stanhope Green Development	Bank of Ireland	2016	15 years	3.99%	1,974,000
Agile Acquisition Fund – Revolver	Bank of Ireland	2023	1 year	Variable	1,679,152
Harold's Cross Development	HFA	2016	23 years	2.75%	3,245,764
Abigail Development	HFA	2017	20 years	3.00%	1,279,427
Briar's Court	HFA	2018	20 years	3.00%	134,712
Barney Development	HFA	2018	20 years	3.00%	266,359
John's Lane West	HFA	2018	22 years	2.75%	5,776,979
Grange Cohan Energy Upgrade	HFA	2018	10 years	2.00%	276,618
Three Lucan properties	HFA	2019	25 years	2.25%	826,962
Barryscourt Road	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	195,199
Aspen Gardens HFA interest	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	193,863
Ceol na hAbhann	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	277,772
Premier Square, Dublin 11	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	188,189
Sunville, Church Road	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	906,468
Old Blackrock Road, Cork	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	257,513
Drummin Village, Nenagh	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	1,293,003
Libertas Villas, Blackrock	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	351,763
Foxfield, The Forts, Limerick and Palmbury, Cork	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	2,498,938
Garrison Mews, The Ramparts, Dublin 18	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	362,857
Commons Road, Blackpool, Cork	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	142,708
Sandbrook, Wilton, Cork	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	225,029
Two Sligo properties: Annacarr and St Bridget's	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	690,097
Fernwood, Glanmire, Cork	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	530,814
High Street, Cork	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	221,036
Connaught Street project	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	871,657
Prussia Street	HFA	2021	25 years	2.25%	6,877,411
North Circular Road project	HFA	2020	25 years	2.25%	1,864,722
Brookwood and Ashmount, Cork City	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	1,541,475
St Michael's Mews	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	472,187
Ryecroft	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	273,340
Gurranabraher Avenue and The Maples, Castlejane	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	388,753
Hibernian Buildings and South Terrace, Cork City	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	453,493
Bru Na Grudan and The Orchard	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	618,306
College View	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	172,327
The Close, Ard Patrick	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	532,971
Oakwood Square, Rope Walk, Blackrock, Cork	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	231,741
Bridholm	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	367,818
Eight Housing Association units	HFA	2021	25 years	1.75%	1,092,124
Castleview Shopping Centre	HFA	2021	30 years	2.50%	289,457
Esker Manor, Talbot Gate, Maple	HFA	2022	25 years	1.75%	3,709,261
Glenlara, Mount Kenneth Place	HFA	2022	25 years	1.75%	628,728
Abbey Court, Nenagh, Tipperary	HFA	2022	30 years	2.25%	203,661
Glanmire Village, Cork	HFA	2022	25 years	2.25%	462,425
Old Dublin Road, Rhebogogue, Limerick	HFA	2022	30 years	2.50%	90,392
Grand Parade, Cork	HFA	2022	30 years	2.50%	2,262,483
Old Court, Bandon, Cork City	HFA	2022	30 years	2.50%	573,061
Lower Glanmire Road, Cork City	HFA	2022	25 years	2.25%	3,123,422
Chapel Court, Cathedral	HFA	2022	25 years	2.25%	325,275
Richmond Avenue, Dublin 3	HFA	2023	30 years	3.15%	1,091,185
Ashbrook, Glanmire, Co. Cork	HFA	2023	30 years	3.75%	3,749,107
Kyle Street, Cork City	HFA	2023	30 years	3.75%	1,123,200
Bow Lane West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8	HFA	2023	30 years	3.75%	428,699
Riverside, Killarney Road, Castleisland, Co. Kerry	HFA	2023	30 years	3.75%	5,346,488
Three Limerick properties: Radharc na Feile, Castleview Estate, Kilmurphy	HFA	2023	30 years	3.75%	417,363
Elmville, Harold's Cross, Dublin 6	HFA	2023	30 years	3.75%	2,923,000
Glanmire Village	HFA	2023	30 years	3.75%	519,720
					66,870,680

22 Total creditors falling due after more than one financial year

	Focus Ireland Group		Focus Ireland Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Falling due between 1 and 5 financial years	16,019,512	16,929,404	–	–
Falling due after 5 financial years	187,307,272	146,372,650	–	–
	203,326,784	163,302,054	–	–

23 Restricted income funds

	Focus Ireland Group		Focus Ireland Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Opening balance accumulated funds	9,240,677	7,899,724	2,026,103	2,026,103
Net income	9,052,207	1,340,953	–	–
Transfer to designated funds	–	–	–	–
	18,292,884	9,240,677	2,026,103	2,026,103

24 Unrestricted funds

	Focus Ireland Group		Focus Ireland Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Opening balance accumulated funds	20,071,723	17,982,718	10,541,213	9,534,168
Net (expenditure)/income	(1,132,713)	2,068,936	(284,628)	996,428
Transfer of reserves	–	–	–	–
Amortisation of capital grants	10,617	20,069	10,617	10,617
	18,949,627	20,071,723	10,267,202	10,541,213

25 Capital grants and donations

	Focus Ireland Group		Focus Ireland Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Capital grants and donations				
Balance at beginning of financial year	3,737,882	3,737,882	607,402	607,402
Amounts received during the financial year	–	–	–	–
Balance at end of financial year	3,737,882	3,737,882	607,402	607,402
Amortisation				
Balance at beginning of financial year	(516,508)	(496,439)	(222,799)	(212,182)
Released during financial year	(10,617)	(20,069)	(10,617)	(10,617)
Balance at end of financial year	(527,125)	(516,508)	(233,416)	(222,799)
Net capital grants and donations	3,210,757	3,221,374	373,986	384,603

26 Unrestricted capital reserves

	Focus Ireland Group		Focus Ireland Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Balance at beginning and end of year	2,590,265	2,590,265	–	–

In 2010, the CAS loan for Stanhope Green was transferred from CAS loans to Unrestricted Capital Reserves as the term of the loan was completed.

27 Reconciliation of net income before taxation to net cash flows generated/ (used in) from charitable activities

	2023	2022
	€	€
Focus Ireland Group		
Net income before taxation	7,919,494	3,409,889
Depreciation	1,535,261	1,229,917
CAS mortgages released during the year	–	(1,077,956)
Property donated	–	(330,000)
Interest paid	1,324,124	1,060,071
Profit on disposal	–	–
Increase in debtors	(1,520,961)	(283,173)
(Increase)/(Decrease) in creditors (excluding bank loan)	1,062,024	(306,172)
Net cash flows generated from charitable activities	10,319,942	3,702,586
Focus Ireland Company		
Net (deficit)/income before taxation	(284,628)	996,428
Depreciation	62,995	80,407
Property donated	–	(330,000)
Profit on disposal	–	–
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors	(1,340,218)	37,894
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	112,578	(356,749)
Net cash flows generated (used in)/from operating activities	(1,449,273)	427,980

28 Capital and leasing commitments and contingent assets and liabilities

(a) Capital commitments

There are no capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

(b) Leasing commitments

At the balance sheet date, the company had total future minimum lease commitments under non-recoverable operating leases in respect of offices, housing land and buildings as set out below:

	2023 €	2022 €
Less than 1 year	1,204,956	547,215
Between 1 and 5 years	3,932,434	2,554,530
Over 5 years	7,322,546	9,770,804
	12,459,936	12,872,549

(c) Contingent liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities at 31 December 2023 (2022: €Nil).

(d) Contingent asset

There were no contingent assets at 31 December 2023 (2022: €Nil)

29 Related party transactions

During 2023, Focus Ireland CLG had related party transactions with Focus Housing Association CLG. At 31 December 2023, Focus Housing Association CLG owed Focus Ireland CLG €3,183,656 (2022: €2,446,170). Focus Housing Association CLG is a wholly owned subsidiary of Focus Ireland. The transactions between the companies during the year related to working capital movements. Related party transactions were eliminated on consolidation.

30 Financial instruments

Focus Ireland Group		2023	2022
	Notes	€	€
Financial assets			
Measured at undiscounted amount receivable			
› Other debtors	17	4,059,522	2,139,805
› Rental debtors	17	644,520	192,887
Financial liabilities			
Measured at undiscounted amount payable			
› Trade creditors	18	2,160,921	386,545
› Other creditors	18	910,810	515,093
› Provisions	18	–	–
Measured at amortised cost			
› Bank loans	21	66,870,680	51,151,756
› CAS loans	19	115,733,276	98,079,832
› CALF loans	20	26,451,495	17,491,849
Focus Ireland Company			
	Notes	2023	2022
		€	€
Financial assets			
Measured at undiscounted amount receivable			
› Other debtors	17	959,241	520,110
Financial liabilities			
Measured at undiscounted amount payable			
› Trade creditors	18	571,140	125,610
› Other creditors	18	267,450	124,547

31 Post-balance sheet events

There are no material post-balance sheet events that would require disclosure in these financial statements.

32 Approval of financial statements

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 28 June 2024.

Appendix to the Financial Statements

Analysis of income and expenditure for the Department of Children and Youth Affairs/ City of Dublin Youth Services for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
Income		
Grant	450,469	433,143
Expenditure		
Salaries and pension (incl. ER PRSI)	350,901	382,965
Programme and activity	32,861	6,997
Light, heat and other costs	18,000	8,000
Insurance	9,110	7,791
Cleaning	9,500	5,000
Management costs	9,000	9,000
Other administration costs	–	5,347
Expenditure total	429,372	425,100
Surplus	21,097	8,043

Analysis of income and expenditure for CDET/B/SOLAS/Department of Education and Skills for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
Income		
Grant	13,950	13,950
Expenditure		
Salaries	12,218	12,301
ER PRSI	1,350	1,359
Administration	382	290
Result	–	–

Analysis of income and expenditure for DFHERIS/SOLAS/CDET/B/ Reach fund for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
Income		
Grant	2,600	6,364
Expenditure		
Programme Activities	2,600	6,364
Result	–	–

Appendix to Financial Statements

Supplementary income and expenditure analysis for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
Income		
Fundraising	21,994,448	14,848,158
Grants	18,647,879	15,833,733
Other	11,010,917	10,221,446
Total income	51,653,244	40,903,337
Expenditure		
Administration		
Equipment hire	187,623	177,612
Depreciation	1,535,261	1,189,789
Insurance	672,273	385,896
Interest and charges	1,973,716	1,473,098
Phones	254,631	202,242
Printing and stationery	123,256	144,317
Professional fees	1,900,044	1,886,320
Subscriptions	167,652	45,315
Premises		
Fuel and power	789,535	439,502
PAA, rent and rates	1,917,352	1,958,774
Property maintenance	2,818,300	1,967,240
Security and cleaning	1,951,547	1,600,973
Programme/Activities		
Activity costs	1,312,728	910,812
Programme costs	289,657	219,418
Promotion and research	270,682	643,399
Staff costs (including pension)	25,648,687	22,375,500
Fundraising costs (excluding salaries)	1,920,806	1,873,241
Total expenses	43,733,750	37,493,448
Surplus before taxation	7,919,494	3,409,889

Appendix to Financial Statements

Analysis of income and expenditure for Tusla (Child and Family Agency) for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Opening balance	Income received	Expenditure	Closing balance
Section 56 funding – name of project	€	€	€	€
Caretakers	–	1,187,665	1,061,666	125,999
Caretakers Case Management	–	272,062	272,062	–
CISP	–	203,389	192,599	10,790
Dalkey and Templeogue	–	891,539	880,872	10,667
Family HAT	–	81,806	81,806	–
Grange Lodge	(31,904)	956,094	952,978	(28,788)
Mediation Service	–	100,000	100,000	–
North Dublin Aftercare	–	491,264	491,264	–
South Dublin Aftercare	–	501,978	501,978	–
Waterford Aftercare	3,676	212,360	216,036	–
Youth Housing Clare	–	41,600	41,600	–
Youth Housing Limerick	–	77,442	77,442	–
Youth Housing Tipperary	–	62,400	62,400	–
South-East Aftercare	–	63,070	63,070	–
Sligo (CAS)	–	8,956	8,956	–
The Haven, Clonmel	–	893,990	773,827	120,163
Other	21,066	71,927	92,993	–
Total	(7,162)	6,117,542	5,871,549	238,831

All the grants were for the purposes of supporting young people who were experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In general, the grant term is for a calendar year.

Appendix to Financial Statements

Analysis of income and expenditure for the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection for the year ended 31 December 2023

Job initiative scheme	2023	2022
	€	€
Income		
Grant	58,255	91,323
Expenditure		
Salaries and allowable expenditure	58,255	76,510
Surplus	–	14,813

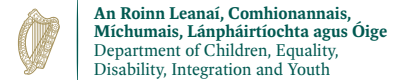
The purpose of this grant is to operate the Job Initiative scheme as granted by the DEASP (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection), which includes paying salaries and other related costs such as audit fees and training. The total number of staff employed under the grant is 3 (2022: 3).

Analysis of income and expenditure for WWETB/SOLAS/Department of Education and Skills/MAED2 fund for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	€	€
Income		
Grant	50,000	68,000
Expenditure		
Programme activities	50,000	68,000
Surplus	–	–

Our partners

State agencies and Government departments



Local authorities and agencies



Donors and corporate partners

A few Focus Ireland services are fully funded by state agencies, most are co-funded by the state and donors. Some – often the most innovative – are fully funded by donations. Overall, half of our work is funded by voluntary donations.



FOCUS Ireland

FOCUS Ireland
OPENING TIMES
MONDAY, TUESDAY,
THURSDAY, FRIDAY
10.30AM - 2.30PM & 4PM - 6PM
WEDNESDAY
12PM - 2.30PM & 4PM - 6PM
SATURDAY, SUNDAY &
BANK HOLIDAYS
10.30AM - 1PM & 4PM - 6PM

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