

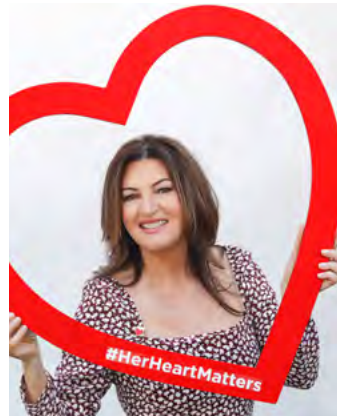
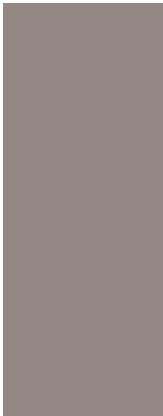


**Irish Heart
Foundation**

The National Stroke & Heart Charity



**2023
ANNUAL
REPORT**



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Message from the Chair

Professor Emer Shelley

It was wonderful to see continuing progress in Irish Heart Foundation activities in 2023, building on the previous year's post-Covid-19 developments.

However, much work remains to be done by the Irish Heart Foundation and the wider health sector. The Department of Health summed up the challenges for population health in its Statement of Strategy 2023-2025: *Given current demographic trends and the consequent projections for healthcare needs, it is clear that the capacity of the health and social care services is not sustainable unless real progress is made in preventing illness and supporting people to live healthier lives, including through implementation of the cross-government Healthy Ireland Framework and supporting the wider ethos of Sláintecare. Both require a higher emphasis on prevention.*

The Department's Statement of Strategy lists the National Clinical Programme for Stroke among those to be developed or expanded. Unfortunately, there is no mention of cardiac services. The Cardiovascular Strategy 2010-2019 has not been evaluated and the Irish Heart Foundation advocacy team continued to push for publication of the Cardiac Services Review which is long overdue.

Despite the lack of a national cardiovascular strategy, there have been welcome developments in services for patients with heart disease or stroke:

- Community hubs have started to cater for those who don't require acute hospital care but whose condition is too complex to be treated in general practice.
- The Chronic Disease Management Programme (CDMP) in general practice provides structured review and care for patients with cardiovascular disease, including heart failure, heart attack, angina, stroke and irregular heartbeat (atrial fibrillation).
- Given our campaign to encourage the public to have their blood pressure measured and the focus of Heart Month on women's health, we welcome the extension of the CDMP in 2023 to those diagnosed with hypertension, gestational diabetes or pre-eclampsia.

Despite these developments, we know from research and much informal feedback, that there is substantial unmet need for information and advice. Improved survival of those affected by coronary artery disease has been associated with an increasing number of people who suffer from heart failure – what might be called a 'silent epidemic'. This requires ongoing self-management which is why our patient support service receives such positive feedback.

Similarly, outcome after stroke has improved substantially in recent years but many patients are challenged by their rehabilitation journey and greatly value ongoing connection to Irish Heart Foundation staff, volunteers and peer groups.

Improved services for those diagnosed with heart disease or stroke are important for those affected, but the greatest health gains will accrue from prevention in the population as a whole. Recognition of this by the Department of Health is welcome but we need to see that translated into policy, strategy and implementation. The prevalence of smoking among teenagers has been static or increasing in recent years. Thankfully, a ban on the sale of vaping products and e-cigarettes to them was implemented at the end of 2023. The advocacy team will continue to push for a ban on flavoured vaping products, designed to be attractive to young people. Publication of an evaluation of the sugar sweetened beverage tax would pave the way for extending measures to make the environment less supportive of unhealthy food and beverages.

Prevention needs to start at an early age, so empowering young people is a key objective of the Foundation's Schools Health Literacy Project with teenagers in disadvantaged areas. This is particularly important when there is so much misinformation about health and nutrition on social media. As a flagship project registered with the World Health Organization, the research will add to the findings of projects in other countries, as well as providing a basis for rolling out the curriculum here at home.

The need for greater emphasis on prevention is very clear from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) finding that one in three of those aged 58 to 64 years reported suffering from three or more chronic conditions such as heart, lung or kidney disease, stroke, diabetes and arthritis. Almost one in five of that age group were taking three or four medications daily! Recognising that environments (economic, physical and social) which do not promote health increase risk of several chronic diseases resulted in the Foundation's leadership in establishing the Health Promotion Alliance Ireland.

Thankfully, the environment which promotes heart health (and health more generally) is also

good for the planet. Avoidance of duplication and collaboration is one of the standards set by the Charities Regulator and the strong engagement of professional and climate-related organisations in the Climate and Health Alliance, also established by the Irish Heart Foundation, will provide a stronger voice on this priority issue of our times.

The above are just some examples of the Irish Heart Foundation's work which is described in this report.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend my thanks to the CEO, Senior Management Team and all our staff and volunteers for their commitment and hard work to prevent heart disease and stroke, and to support all those affected by these conditions.

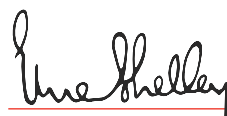
Thank you also to the health professionals who sit on our advisory councils and contribute their expertise so generously despite their many onerous commitments.

Governance of charities and publicly funded organisations has received substantial attention in recent years. Our Board is comprised of Directors with substantial experience from a range of backgrounds. I am most grateful to them for their detailed oversight of the Foundation's activities and finances.

I must extend a special 'thank you' to our former CEO, Tim Collins, recognising that the Foundation benefitted greatly from his dedication and innovative approach to fulfilling the organisation's mission. Tim, we wish you the very best in your retirement!

In thanking the outgoing CEO, it is a pleasure to welcome Emma Balmaine who started in the role in August 2023. Emma brings experience across a range of health and social care organisations, and we look forward to working with her in the years ahead.

And last but by no means least, a very special thank you to all our donors. None of the Foundation's work would be possible without your generosity. Within these pages you will see how your support makes a difference and enables us to reduce the impact of heart disease and stroke in Ireland.



Professor Emer Shelley
Chair, Irish Heart Foundation

→
CEO, Emma Balmaine



Message from the CEO

CEO Emma Balmaine

There are certain unavoidable facts that we know about cardiovascular disease and stroke. We know that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death globally – a fact that comes from the World Health Organization. Closer to home, we know that stroke is the leading cause of acquired adult neurological disability in Ireland.

We know that time is of the essence when it comes to detecting cardiovascular disease, and we know that every single second is important when it comes to recognising the signs of stroke and ensuring a person gets the potentially life-saving treatment that they need.

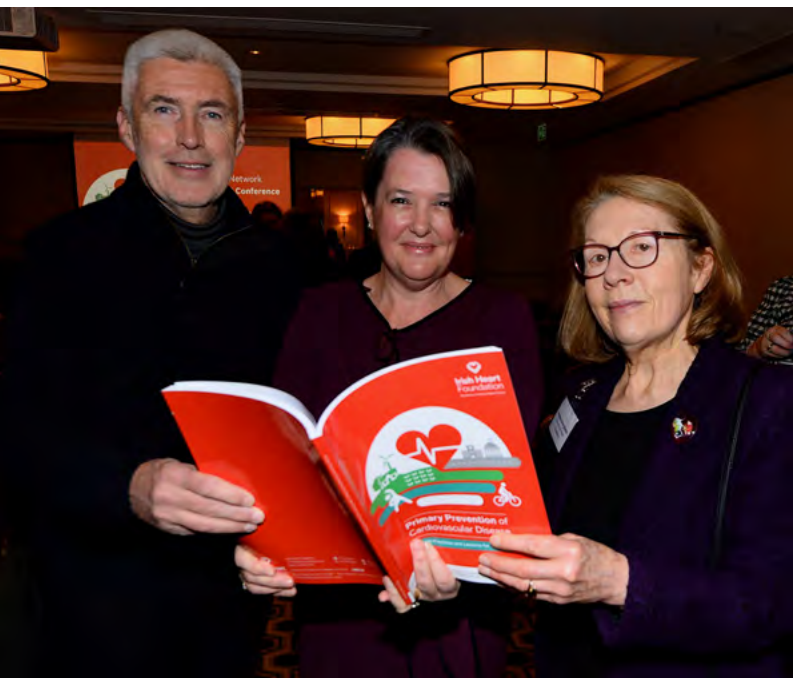
For every single second of the last twelve months, the Irish Heart Foundation has been working tirelessly to raise awareness of cardiovascular disease and stroke, to offer support to thousands of patients and to advocate on their behalf.

By international standards, we are a small charity but let me assure you that we can (and we have) moved mountains to ensure that no more hearts are broken as a result of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

Here is a brief sample of some of the work that's been carried out across our campaigns, advocacy, health promotion, information and training, patient support and fundraising.

We are all too aware of the inequalities that exist in Ireland when it comes to life and healthy life expectancy between those in different socioeconomic groups. We know that there are a multitude of factors that contribute to the poorer health of those living in poverty and lower socioeconomic areas and that there are many barriers that they face when it comes to making healthier choices. Low incomes were exacerbated in 2022 and in 2023, they continue to have a significant impact from a health perspective.

Our High Risk Prevention programme is one way in which we are trying to help those in lower socioeconomic areas. This programme is a collaboration between the Irish Heart Foundation and patients in disadvantaged areas who are at high risk of heart disease and stroke. This programme was designed to work with this cohort and help them to make positive lifestyle changes. The HSE funded the pilot programme and in 2023, the Irish Heart Foundation secured further HSE funding to continue to develop this programme in 2024 and reach more people.



L-R: Tim Collins,
Emma Balmaine and
Prof Emer Shelley

This has also been a year of collaboration for the life-saving resuscitation work carried out by the Foundation. In 2023 our resuscitation team worked with a host of other organisations – all with the same goal of increasing survival rates after someone has experienced cardiac arrest. Over 70,000 people were trained in CPR in 2023, excluding the number of students who took part in our CPR 4 Schools programme.

The Foundation also introduced the new Resuscitation Quality Improvement Programme to a number of hospitals and healthcare professionals. This programme is anchored in science from the American Heart Association and delivers a comprehensive learning system that allows participants to achieve and maintain their skills in high-quality CPR. In 2024, we hope to expand this programme to even more healthcare professionals and organisations.

Our Mobile Health Unit (a free nationwide service that raises health awareness) performed over 8,000 health checks nationwide and empowered people to understand their blood pressure and the risk factors for heart attack and stroke.

Our fundraising team continued to work with our incredible donors, trusts, foundations, companies and government sources to ensure that the Irish Heart Foundation can continue to commit to funding vital programmes in communities all over Ireland. From sky dives to walkathons, campaigns, services and more – we thank each person who has given generously to the organisation.

October 2023 saw the announcement of next year's budget and we can't deny the impact that the deficits in the HSE budget will have on both cardiac and stroke services. This deficit comes in spite of a growing level of demand for patient support.

This is why it's so important for us to support heart and stroke services from prevention through to recovery. We must continue to be there to offer support for people when they are at their most vulnerable and in need of our service.

I'm delighted to be working with the Irish Heart Foundation since August 2023, and as we move into 2024, we are entering the final year of our current strategy. While it is important for us to reflect on everything we have achieved during the lifetime of this strategy, it's also important for us to focus on the future and to make plans and set goals now that will ensure we can continue to fight for and support the people who need us most. Rest assured, the fight will continue.

Before I end this note, I would like to take a moment to recognise and, on behalf of the Irish Heart Foundation, bid a fond farewell to my predecessor Tim Collins, who held the post of CEO for six years. Tim came with a wealth of experience and under his guidance, the Irish Heart Foundation has achieved some truly incredible things. He steered the organisation through the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic. We thank Tim for his stewardship and commitment, and wish him well in his future endeavours.

I would also like to recognise the hard work and wonderful support of our staff, volunteers, our board of directors and our donors – none of this important work would be possible without you.

Emma Balmaine
CEO, Irish Heart Foundation

Who we are and what we do

The Irish Heart Foundation is a community of people who fight to protect the cardiovascular health of everyone in Ireland. We are the national stroke and heart charity.



Our vision

A future where no hearts are broken by preventable heart disease and stroke.

Our mission

To eliminate preventable death and disability from heart disease and stroke, and to support and care for those living with these life-changing conditions. We work to achieve our mission through:



speaking out and caring for people in the community living with heart conditions and stroke, and their families



innovating and leading in health promotion and prevention to change health behaviours and reduce cardiovascular risk



building a nation of lifesavers through **CPR training**



campaigning and advocating for policies that support people to live healthier lives.

Our values



Evidence-based

We base all our programmes on the best available advice and evidence, and always aim for maximum impact and cost effectiveness.



Courageous

We are not afraid to tell it as we see it and be outspoken, especially when public policy or vested interests are threatening or failing to protect people's health. We are relentless in campaigning for those who have been impacted by heart disease and stroke.



Collaboration

We design our programmes in collaboration with the people who need them most, and their families and carers, so they are appropriate, relevant and effective. We believe in partnership and collaboration with other organisations.



Fairness and equality

We believe equal access to heart and stroke services for prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care is a basic human right. We believe tackling health inequality is where we will make the greatest difference to the overall health of the nation.



Empowering

We support and enable people to lead healthier lives.

2023: Our impact in numbers

Over
8,000
health checks

were carried out by the
Mobile Health Unit.

500
people

came forward for a health
check at this year's National
Ploughing Championship.

Over
70,000

people (excluding school
students) were trained in CPR.

56
newly trained

advanced cardiac life
support national instructors.

Almost
3,000
teachers

joined our Primary School
Wellbeing programme,
sharing our free online
resources with over
100,000 children.

Over
5,000
patients

were supported by the
Irish Heart Foundation this year
by phone, online and through
our face-to-face services.

40,000
primary school children

nationwide learned healthy
habits as part of our
'Let's Get Active' challenge.

106
volunteers

logged a massive 5,967
hours of volunteering
work across our patient
support services.

Our
Nurse Support Line
answered

1,521
calls from the public.

Over
700
hours

of support were delivered
to Heart Connect Service
participants in Dublin,
Waterford, Tipperary and
Monaghan.

Creating a
generation of
lifesavers...



Our **CPR 4 Schools** programme was
delivered to nearly **90,000** students.

2,622 teachers were trained to
deliver the programme.

87% of post primary schools are now
in the CPR 4 Schools programme.

“It was great to have someone to talk to that understood the issues.”



What our service users say

“First class service.”

“[The Nurse Support Line] is a great service provided by an excellent, caring, professional and understanding team, quick to respond to any questions and problems.”



“I would not have done as well without the Irish Heart Foundation.”

“I have been extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to volunteer with the Irish Heart Foundation and, in particular, its stroke survivor groups. It’s an unbelievably satisfying feeling to know that you are making a difference to the lives of others, no matter how small that might be. I have met and come to know so many wonderful and interesting people, and have learned so much about life and dealing with adversity. Sometimes I think I have received more from them than I have given.”

“I got so much support speaking with the Irish Heart Foundation. They pointed me in the right direction to access the services I needed... I am so thankful for this service.”



“The Irish Heart Foundation is such a treasure trove - staff are always so receptive of a call and the professional, informative knowledge by the Nurse [Support] Line is always so reassuring.”

“Now I know there is support.”

“Very kind and informative.”

"I am delighted with [the] one-to-one chats, feel I got lots [of] support and knowledge."



"It felt good to talk about my diagnosis, I felt it was a good platform. I have opened up regarding my diagnosis and this positively impacted my wife too."

"I really loved the service. It was very reassuring to get the phone calls."

"An absolutely fantastic charity! All of the team in the lead up to the marathon! Amazing. Would love to run again for you guys soon."



"Thank you so much! Your email cheered me up and put a big smile on my face. I'm really delighted to have had an opportunity to support [the Irish Heart Foundation], you do amazing work and it was a privilege to play a small part in the effort."



"Wellbeing is topical in schools now and there's a lot of focus on it. What you're doing is the missing piece of 'What does wellbeing look like in practice?'. All your resources, all of the work you've done to tie it all together, it's so valuable and usable for teachers. Teachers really value these resources."



"I would have benefitted so much from the Patient Champions Programme if it was developed when I had my stroke. I was 22 and if I could listen to other people's experiences, it would have given me so much encouragement..."

"If not for the Irish Heart Foundation doing free health checks that day, I might not be here..."

"They [the Irish Heart Foundation] are vital in letting young people communicate and speak. The classes are fun but also provide useful skills in life such as being able to talk about problems."

Corporate governance

The Irish Heart Foundation is a registered charity supported by donations from the public and businesses in Ireland.

The goodwill and generosity of our supporters funds the lifesaving and life-changing work that we carry out in prevention, research, CPR training, advocacy and patient support.

Every donation we receive helps people in Ireland to live longer, heart-healthy lives.

Our commitments



Our donors and supporters are the backbone of our organisation. We are fully committed to them and subscribe to a donor charter as set out by the Charities Regulator.



We are committed to honesty and transparency about our finances and charitable spend, so our donors and supporters can see the impact of their support.



We adhere to the Charities Governance Code and comply with the Triple Lock Standard set by the Charities Institute of Ireland.



We are governed by a voluntary Board of 12 members from the medical and business community. Our Board members do not receive any remuneration.

The Irish Heart Foundation is:

- a registered charity with the Charities Regulatory (20008376)
- a registered charity with the Revenue Commissioners to receive tax exemption (CHY5507)
- registered with the Companies Registration office (23434).

Directors' Report

Strategic goals 2021-2024

Our strategy focuses on several pillars. Under each pillar we are committed to the following goals:



We defend

We defend hearts in Ireland from the commercial, environmental and societal threats to heart health such as unacceptable gaps in patient care, tobacco, air pollution and the marketing of unhealthy foods.



We empower

We empower patients and the public to stand up for their hearts by working with them to provide the tools and information they need to lead healthy lifestyles and make informed decisions about their health.



We care

We care for every heart impacted by heart disease and stroke through online, telephone and community-based support programmes.



We fund

We fund our work through a mix of support from the general public, the corporate sector and government.



We innovate

We continue to transform our services through increased use of digital platforms and approaches so that we optimise the quality, reach and cost-effectiveness of our services.

We defend



Our advocacy work in 2023

Under the Irish Heart Foundation's Strategic Plan (2021-2024), we aim to defend Irish hearts from commercial, environmental and societal threats to their heart health. From junk food marketing to air pollution and unacceptable gaps in patient care, over the lifetime of our strategy our focus is on:

- **Childhood obesity:** A Public Health Obesity Act that puts children's health first over the interests of junk food companies.
- **Heart disease and stroke:** A new **National Cardiovascular Health Policy** that prioritises prevention, tackles health inequality and recognises the importance of supporting people living with heart conditions.
- The implementation of the **National Stroke Strategy** and a greater focus on supporting stroke survivors in the community.
- **Tobacco control:** A renewed commitment to achieve a tobacco-free Ireland through an action plan designed to reduce smoking rates to 5% of the population and strong measures to protect children and young people from nicotine addiction through e-cigarettes.
- **Air pollution and climate change:** A Clean Air Act that tackles air pollution (a leading cause of heart disease and stroke) and adopts the World Health Organization's air quality standards.
- **Physical activity and healthy weight environments:** Greater government action to encourage physical activity, including the introduction of cycle lanes and the prioritisation of walkers in urban environments.



←
 L-R: John Lahart
 TD, Dr Angie Brown,
 Pauline O'Shea,
 Prof Emer Joyce and
 Chris Macey

Budget 2024

Fiscal measures in Budget 2024 were positive for cardiovascular health. The Irish Heart Foundation secured a tax on e-cigarettes to be applied in 2025 to help discourage young people from vaping. Although the 75c additional tax on a packet of cigarettes was less than we sought, it was among the highest increases ever levied in a single Budget. This additional tax represents another deterrent that will discourage young people from starting to smoke.

Meanwhile, funding for the VAT Compensation Scheme (which the Irish Heart Foundation was centrally involved in securing) doubled to €10 million, partially meeting our request. This will enable charities to recover a significant portion of VAT incurred on the goods and services we purchase in our mission to eliminate preventable death and disability from heart disease and stroke, and to support and care for those living with these life-changing conditions.

2023: What we achieved

2023 began positively with the removal of VAT on defibrillators passing into law on New Year's Day. This ended a decade-long campaign by the Irish Heart Foundation to change EU VAT laws, which essentially amounted to a tax on saving lives.

What followed was a year of significant progress in many areas of our advocacy agenda, particularly on tobacco and e-cigarettes. While we had successes, there was continuing frustration in other areas – most notably the continuing absence of an overarching national cardiovascular policy.

→
 Patients living
 with heart failure
 at Dáil Éireann



Heart disease and stroke

Heart failure

Our efforts to increase the profile of heart failure kicked off with a successful lobby day in Leinster House supported by 35 TDs and senators. In particular, we highlighted how service deficits are contributing to a 90-day hospital readmission of heart failure patients at a rate of around 30%. We are now being supported on issues such as the development of a comprehensive national heart failure registry to help cut excessive mortality and readmission rates for patients, and greater access to clinical psychology which is currently available in just four hospitals.

Covid-19 research

Research we commissioned over concern that younger heart failure patients were under-prioritised for Covid-19 vaccines indicated they should have been in the very high-risk category. The study, which was conducted by the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland, also found that 34% of heart failure patients hospitalised with Covid-19 sadly passed away. The downgrading of up to 43,000 younger heart failure patients is important given the risks posed by ongoing waves of Covid-19 infection and the Irish Heart Foundation will attempt to rectify the situation in 2024.

Cardiovascular policy

Despite being the world's biggest killer disease, Ireland has had no national cardiovascular health policy since 2019. This means there has been no long-term service planning and, therefore, reduced prospects of funding regardless of patient need.

Meanwhile, the long-completed National Cardiac Services Review has remained unpublished. This review recommends an updated configuration for cardiac services which will remain in a state of limbo until it is published and implemented.

During a meeting with the Irish Heart Foundation in December 2023, the Oireachtas Health Committee resolved to seek both the immediate publication of the review and a timebound commitment to the publication of a new overarching policy.

National Stroke Strategy

Our concerted lobbying campaign against defunding the National Stroke Strategy in 2024 due to the health budget shortfall gained traction across the political divide. Health spokespeople from all parties questioned Minister Donnelly and HSE leaders on the impact of the decision. The issue was also raised at Leaders' Questions by Sinn Fein leader Mary Lou McDonald.

The result was a commitment to provide National Stroke Strategy funding of €7.3 million in 2024. However, doubt has remained over whether any new stroke posts (which are key to the effective operation of the stroke unit network) will be filled. There was also no indication of funding for our own Irish Heart Foundation stroke support services.

Meanwhile, the Oireachtas Disability Matters Committee supported our call for the right to a discharge plan and regular follow-up for stroke survivors, more help for them to return to work and better community support.

Tobacco and e-cigarettes

Along with our ASH Council, we embarked on a major push to tackle the explosion of youth vaping and the first increase in teenage smoking rates for a generation. This included meetings with Health Minister Stephen Donnelly and Minister of State Ossian Smyth with whom we collaborated on plans to ban disposable vapes.

This year we gained a high media profile in underlining the need for greater policy interventions on the rates of young people vaping and smoking. This culminated in the Department of Health announcing a public consultation covering our main recommendations, including banning vape flavours, the introduction of plain packaging of vape products and further advertising restrictions. Crucially, tobacco control measures are also included in the consultation, such as increasing the legal age of the sale of tobacco to 21.

We also secured agreement by Dublin City Council to ban smoking in outdoor sections of pubs and restaurants in publicly owned spaces. This will apply to more than 400 premises in Dublin city.



Students from Presentation Secondary School, Warrenmount, Elena (13), Janica (14) and Ella (13) joined Tim Collins, former CEO of the Irish Heart Foundation, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications Eamon Ryan TD and Head of British Heart Foundation NI Fearghal McKinney at the launch of the 'Air Pollution and Mortality on the Island of Ireland' report

Childhood obesity

Following our 'Stop Targeting Kids' campaign (which seeks to ban junk food advertising online), the Coimisiún na Meán accepted that the link between junk food marketing and obesity has been established. Consequently, its safety codes for junk food marketing will focus only on the appropriate levels of protection required. Our Irish Heart Foundation Youth Advisory Panel member Ishita Gupta was appointed to the commission's youth advisory group.

A new strand is being introduced in the Junior Cycle SPHE course called 'Making Healthy Choices'. This incorporates our 'Stop Targeting Kids' campaign video to show how children are targeted by marketers of unhealthy products.

We engaged in protracted lobbying on extending the sugar sweetened drinks tax and gained support from the Oireachtas Budgetary Oversight Committee to examine broader sugar and ultra-processed food taxes. We are also undertaking research with the HSE on how healthy food subsidies could be delivered alongside new taxes.

Climate and Health

Our Climate and Health Alliance (CHA) continued to expand. Among many new members was the HSE, with which we developed a joint declaration on climate and health.

We collaborated with the British Heart Foundation on research showing that almost 1,000 lives a year could be saved on the island of Ireland by meeting World Health Organization (WHO) air pollution guidelines. The government also launched its Clean Air Strategy that ties Ireland to WHO levels, although in a longer timeframe than we sought.





←
L-R: Dr Sean Owens,
ICGP, Orna O'Brien
and Tim Collins

The CHA also expanded its activities to include sustainable diets with its position paper ‘Fixing Food Together’ in May 2023. This report brings an often-missing public health perspective to the climate and food systems dialogue.

The report:

- demonstrates the need for a food system transition
- identifies Ireland’s challenge areas
- makes recommendations for future Irish dietary guidelines
- makes policy-level recommendations.

The paper received significant attention from policymakers, including a presentation to the Climate Change Advisory Council, an independent advisory body that provides evidence-based advice and recommendations on policy to support Ireland’s transition to a biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable, climate neutral and resilient society.

The CHA continues to advocate for greater political movement to implement the recommendations of ‘Fixing Food Together’ and create a healthier, fairer food environment for all.

→
Heart and stroke patients
graduate from the Patient
Champions programme

International activities

Dublin was chosen to host the second European Life After Stroke Forum in 2024 in recognition of the Irish Heart Foundation’s ground-breaking development of high-grade stroke support services. We were also part of the European Heart Network delegation that lobbied Members of European Parliament in Strasbourg on making cardiovascular disease a European Union (EU) priority. And we gained prominent inclusion for stroke in the EU’s non-communicable diseases initiative, ‘Healthier Together’.

Patient advocacy

A major focus in 2023 was developing heart and stroke patients’ capacity to advocate for better services through our Patient Champions programme. Having large numbers of articulate and motivated advocates with lived experience of service deficits will greatly increase the influence we can exert on national policy during 2024.



“No patients should be told they can’t do something – they shouldn’t give up.”

Meaghan O’Brien is using her voice to advocate for other stroke patients



Meaghan O’Brien from Boston was just 22 years old when she started to feel unwell during a gym class in 2013. Thinking she was unfit, Meaghan packed up her things to leave but walking through the corridor of the gym, she collapsed. Staff ran to her aid and called the emergency services.

Meaghan recalls feeling a sensation on her face and having no power on the left side of her body. She immediately recognised the F.A.S.T. signs and told the paramedics she thought she was having a stroke, but it was suggested that due to her age and high fitness level, this wasn’t happening because Meaghan was “young and healthy looking”.

In hospital, Meaghan went through a range of tests until her medical team told her about thrombolysis – a blood clot-busting treatment used for stroke.

“I felt like I was dying, so I was happy to take it. Thankfully the medicine returned the blood flow and oxygen to my brain to keep me alive, but too much damage was already done, and the left side of my body was paralysed.”

Meghan was sedated and brought by medical helicopter to another hospital where she woke up in ICU the following day: “I was in ICU and surrounded by doctors and machines – it was so scary... I couldn’t do anything – I couldn’t sit up, go to the toilet, move my head...”

Her family were told the devastating news that she would never walk again.

Once she left ICU, Meghan began the process of relearning how to walk and do things with one hand, but when accessing supports in the hospital, she felt that they had a “one size fits all” approach, which didn’t suit her as there was a large age difference between Meghan and the other patients. With determination and the support of her family, Meaghan regained the ability to walk, defying the earlier predictions of her medical team.

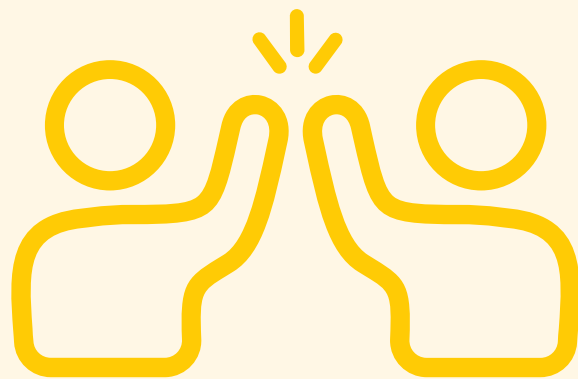
“No patients should be told they can’t do something,” she says, “they shouldn’t give up.”

Now, ten years later, Meghan lives in Dingle and is independent, although she still has some difficulties with her left leg and hand which she continues to work on. She’s also a member of the Irish Heart Foundation’s Patient Champions Programme where she connects with other patients, shares her own story and helps others to be seen around the table when it comes to treatment and recovery:

“I would have benefitted so much from the Patient Champions Programme if it was developed when I had my stroke. I was 22 and if I could listen to other people’s experiences, it would have given me so much encouragement. I’m here for those stroke patients now, to support them.”

After progressing through the Patient Champions Programme, Meghan has received training in lobbying at political level, speaking with the media, how to advocate, social media and others. She says: “After sharing my story so many times, it’s so beneficial to me to get official training on how to use my experience to make a difference. When in America, I was often ‘wheeled out’ to tell my story, but now I feel I have the training to give impact. So much change needs to happen.”

We empower



Health promotion and prevention work in 2023

Under the Irish Heart Foundation's Strategic Plan (2021-2024), we aim to empower patients and the public by working with them to provide the tools and information they need to lead heart-healthy lifestyles and make informed decisions about their health. Over the lifetime of our strategy our focus is on:

- **Evidence-based interventions:** The development, validation, funding and scaling up of high-impact interventions in the community to support people at high risk of heart disease or stroke.
- **Health promotion programmes** in primary and post-primary schools that focus on health literacy and place all children on the path to healthier and longer lives.
- **Awareness of health risks:** A 50% reduction in undiagnosed high blood pressure through national awareness campaigns.
- **A 25% increase in the out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rate** through greater awareness and training in CPR and automated external defibrillator (AED) use.

2023: What we achieved

High Risk Prevention programme

The Irish Heart Foundation's High Risk Prevention programme works with patients from disadvantaged areas who are at high risk of heart disease and stroke. This programme has been designed to help patients make positive changes to their lifestyle and to improve their health and wellbeing. The pilot of this programme was funded as part of the HSE's chronic disease management programme and was carried out across six general practices in underserved communities in Leinster.

In 2023, the Irish Heart Foundation submitted a full report on the pilot programme (carried out by the UCD School of Medicine) to the HSE. This report showed significant improvements in several clinical outcomes such as BMI, weight, waist circumference and further improvements in health behaviours such as diet, physical activity and cigarette smoking across a cohort of patients at high risk of cardiovascular disease.

Despite the obvious challenges presented to patients and practices by the Covid-19 pandemic, the High Risk Prevention programme was demonstrated to be feasible and acceptable to patient and care provider stakeholders and possessed high levels of likely effectiveness with

regards to enhancing patients' clinical outcomes and health behaviours.

The Irish Heart Foundation has now secured HSE funding to further develop the programme in 2024. Our aim is to expand the project across four areas in Ireland in association with Sláintecare Healthy Community catchment areas. The Irish Heart Foundation will place a health promotion professional in each community working closely with HSE community health network teams and general practices to cultivate referrals and improve the health behaviours of adults identified at high risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

As part of this HSE funding (and in collaboration with the UCD School of Medicine and the Coombe Hospital) we will also work to identify mothers who experienced high blood pressure in pregnancy and will run education with this cohort around their increased risk of disease. This element of the programme will aim to improve the health outcome of mothers while also strengthening the knowledge base and awareness of the long-term effects of high blood pressure in pregnancy within primary care.



←
L-R: Peter Mulcahy and his dog Diego, Hannah Maher and Martin Ryan attending the National Ploughing Championships.

Health checks with the Mobile Health Unit

The Mobile Health Unit is a free nationwide service that raises health awareness about high blood pressure and the risk factors associated with heart attack and stroke. The service provides heart health checks to adults aged 18 years and older with a particular focus on underserved individuals. Each health check includes a blood pressure and pulse check carried out by a qualified nurse and one-to-one lifestyle advice.

The Mobile Health Unit is a versatile and unique service that complements traditional health services. Given its mobile nature, it can travel directly to different locations nationwide and engage with a variety of community groups.

Throughout 2023, the Mobile Health Unit has performed over 8,000 health checks and has contributed to identifying members of the community with silent symptoms of cardiovascular disease. The nurses are trained to recognise high risk symptoms and refer individuals to a general practitioner.

The 'Farmers Have Hearts' programme is a comprehensive cardiovascular disease risk assessment that's carried out by the Mobile Health Unit. Delivered with the support of the HSE, this

assessment offers lifestyle advice that's directly tailored to those in the farming community. This programme was initially developed to address the health inequalities among farmers in Ireland. A major study of farmers' health (published as part of the 'Farmers Have Hearts' detailed impact report) found that farmers are at increased risk of cardiovascular disease compared to the general population. It showed the majority of the study group had four or more risk factors of cardiovascular disease.

Every year, the Irish Heart Foundation's Mobile Health Unit carries out approximately 1,000 health checks under the 'Farmers Have Hearts' programme. A successful attendance at the 2023 Ploughing Championships saw nearly 500 people come forward for a health check in this community.



↑
The Irish Heart Foundation's Mobile Health Unit set up in the community



“If not for the Irish Heart Foundation doing free health checks that day, I might not be here...”

Maura Canning shares her experience of a health check with the Mobile Health Unit

Maura Canning, a 52-year-old farmer from Galway has been successfully managing high blood pressure for the past ten years.

In 2012, Maura was helping out at the Women in Agriculture Conference in Killarney when she decided to visit the Irish Heart Foundation’s Mobile Health Unit for a free health check. The Mobile Health Unit nurses took Maura’s blood pressure and told her it was sky high. She was advised to visit her GP who told her to buy a blood pressure monitor so she could regularly check her blood pressure at home.

Within a few days of her initial health check with the Irish Heart Foundation, Maura was admitted to hospital.

“By the time I got to the emergency department [my blood pressure] was 226 over 118,” she recalls, saying that the doctors were amazed she hadn’t had a stroke or heart attack.

Prior to her health check with the Mobile Health Unit, Maura had no idea that her blood pressure was dangerously high. She had no symptoms and, in her own words, had been “go, go, go” juggling her family life, work on the farm and her positions on various committees in the farming community. Maura says she was “trying to be everything for everybody.”

“I was the picture of health and didn’t know I was a walking timebomb,” she says.

Since being diagnosed, Maura has been managing her high blood pressure with medication and lifestyle changes. Coming so close to having a stroke or a heart attack was a wake-up call and inspired Maura to make changes to her lifestyle and prioritise her health.

While these changes are “easier said than done” for busy farmers like Maura, she reminds others that “if you don’t look after yourself, nobody else is going to look after you.”

Now Maura takes time out going to bootcamp classes, meditation classes and country dancing in her local community. She also makes time to get her nails done once a month and meets friends for coffee – things she never would have made time for ten years ago.

“I take time to do stuff for myself whereas I didn’t for years and years,” says Maura. “The expectation is you’re supposed to be the go-to for everything, but that doesn’t work. Women need to look after their own health.”

In 2023, Maura shared her story at the Irish Heart Foundation’s ‘Her Heart Matters: What Every Woman Needs to Know’ webinar. With one in four women dying from heart disease and stroke, the Her Heart Matters campaign is supported by the HSE and seeks to raise awareness of heart disease and stroke in women and encourage them to make healthy lifestyle changes.

Primary Prevention Paper and Health Promotion Alliance Ireland launch

On November 14th 2023, the Irish Heart Foundation published a major new position paper: 'Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease: Best Practices and Lessons for Ireland'. This paper highlights the extent to which 'upstream' policy-based cardiovascular disease prevention strategies are more effective, equitable and cost efficient than 'downstream' preventative activities targeting individuals.



↑
Members of the Health Promotion Alliance Ireland



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L-R: Prof Ivan Perry and Janis Morrissey

The aim of the paper was to outline the recommendations made by Professor Ivan Perry of University College Cork to implement an effective cardiovascular disease prevention strategy in Ireland, drawing on international experience and best practice. We hope this paper will influence government policy in the coming decade.

Ireland is facing increasing challenges due to the rising burden of avoidable non-communicable diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory ailments. Many conditions share risk factors and interact to increase risk. We know only a stronger focus on primary prevention of these diseases will be enough to enable policymakers to tackle ongoing hospital overcrowding problems, pressures on community services and the impact of changing demographics.

To address this issue, the Irish Heart Foundation established a new all-island, advocacy-driven coalition. The Health Promotion Alliance Ireland comprises organisations committed to advocating for major policy change to promote the primary prevention of chronic disease.

Resuscitation

2023 was a year of collaboration for the Irish Heart Foundation's resuscitation team. We worked together with other organisations, all with the common goal of increasing survival from cardiac arrest. By attending a CPR training course, you are ten times more likely to respond in an emergency than someone who has never attended a course. By performing high quality CPR and using an automated external defibrillator (AED) early, the person's chances of survival increase. The CPR courses administered by the Irish Heart Foundation range from simple awareness courses taught in our communities, to complex advanced cardiac life support which is taught in hospitals.

Throughout 2023 we encouraged people to unlock their AEDs, check them and make them accessible 24/7.

We continued to support our 221 training sites and 2,000 CPR instructors. All training products are distributed digitally via the Laerdal learning platform from our administration team, who also give technical support to our clients on a daily basis. In 2023 over 70,000 people were trained in CPR.

We also continued our work with the HSE's National Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Strategy Governance Implementation group. This multi-agency group is tasked with implementing the recommendations of the National Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest strategy. Work on the establishment of a national AED registry continues, although this is progressing slowly.

Earlier this year, a focus group was held to investigate the need for a support group or survivor network for people who had survived an out of hospital cardiac arrest. The Irish Heart Foundation and National Ambulance Service are working together to improve these services.

The global initiative 'Restart a Heart' took place in October. A sub-group of the National Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Strategy group, led by the Irish Heart Foundation, encouraged members of the public to perform CPR and use an AED. All agencies involved (National Ambulance Service, Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council, Community First Responder Ireland, Voluntaries and Royal National Lifeboat Institution) collaborated and ran a very successful national campaign called 'Check, Call, Compress, Shock'.

Advanced Cardiac Life Support

In 2023, the Irish Heart Foundation ran two advanced cardiac life support national instructor courses. As a result of these two courses, we now have 56 newly trained instructors nationally.

This type of training is designed for healthcare professionals who either direct or participate in the management of cardiovascular emergencies and for emergency response personnel. It teaches effective communication skills on a resuscitation team, early treatment of cardiac arrest and prevention by early recognition of an unstable patient. With this course, participants practice their skills and reach a level of mastery which can improve outcomes from cardiac arrest.

We also ran a national advanced cardiac life support experienced provider instructor course in Dublin's Mater Hospital in May where we trained 16 candidates.

Advanced cardiac life support experienced provider instructor is a course targeted at those who are proficient in performing basic life support and advanced cardiac life support skills, reading and interpreting ECGs, understanding pharmacology, and those who regularly lead or participate in emergency assessment and treatment of pre-arrest, arrest or post-arrest patients. This course is targeted at those working in critical care areas.

The goal for this course is to set up regional experienced provider centres and roll out the course through a network of qualified instructors. Feedback from the course has been very positive.

→
National advanced cardiac life support experienced provider instructor course 2023



An introduction to Resuscitation Quality Improvement

In 2023, the Irish Heart Foundation introduced the exciting new Resuscitation Quality Improvement (RQI) programme to hospitals and healthcare professionals. The ability to consistently administer high-quality CPR is critical to improving outcomes and is the best chance for survival in a cardiac arrest emergency.

Anchored in the American Heart Association's science, driven by the technology of Laerdal Medical, and offered to the Irish healthcare

market through the Irish Heart Foundation, RQI programmes combine short but frequent refresher sessions, directive skills feedback and self-directed education for safe and convenient learning at the point of care.

In 2023, the Irish Heart Foundation presented the RQI programme to 12 healthcare organisations in Ireland. These range from private and public acute hospitals, to the National Ambulance Service, a school of nursing and midwifery and the Irish Association of Resuscitation Officers at their annual conference. We hope that 2024 will see the first implementation of the RQI programme in many of these healthcare organisations.



CPR 4 Schools awards

Each year we recognise our amazing schools and the work they do through two awards: a special recognition award for schools who have trained all their students in CPR, and a CPR heroes award which recognises outstanding efforts and actions of individual teachers and students. This year we presented an incredible 50 awards.

↑
Miss Ireland Dr Ivanna McMahon in CBS James's Street, Dublin delivering a CPR 4 Schools training session

→
L-R Anne Riordan, Munster Rugby Player and Irish Heart Foundation Ambassador Diarmuid Barron and Katherine Scott Irish Heart Foundation at a CPR 4 Schools Recognition event in Hazelwood College, Limerick



CPR 4 Schools

CPR 4 Schools is the Irish Heart Foundation's national programme of CPR training for post-primary schools in Ireland. Our aim is to train as many students as possible in good quality CPR with continued opportunities for practice throughout their school life.

CPR 4 Schools offers an opportunity for all young people to learn and practise CPR and AED use, to recognise the signs of a stroke and to help someone if they are choking. In just one 60-minute class, a group of students can be trained in these lifesaving skills.

The CPR 4 Schools programme spreads beyond the school into the community where we are creating a generation of lifesavers and CPR champions. We already know the training provided is saving the lives of students, parents, teachers and members of the community. Every second matters, which is why we are committed to providing free training to all schools, students and staff.

Teacher testimonials for the CPR 4 Schools programme

"It is the best lesson you can ever learn, especially in the biggest school in Ireland. What's the lesson? To save a life. If you can even save one, then we have done our job."

"Excellent course and such a valuable resource available to schools. This is what students want to learn. Real life skills and something that they can carry anywhere in the world."

"Excellent course, well done. What a great initiative to have all young people in Ireland CPR trained."



←
Students in CBS James's Street, Dublin practicing their CPR 4 Schools skills



Children and Young People (CYP)

We are the leading health non-governmental organisation working in and with primary and post-primary schools in Ireland with a focus on heart health, wellbeing, nutrition, physical activity, and CPR. We develop programmes that focus on health literacy and place all children on the path to healthier, longer lives. All of our programmes are designed with these core values at heart:

- **fairness and equality:** We provide our programmes for free. We work through schools to make sure we can reach all children and we offer our resources online so that no child will miss out.
- **collaboration:** We work with children, teachers, parents and the Department of

Education to make sure we answer their needs in a way that works for them. We have a youth advisory panel that guides our work.

- **evidence-based:** We work with leading experts in health promotion, health literacy and education and translate the latest evidence into easy-to-deliver programmes for teachers that match the school curriculum.
- **empowering:** We give children the tools they need to make the best decisions for their health now and in the future.



Primary schools

Through our Primary School Wellbeing programme, schools are creating active classrooms, inspiring a love of movement and building heart-healthy habits for life.

Nearly 3,000 teachers have joined our Primary School Wellbeing programme, sharing our free online resources with over 100,000 children.

Challenge Pack



Let's Get Active

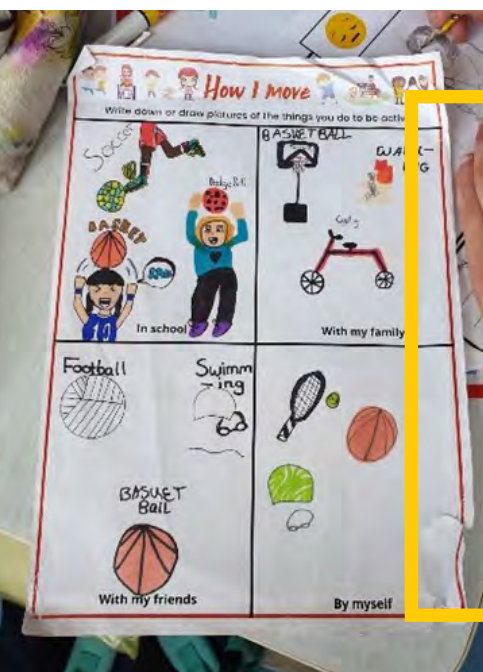
The 'Let's Get Active' challenge focuses on the importance of being active and building heart-healthy habits for life. This fun pack challenges children to be active for at least 60 minutes every day for four weeks. In 2023, 40,000 primary school children nationwide were able to take part in this challenge for free.

Sixty minutes every day is the minimum amount of physical activity that children and young people are recommended to do for health benefits. The 'Let's Get Active' challenge helps children to find ways to move that they enjoy, so that they can reach this goal. Building heart-healthy habits at an early age sets the foundation for life-long health and the 'Let's Get Active'

challenge is a great way to build these habits in school and at home. Being active is not only great for heart health but also improves concentration, mood and overall health.

The challenge is designed in collaboration with children and teachers, and features a booklet which helps participants to keep track of their achievements, learn about keeping their hearts healthy and happy, set goals and stay motivated.

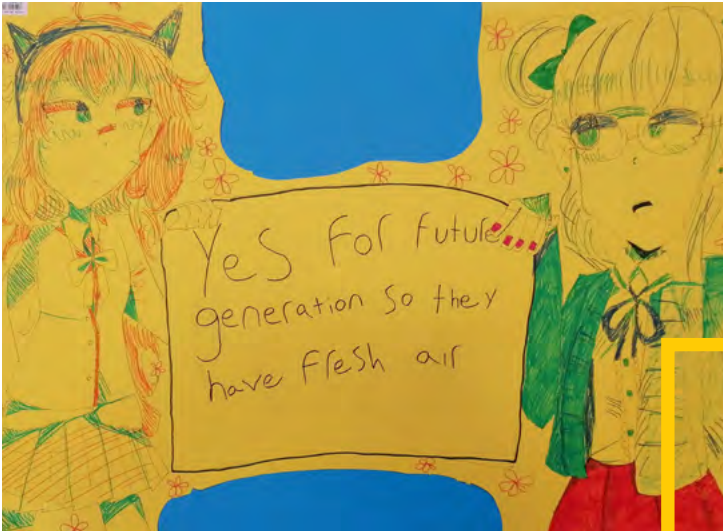
To design the 'Let's Get Active' challenge, we asked children what they wanted. Over 300 children from ten schools shared their ideas with us. It was incredible to bring their vision to life and reach 40,000 children in the process.



Teacher testimonials for the Let's Get Active challenge

"Fantastic resource. The children really enjoyed the challenges. It was a great way to increase physical activity and include movement breaks in the school day."

"What you're doing is the missing piece of what does wellbeing look like in practice in schools. All your resources, all of the work you've done to tie it all together, it's so valuable and usable for teachers."



***“We care about air pollution because it affects people’s health and it will affect future generations,”
– student***

World Health Organization schools health literacy project

Health literacy is a skill that helps people to find, understand and use health information and improving health literacy is a cornerstone of the Irish Heart Foundation’s work.

To support this, we are working with schools to develop a programme to improve young people’s health literacy. This is the only project of its kind in Ireland and focuses on creating a supportive environment for health literacy in schools and targeting health inequalities. Via co-designed projects, young people who take part are building their own health literacy while also designing initiatives for their school community.

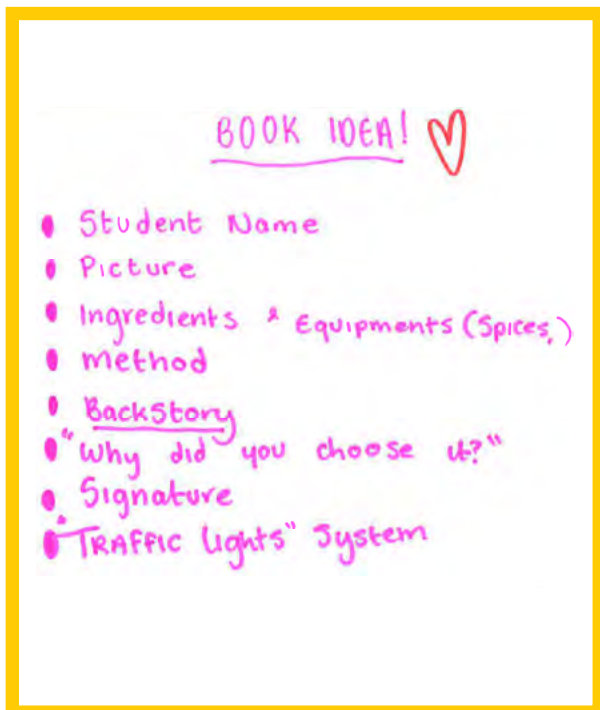
Here is a glimpse of some of the projects co-designed with schools in 2023:

Air pollution active citizen project

Young people developed their health literacy skills through learning about air pollution and how it can impact people’s health and their local community. They gained skills in health communication through creating posters and a video calling on the government to act on air pollution. This was then presented to the Minister for the Environment, Climate, Communications and Transport, Eamon Ryan.



↑
L-R Ella (13), Janica (14) and Elena (13) presenting their class project on air pollution



Food project

Students identified that not knowing how to cook was a barrier to promoting good health. They wanted support in making healthier and more balanced food choices. They felt that school was a good place to learn cooking skills and would give them opportunities to learn skills that they may not otherwise get.

They recognised that food was a social experience and wanted family and friends to get involved. They expressed a desire to learn traditional recipes from family and older members of the community. We are currently working with the students to co-design a recipe book for their community which includes a selection of their family recipes.

We care



Patient support work in 2023

Under the Irish Heart Foundation's Strategic Plan (2021-2024), we aim to care for each and every heart impacted by cardiovascular disease through online, telephone and community-based support programmes. Over the lifetime of our strategy our focus is on:

- **Service development:** Continuing to develop the quality and breadth of our services so that we are the primary source of information for those living with heart conditions or stroke.
- **Improving accessibility** so that our services are available to all.
- **Heart support:** Maximising the numbers participating in our **self-management support programme** for heart failure patients.
- **Developing and extending our network** to support people living with other heart conditions.
- **Stroke support:** Working to ensure that everyone who requires our Stroke Connect Service can avail of it and continue to develop long-term community supports for stroke survivors at every stage of their life.

2023:

What we achieved

The scale of stroke support delivered by the Irish Heart Foundation during 2023 significantly exceeded targets, with referrals equating to around one in three of all survivors returning home from hospital nationally.

In addition, our heart failure supports expanded rapidly in the second half of the year, in line with growing awareness of their existence and impact among professionals across national cardiac services.

We also delivered enhanced supports across a variety of other cardiac conditions, including cardiomyopathies, sudden cardiac death (SCD), long QT syndrome (LQTS), heart attack, congenital heart disease (CHD), spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD) and for people living with implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs). In total, over 5,000 patients were supported by the Irish Heart Foundation in 2023 by phone, online and through face-to-face services.

While these services are endorsed by the HSE, they have not been approved for statutory funding to date, apart from partial Community Health Organisation (CHO) support amounting to just over 7.5% of their total cost. Significant waiting lists already exist for these services and without future HSE funding, we will not be able to develop our services to support those who need them and waiting list numbers will continue to grow.

Our stroke and heart failure services are delivered separately, reflecting differing patient needs and to maximise peer support. However, the main service elements are largely the same, incorporating:

- support calls through our heart and Stroke Connect services
- short duration interventions designed to meet specific needs
- counselling
- the Irish Heart Foundation's Nurse Support Line
- online, face-to-face and peer-to-peer phone support
- Young Stroke Support Network
- Stay Connected.

All this work is underpinned by a dedicated team of professional staff, nurses and more than 100 volunteers which include many heart patients and stroke survivors.

Stroke Connect

The Irish Heart Foundation's Stroke Connect service involves a nurse-led needs assessment that is followed by up to eight weekly support calls. During 2023, over 1,000 stroke survivors were referred to this service. A total of almost 1,300 hours of support were delivered through the assessments and calls. Thirteen urgent cases were identified under our escalation protocols, with an ambulance being called on three occasions. The service also escalated 26 people to their GP and 24 to an Irish Heart Foundation nurse. The result of a service user survey showed that satisfaction rates were high at 81%, whilst the most popular service was the peer-to-peer support. This was rated 'excellent' by 89% of participants and 'good' by the remaining 11%.

Heart Connect

We extended the Heart Connect service nationwide after a pilot in Waterford recorded a significant reduction in hospital readmissions among participants. This reduction was due to major improvements in their ability to self-care.

The main purpose of the Heart Connect service is to reiterate health messages from heart failure clinics in a series of monthly calls. These calls focus on areas such as identifying the signs and symptoms of heart failure, and medication adherence, while also providing social support, information and signposting.

A total of 472 patients were referred to the service, with participants in Dublin, Waterford, Tipperary and Monaghan being the biggest beneficiaries of around 700 hours of support delivered between our nurses and coordinators.

Short courses

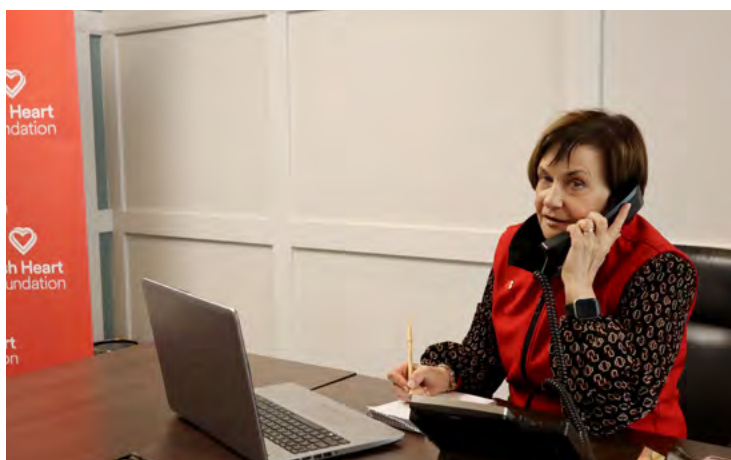
A total of 20 short courses were delivered to some 300 participants during the year. These included art therapy, cognitive skills, fatigue management, living with aphasia, mindfulness, vocational return-to-work, programmes to improve mental health and various exercise programmes.

Counselling

Considerable research has shown that the psychological impact of a stroke or heart disease diagnosis can be similar to that of post-traumatic stress disorder. The Irish Heart Foundation provides the only access to counselling that many patients with cardiovascular disease have. In 2023, 237 people received the service, including 140 stroke survivors, 77 heart failure patients and 20 people with various other cardiac conditions.

Nurse Support Line

This year, our Nurse Support Line answered 1,521 calls from the public. Heart attack and stenting, stroke and heart failure were the biggest source of requests for information. Via the support line, callers were referred to 100 different medical and support organisations and Irish Heart Foundation services. In 55 cases callers were referred to an emergency department and in 79 cases, callers were referred to a cardiologist.



↑
Irish Heart Foundation nurse
Catherine on the Nurse Support Line

Online support

There were more than 4,600 members of our three private Facebook groups at year-end, including over 2,400 in the Heart Support group, over 1,600 in the Life After Stroke group and almost 600 in the group for carers.

Engagement on the Heart Support group was particularly high with over 2,000 members active in the last three months alone, and 1,200 posts, 5,000 comments and 14,000 reactions recorded during the year. On the Life After Stroke group, over 1,150 members were active, providing 770 posts.

A total of 13 information talks from expert clinical presenters were streamed via Zoom and Facebook Live, and these received over 3,600 live views. Topics covered during these talks included cardiomyopathy and heart attack recovery, medication anxiety and neurorehabilitation.

Irish Heart Foundation nurses also provided 18 pieces of video content for the Facebook groups, on topics such as managing high blood pressure, heart failure self-care and managing fatigue after stroke.

Other online supports included weekly Zoom exercises classes, a series of online talks in the lead up to World Stroke Day and the ever-popular Monday Club which provides social support and health information to older stroke survivors. In total, the Irish Heart Foundation delivered 141 hours of Zoom support during 2023.

Face-to-face support

We now have 16 face-to-face support groups with Sligo, Tallaght and Ballinasloe rating as the best attended. During 2023 we began a process of transitioning to volunteer-led groups. A total of 980 hours of face-to-face support was delivered during the year.

We also held our 16th annual memorial service for families who have lost a young person to sudden cardiac death or sudden adult death syndrome in Monkstown church, Dublin. This included a candle lighting ceremony for 72 deceased young people.

Peer-to-peer support

In 2023 we launched our 'Let's Talk' service. This involves phone support for recently diagnosed heart patients and stroke survivors returning home from hospital. It is delivered mainly by patients who have previously accessed our services.

Young Stroke Support Network

There were 206 members of the Young Stroke Support Network (YSSN) at year-end, with 83 new members signing up during 2023 and 19 moving to the Stay Connected programme. The YSSN took part in online sessions providing peer support and information, and the service also has a very active WhatsApp group where members can offer support. Other activities included weekly exercise sessions and social meet-ups at our Dublin-based groups in Kilmainham and Sandyford.

Stay Connected

This service provides stay-in-touch communication for members who have been through our services but want to receive ongoing information and the option of re-engaging with our programmes if their circumstances change. They receive a quarterly newsletter, access to our Nurse Support Line, our full range of digital and print resources and our calendar of events.



Sheila Foley – Heart Patient Volunteer

Volunteer programme

In 2023, 106 volunteers logged 5,967 hours of volunteering across our patient support services. The main areas of activity were telephone volunteering, e-volunteering and community in-person support. Almost a fifth of all Stroke Connect calls were made by volunteers.



Fiona Bardon – Stroke Patient Volunteer

The programme is continuing to grow rapidly, with training to 134 new volunteers undertaken by year-end. This includes mandatory training in areas such as safeguarding vulnerable adults and GDPR. We held our first National Volunteer Conference in November in Meta's Dublin headquarters. This event highlighted the achievements and impact of the extensive work of our volunteers and was the first opportunity for our nationwide volunteers to come together in one location.



L-R: Helena Heffernan, Katie Foy, Martina Greene and Sonia Hearne attending the National Volunteer Conference



“Am I being dramatic or is something wrong?”

Grainne Hunt suffered two heart attacks in the last three years

Grainne, age 44 from Limerick, who describes herself as living quite a healthy lifestyle, didn't experience any symptoms that concerned her in the days preceding her first heart attack in April 2020. The only thing she noticed was slight breathlessness when going up and down the stairs.

Then, Grainne woke during the night with a burning sensation in her chest. Thinking it was heartburn, she went to the kitchen for a glass of milk, but when this didn't resolve her symptoms, she woke her wife Louise and explained the situation. Louise suggested calling an ambulance, which Grainne dismissed and said she would wait until the GP opened at 8am.

By the time Grainne visited her GP, she had a pain in her arm. Her GP recommended that she go straight to the emergency department, which Grainne did, but she says she felt she was wasting the doctors' time. Following a number of tests – including a blood test and an electrocardiogram (ECG) - Grainne was told that she had just suffered a serious heart attack. Grainne says she was flabbergasted: “I asked if he was definitely speaking to the right patient!”

Grainne says that it wasn't until she spoke with some of the nurses in the hospital that her diagnosis “really hit” her. The nurses spoke to her about Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection (SCAD) - the condition which had caused Grainne's heart attack – and gave her some materials from the Irish Heart Foundation that offered advice on how to manage the condition.

Following her stay in hospital, Grainne enrolled in a cardiac rehabilitation programme in St. James's Hospital which allowed her to meet other heart patients. During this time, she also became very conscious about her diet, the signs and symptoms of heart attack and making sure she got enough exercise.

Unfortunately, her second heart attack happened in July 2022 at the All Ireland Hurling Final between Limerick and Kilkenny. This time, she took herself to the Mater Hospital although she felt more shocked by her diagnosis. She remembers asking: “How could this happen again? I am doing everything right. If I wasn't on the medication from the first heart attack, would I be dead?”

As part of her recovery Grainne received a lot of information from the Irish Heart Foundation's website but also found the HSE's Living Well Programme to be a great support. She also found the SCAD Support Network a brilliant resource. The support group, based in the Irish Heart Foundation, helped her obtain some “really useful, practical advice”.

Grainne found exercise played a key role in her recovery and recommends that anyone in a similar position do some research: “There are lots of personal trainers and gyms out there that are brilliant with heart patients. Find the right one so you feel comfortable in your recovery.”

She also recommends taking your medication and being proactive in seeing your consultant and GP.

We fund



Funding work in 2023

Under the Irish Heart Foundation's Strategic Plan (2021-2024), we aim to fund our mission through a mix of support from the general public, the corporate sector and the government.

Over the lifetime of our strategy our focus is on:

- **Broadening our income sources:** Developing new sources of income and harnessing the best of both traditional and digital fundraising methods.
- **Developing programmes:** We will develop programmes that align as far as possible with the objects of Sláintecare in order to increase our level of government funding.

2023: What we achieved

Individual giving

In 2023, more than 5,000 donors generously supported our lifesaving work by making regular monthly donations. Monthly recurring donors allow us to commit to delivering vital programmes in communities all over Ireland. They also allow us to plan with confidence for future activities.

During the year, our wonderful existing donors also answered our postal appeals and donated over €150,000. Not only that, they also helped to raise almost €80,000 through our tax campaign where the Irish Heart Foundation can claim back tax on individual donations over €250.

Around the country, people also kindly donated in celebration of healthcare workers, birthdays, anniversaries and in memory of a loved one.

Corporate partnerships

This year we worked with Marks & Spencer Ireland to raise vital funds to protect hearts across Ireland. Marks & Spencer staff members and customers nationwide supported 'Her Heart Matters' (the Irish Heart Foundation's Heart Month campaign), raising awareness and donating an incredible total of €100,000.

Daybreak is one of our long-term partners and we are grateful for their wonderful and continued support. In 2023, they ran their annual 'Keep it Moving' campaign, which challenged Daybreak retailers and staff to complete a marathon throughout the month of September. The goal of the challenge is for 'Daybreakers' to get active and improve their fitness and heart health. We were delighted to see that over 150 stores took on this challenge. Thanks to their commitment throughout the year, they raised an impressive €60,000.



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L-R: Molly Byrne, Daybreak with Mireya Gines and Clíodhna Burke



↑
Her Heart Matters Webinar

We have received amazing support from pharmaceutical companies in our services and campaigns in the areas of stroke, heart failure, blood pressure and cardiomyopathy:

- Pfizer and Bristol Myers Squibb have generously contributed to the operation of our Mobile Health Unit, allowing us to offer free health checks to disadvantaged communities across the nation, as well as providing funding to increase awareness of high blood pressure.
- Ipsen and Novartis have kindly supported our heart health information booklets, which play a crucial role in promoting cardiovascular health.

- Vifor has supported our patients living with heart failure and Bayer has backed our training initiative aimed at assisting these patients.
- Daiichi Sankyo has given support to our physical activity programme for stroke survivors.
- Amgen staff have been busy with a charity walk and heart health information for their staff.

Additionally, we take pride in providing lifesaving CPR training to employees across various industries. This year, we had the pleasure of working with Apple, training a total of 523 staff members. Apple donated funds for each staff member trained in CPR which resulted in a contribution of €11,480 from this initiative.

Grants

We seek funding from various trusts, foundations and government sources to run our vital services.

A special acknowledgment goes to the Hospital Saturday Fund for their generous donation of €3,000 in support of our Nurse Support Line. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to The Smurfit Kappa Foundation for their significant contribution of €24,600 towards our CPR 4 Schools programme.

We also want to acknowledge the support from the HSE. Through section 39 and National Lottery funding, we received €89,200. This funding is instrumental in facilitating the ongoing operations of our impactful stroke support groups in regional locations.



↑
Keziah Philip completing the VHI Women's Mini Marathon

Community engagement

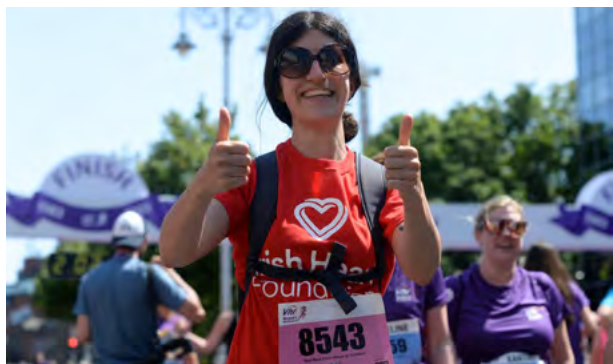
2023 was another year where the Irish Heart Foundation was supported by amazing fundraisers both nationally and internationally. So many volunteer fundraisers organised their own events this year and collectively they raised €340,000. These volunteers jumped out of planes, hosted coffee mornings, did tractor runs and more to support our work – their drive and enthusiasm was nothing short of incredible.

163 runners braved the pouring rain for this year's Dublin Marathon and together they raised an incredible €220,000. What made the whole occasion extra special was the volunteering so many did on race day – our cheer squad supported the runners and made a huge impact on people's race day experience. Women across the country also took part in the VHI Women's Mini Marathon to raise funds for the Irish Heart Foundation.

As part of their 'Charity Challenge', Freshways Samworth raised €10,000 for the Irish Heart Foundation. A team of colleagues undertook a nine-hour adventure race that included cycling, canoeing and hiking. Thank you to the team for their support.



↑
Irish Heart Foundation staff cheer on participants in the Dublin Marathon



↑
Loredana Macari completing the VHI Women's Mini Marathon

Schools also supported our work this year by running Valentine’s Day fundraisers, row-a-thons, jumper days and doing sponsored walks in aid of the Irish Heart Foundation. In June, Enda Lyons began his 24-hour walkathon in memory of his mother Monica, who he sadly lost in 2022. Enda completed a whopping 150,000 steps, 105 kilometres and 389 laps around the Carraigallen GAA pitch to honour his mother. He also raised €25,550 for the Irish Heart Foundation – thank you Enda!

Linda Dunican and 24 of her dedicated family and friends all jumped out of a plane in August in memory of Linda’s husband Kieran. This amazing group of brave individuals (and the community of Moate in county Westmeath) raised a massive €48,737.59 for the Irish Heart Foundation – thank you Linda and thank you Moate!

Our second annual ‘Walk 100km with your Dog’ challenge took place in June and saw over 1,300 people and their dogs walking every day to raise €230,000. Dogs all over Ireland were raising awareness for us by wearing an Irish Heart Foundation dog bandana. They also received a medal and a ‘personal trainer’ certificate for completing the challenge.

The year ended on a high with more than 500 people all over Ireland doing our ‘12 Dips in December’ challenge. People dipped in open water, pool plunges or had an ice bath all to raise funds in aid of the Irish Heart Foundation.

This year we were blown away by the support we received from each and every one of our fantastic fundraisers. To them we say:

Thank you all so much. It is because of you that we can continue to support individuals impacted by heart disease and stroke throughout Ireland.



↑
Doing a dip: Over 500 people took part in our ‘12 Dips in December’ challenge

↓
Carol and her four-legged friend Lily who took part in our ‘Walk 100km with your Dog’ challenge in June

Remote challenges

In February, over 1,000 people ran either 100 kilometres or 100 miles in a month as part of our ‘RUN 100’ campaign. People ran solo or as part of their company and raised over €250,000.

→
One of the participants in our ‘RUN 100’ campaign



Marketing and communications

People living with heart disease and stroke are at the core of the Irish Heart Foundation. This year, we continued to work with colleagues to build awareness of our supports and encourage more people to join, attend and engage with our services – services that can positively make a difference in their lives.

We listened to and spoke with people from across the country who had experienced a heart event or stroke, had a risk factor for cardiovascular disease or received help from our support services. Their stories featured heavily across our growing social media channels and in PR, allowing key health messaging to be communicated in a way that

really resonated with people. Their stories fuel our work and help to share our message and we cannot thank them enough for helping us to help others.

Our major campaigns gave us an opportunity to highlight the risks of heart disease and stroke, and to provide people with the information and resources to empower them to look after their heart health and that of those close to them.

2023 also saw the return to in-person events continue. We were delighted to support colleagues in planning and hosting launches and events and to get the opportunity to meet people using our support services, their families and other stakeholders.

A snapshot of marketing and communications activity in 2023



58

news articles published on irishheart.ie



4

national campaigns



19

events and launches supported



240,000+

people visited irishheart.ie



110,000

followers across social media



12

targeted emails to our supporters and patients

2023: Major campaigns

Her Heart Matters

Our 'Her Heart Matters' campaign aims to increase awareness of the risk of heart disease and stroke in women and to start a national conversation about women's heart health. The campaign is supported by the HSE as part of their delivery of Healthy Ireland, the national framework to support health and wellbeing Ireland. 'Her Heart Matters' encourages everyone to talk to the women in their life about heart health, share the campaign message and tips with them and empower them to make small, sustainable lifestyle changes for the good of their heart health.

This year's campaign which took place during heart month in September was fronted by broadcaster Maura Derrane and received excellent coverage. There were 86 pieces of national and local media coverage, with a reach of 4,602,322. Key media which featured the campaign included Newstalk, RTÉ radio, the Irish Times, the Irish Independent and the Irish Daily Mail.

For the campaign, the Irish Heart Foundation created a range of free resources (including a downloadable self-care and wellbeing journal and 28-day journey which focused on heart healthy habits) and hosted a webinar in Meta's head offices on World Heart Day. Over 2,300 women signed up for the free '#HerHeartMatters: What every woman needs to know' webinar, which featured a panel of experts discussing heart health, and 99% of attendees said they felt empowered after it. The 28-day journey was also a popular resource with 5,700 sign-ups.

This year we teamed up with Marks & Spencer for the second time to raise campaign awareness through their stores and cafés – 5c from every hot drink sold in their cafés was donated to the Irish Heart Foundation throughout the month of September. We also worked with CarePlus Pharmacies to offer free blood checks throughout the month, raise awareness of the campaign and encourage women to engage with our resources.



Helen Deely, Health and Wellbeing Assistant National Director, HSE, Broadcaster Maura Derrane and Janis Morrissey, Director of Health Promotion, Information and Training, Irish Heart Foundation at the launch of the 'Her Heart Matters' campaign.

Before Damage is Done

The 'Before Damage is Done' campaign aims to drive awareness of the link between high blood pressure and heart disease and stroke. Previous research shows that Ireland has one of the lowest rates of awareness, treatment and control of high blood pressure among 12 high-income countries.

High blood pressure is a silent killer and affects two out of three people over the age of 50, but because the condition is symptomless, half of people don't know they have it. If left untreated, high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart failure and many other conditions. The campaign is a call to action to this cohort, encouraging them to get their blood pressure checked by their GP or local pharmacy.

This campaign was supported by Pfizer, the Irish College of General Practitioners and the Irish Pharmacy Union. The message was shared through an informational video and flyer and a free downloadable support pack which offered users advice on their blood pressure including how to cut down on salt and how to take their blood pressure at home.

'Before Damage is Done' was well-received by the public. There were 60 pieces of national and local coverage with a reach of 4,312,246. Key media which featured the campaign included RTE's Morning Ireland and Today Show. The campaign webpage received over 2600 views and 906 people downloaded the free support pack.



L-R: Irish Heart Foundation nurse Roisin with Orlaith Gavan, Pfizer Healthcare Ireland and Dr Angie Brown



F.A.S.T.

↑
L- R: Judith Gilsean, Pauline McLynn
and Chris Macey

Time is of the essence when it comes to stroke. Since 2015, awareness around the F.A.S.T. symptoms of stroke has been dropping. In fact, figures show that around 1,000 less stroke patients have been getting to hospital in time to receive potentially life-saving treatment. This year, we ran a national 'Act F.A.S.T. - Minutes Matter' campaign with the HSE to raise awareness around the symptoms of stroke and to encourage people to act quickly.

The campaign, fronted by actor Pauline McLynn and former Dublin footballer Siobhán McGrath, ran twice during the year and received huge media coverage across two bursts of radio advertising. In addition, our supporters ran 330 local campaigns nationwide. Ipsos MRBI polling registered an 8.3% increase in people's intention to call an ambulance if they witnessed any F.A.S.T. signs as a result of the campaign – this is equivalent to 260 additional timely hospital admissions for stroke.



←
L- R: Prof Rónán Collins,
Siobhán McGrath and
Chris Macey

We innovate



Innovation and transformation work in 2023

Under the Irish Heart Foundation's Strategic Plan (2021-2024) we aim to continue to innovate and transform our services through the increased use of digital platforms and approaches so that the quality, reach and cost-effectiveness of our digital work is optimised for those who need it most.

Over the lifetime of our strategy our focus is on:

- **A user-centric approach:** Ensure that users of our service are at the centre of our planning, development and implementation of programmes and services across the organisation.
- Creating a **working culture** that encourages trial and learning based on evidence and analysis.
- **Patient support services:** Seek feedback from heart patients and stroke survivors, and continuously review digital platforms to ensure we are using the best platforms for our services.
- **Accessibility:** Undertake a review of our website to assess the accessibility of our information and identify and implement improvements as appropriate

Digital Transformation project

In 2023, the Digital Transformation project focused on CRM system provision. The team and staff worked with two consultancy agencies to complete vital preparation work to ensure we are resourced with the appropriate technology to meet the needs of the people we serve.

The Irish Heart Foundation employed Context Studio to apply service design principles to improve patient support services efficiency in 2022. Over the course of that year, research was conducted, and service design principles were applied focusing on improving user experience and the overall service delivery for users and staff. In 2023, that work culminated in the creation of five blueprints which outline the vision for the services offered to our patients that would give them the best user experience. This ongoing work with Context Studio will inform the configuration of the human services case management system for the patient support team in 2024.



Consultants Hart Square (who specialise in the not-for-profit sector) were engaged to work on a company-wide CRM upgrade project which includes resourcing a human services case management system for the patient support team. They worked with staff to define project objectives and business case, conducted a detailed process review, created a roadmap for the upgrade project and the development of an invitation to tender outlining our requirements. Through this process with Hart Square, the Irish Heart Foundation shortlisted four potential partners and chose our preferred partner Bluelight CRM. Bluelight CRM will deliver an enterprise-wide solution using MS Dynamics. This project will begin in January 2024.

Improvements to our network and cybersecurity defences were also implemented and are ongoing.



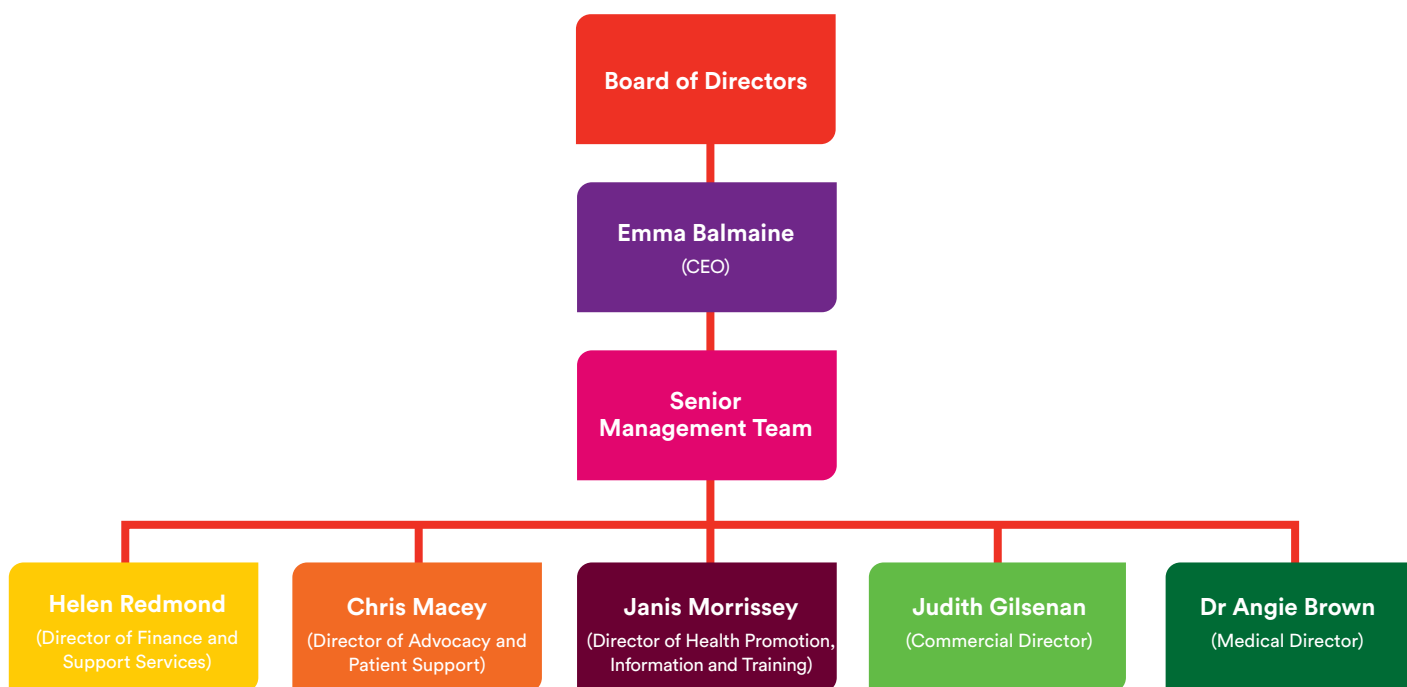
Structure, governance and management

The Irish Heart Foundation (Foras Croí na h-Éireann), the ‘Foundation’ is constituted under Irish company law as a company limited by guarantee and is a registered charity. It is incorporated in the Republic of Ireland and the address of its registered office is: 17-19 Rathmines Road Lower, Dublin 6, D06 C780. The Foundation is a public benefit entity.

The Irish Heart Foundation is:

- a registered charity with the Charities Regulatory (20008376)
- a registered charity with the Revenue Commissioners to receive tax exemption (CHY5507)
- registered with the Companies Registration office (23434)

Governance and management



The Irish Heart Foundation is led by a voluntary Board of directors which meets at least four times a year. In 2023, the Board met four times. Nominations of new directors are approved by the Board. Directors are appointed for a three-year term which may be renewed once, with the maximum term that a director can serve being six years.

When recruiting new directors, the Board aims to attract a diverse range of candidates. None of the directors or committee members receive fees for their time or reimbursements for any expenses incurred.

The roles, responsibilities and code of conduct of the Board and committees are all included in the Irish Heart Foundation's governance manual. Responsibility for day-to-day management is delegated to the CEO, Emma Balmaine, who is supported by the Senior Management Team, staff and volunteers.

All members of the Senior Management Team attend Board meetings, other than closed Board sessions.

The Senior Management Team consists of:

- Director of Finance and Support Services, Helen Redmond
- Director of Advocacy and Patient Support, Chris Macey
- Director of Health Promotion, Information and Training, Janis Morrissey
- Commercial Director, Judith Gilsenan
- Medical Director, Dr Angie Brown.

The Foundation is 'Triple Locked' and complies with the Charities Governance Code, the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public, and the SORP (FRS 102) accounting standard for charities.

Board members

The Board ensures that the activities of the Irish Heart Foundation are consistent with its charitable objectives as set out in its constitution. The Irish Heart Foundation is very grateful to the Board for their support and time in 2023.

- **Professor Emer Shelley**
Chair of the Irish Heart Foundation and public health expert.
- **Aisling Blake (retired 28 September 2023)**
Director in Meta.
- **Wally Young**
Public relations consultant and media trainer.
- **Professor Joe Harbison**
Consultant in medicine for the elderly and stroke medicine at St. James's Hospital Dublin, Associate Professor of Gerontology at Trinity College Dublin.
- **Dr Walter Cullen**
GP and Professor of Urban General Practice at University College Dublin.
- **Joan O'Brien**
Independent Non-Executive Director and member of the Institute of Directors, chartered certified accountant.
- **Dr Anne Marie O'Flynn**
Consultant Cardiologist at Mallow General Hospital.
- **Professor Francis Finucane**
Consultant Physician in Endocrinology and General Internal Medicine at Galway University Hospitals and an Honorary Personal Professor in Medicine at NUI Galway.
- **Jeanette Codd McDonagh**
Solicitor and Head of Procurement and State Aid within NAMA.
- **David Dempsey**
Senior Vice President and former Country Leader and General Manager at Salesforce Ireland, member of the Institute of Directors.
- **Kevin Cardiff**
Former senior civil servant Kevin Cardiff served as Secretary General at the Department of Finance from 2010 to 2012. He has served in several audit committee roles and provides occasional consultancy services in the public and private sectors.
- **Dr Catherine Conlon (elected 28 September 2023)**
Senior Medical Officer in Public Health.
- **Brian O'Sullivan (elected 7 December 2023)**
Former Senior Executive Director with international investment and underwriting experience.

Name	Meeting attendance in 2023	Length of service	Retired from Board
Professor Emer Shelley	4/4	Elected 22 Mar 2018	
Aisling Blake	2/3	Elected 7 Dec 2017	28 September 2023
Wally Young	2/4	Elected 27 Sep 2018	
Professor Joe Harbison	3/4	Elected 27 Sep 2018	
Dr Walter Cullen	3/4	Elected 27 Jun 2019	
Joan O'Brien	4/4	Elected 24 Jun 2021	
Dr Anne Marie O'Flynn	4/4	Elected 24 Jun 2021	
Professor Francis Finucane	4/4	Elected 24 Jun 2021	
Jeanette Codd McDonagh	4/4	Elected 24 Mar 2022	
David Dempsey	4/4	Elected 23 Jun 2022	
Kevin Cardiff	3/4	Elected 8 Dec 2022	
Dr Catherine Conlon	1/1	Elected 28 Sep 2023	
Brian O'Sullivan	1/1	Elected 7 Dec 2023	

Board committees

In addition to the Board of directors there are two sub-committees, each of which is chaired by a Director. These are the Audit and Risk Committee and the Governance and Nominations Committee.

Audit and Risk Committee

The role of the Audit and Risk Committee is to supervise the financial affairs of the Irish Heart Foundation and ensure that they are conducted in an effective and business-like manner and comply with all legal and regulatory obligations.

The Audit and Risk Committee meets quarterly or more frequently as required. It reviews actual income and expenditure compared to budget, the performance and risk profile of the Foundation's investment portfolio and monitors the adequacy of fundraising, cash flow, and liquidity to meet foreseeable operating needs. It also reviews the risk register and monitors the implementation of plans to address specific identified risks.

The Committee met seven times in 2023. There were four standard meetings and three additional meetings. In January 2023 the Committee met to do a deep dive on investments and cashflow. In June 2023, the Committee met twice. First to recommend and approve the 2022 Annual Report to the Board. The second meeting (a sub-committee of the Audit and Risk Committee), was to review four pension providers following the Irish Heart Foundation putting the management of the Irish Heart Foundation pension fund out to tender. During this meeting, after full due diligence, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Board for approval the transfer of the pension fund to a Zurich Master Trust Fund.

Below are the members of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2023. The meetings of this Committee are also attended by the CEO, Director of Finance and Support Services, Commercial Director, Medical Director, Director of Advocacy and Patient Support and Director of Health Promotion Information and Training.

Name	Meeting attendance in 2023	Length of service
Joan O'Brien (Chair)	7/7	Elected 24 June 2021
Prof. Emer Shelley	5/6	Elected 22 March 2018
Wally Young	6/6	Elected 27 Sept 2018
David Dempsey	6/7	Elected 23 June 2022
Kevin Cardiff	7/7	Elected 8 Dec 2022

Governance and Nominations Committee

The role of the Governance and Nominations Committee is to review the Board composition, performance and succession planning, with diversity and inclusion at the forefront of decision-making. Its role also includes developing and reviewing governance policies and procedures, and ensuring compliance with the Charities Governance Code and other relevant requirements.

Name	Meeting attendance in 2023	Length of service	Retired from the Board
Professor Emer Shelley	4/4	Elected 22 Mar 2018	
Aisling Blake	4/4	Elected 7 Dec 2017	28 Sept 2023
Professor Joe Harbison	4/4	Elected 27 Sept 2018	
Dr Walter Cullen	1/4	Elected 27 Jun 2019	
Jeanette Codd McDonagh	3/4	Elected 24 Mar 2022	

Conflicts of interest

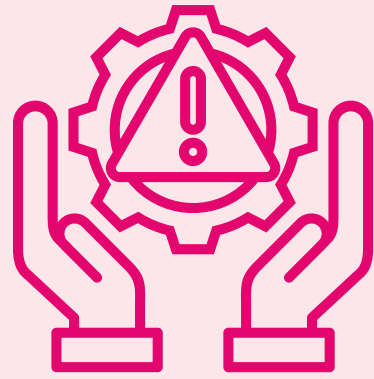
Where the Foundation enters into a contract or a financial or professional arrangement with any organisation or individual, and this matter appears before the Board for decision, any Board member who has an interest in or connection with that individual or organisation, either direct or indirect, must declare their interest to the Board.

Directors also complete a 'Conflicts of Interest' declaration annually and the Foundation maintains a register of Directors' interests. Conflicts of interest is a permanent agenda item at every Board meeting.

In 2023, no conflict of interest was notified to the Board.

Safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse

The Foundation supports people over 18 years of age living with stroke and heart conditions, and also works with children in schools and with the Youth Advisory Panel. As part of our work, our staff and volunteers interact with vulnerable adults in our patient support and health promotion services, and with children in our HPIT services. The Foundation has policies and procedures in place to ensure it is compliant with the legal requirements and best practices in the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children.



Risk management

Risk management is a cornerstone of good governance and is critical in enabling and facilitating an organisation to meet its objectives. The Irish Heart Foundation has an effective risk management policy in place.

The policy outlines how risks are identified and managed using a clear methodology and ranking system and is committed to successfully managing the organisation's exposure to risk and to minimising its impact on the achievement of objectives. The policy views risk management as an integrated process essential to the overall success of the organisation. The Board approves the risk profile of the organisation together with the types and levels of risk that it deems acceptable, based on information supplied to them by management and reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee. The risk register includes details of risk mitigation measures and plans for improvement where required.

These are the top five risks determined by the Irish Heart Foundation in 2023:

Risk	Mitigation measures
<p>1. Cyberattack/Information security risk</p> <p>Risk of disruption to services or loss or compromise of data due to technology failure, a breach or a cyberattack.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Auditable Phishing campaign and educational cyber training software for all staff. ● Business continuity/disaster recovery plan in place. ● Multifactor authentication in place. ● Standard network security layers. ● Penetration (PEN) testing. ● Independent cybersecurity audit (Mazars).
<p>2. Investments</p> <p>Risk of exposure to financial markets due to inadequate monitoring of the investment policy and portfolio resulting in substantial losses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall objective is for capital preservation and growth over the investment period. ● Ongoing monitoring of investments performance by the Board with Goodbody the investment advisors. ● Monitoring of cashflow requirements by the Board to ensure there is adequate cash to meet the current and future spend requirements of the organisation.
<p>3. Reserves and funding</p> <p>The risk of insufficient reserves, due to business losses or mismanagement of funds, resulting in reputational risk or insolvency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reserves are reviewed every six months by the Board with particular focus on the key flagship projects of the organisation. ● The Senior Management Team have established a financial sustainability focus group to look at how to broaden and grow our sources of income and secure HSE funding and other sustainable income. ● In 2023 the Foundation invested in a Direct Debit Recruiting programme.
<p>4. Governance and reputational risk</p> <p>The Risk that the foundation is exposed to legal, regulatory, and reputational damage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Screening and selection process for all Board members. ● Board and staff induction and training Programmes. In 2023 the Board completed training on the roles and responsibilities of charity trustees from Mason Curran Hayes. ● Board effectiveness reviews. ● Review of compliance and governance processes and procedures to ensure best practices are followed. Mazars are the internal auditors carrying out this work. ● A crisis communication plan is in place. ● All media reports on the Foundation are monitored.
<p>5. People risk</p> <p>The risk associated with recruitment, retention, and loss of our key staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commitment to a flexible work environment. ● Ongoing training and development for all staff. ● Ongoing feedback from staff through HR survey and staff meetings. ● Resource planning to align with the Foundation's strategic objectives. ● Towards the end of 2023 the Foundation embarked on the replacement of its legacy CRM system which will increase efficiency and maximise resources.



Financial Review

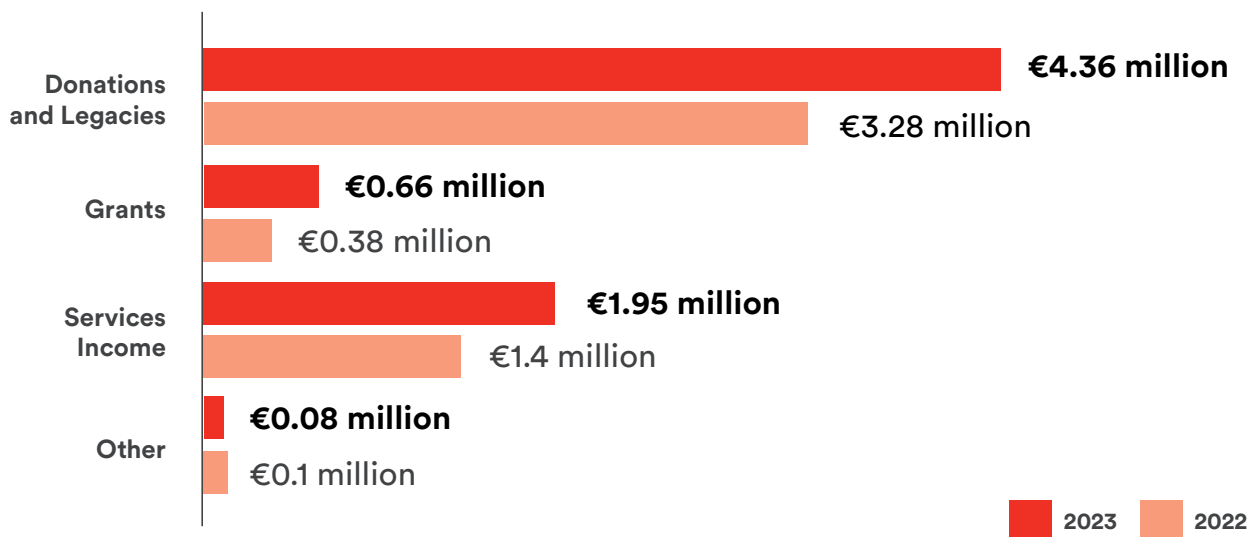
Income

The majority of our income in the Foundation comes from the generous support of the general public, corporate sponsorships, fundraising events (predominantly online) and legacies within the Republic of Ireland.

In 2023, the Foundation's income was

€7.05 million

an increase of 37% on the previous year,
(2022: €5.16 million)



Donations and legacies

Income from donations and legacies includes income from individual donors, corporate donors, trusts, foundations and events. Our donations and legacies increased by 33% (€1.08 million) in 2023. This was substantially attributable to an increase in our events and legacy income.

Grants

In 2023, the Foundation received €0.66 million in grants (2022: €0.38 million). The increase is mainly due to a once-off grant we received in 2023 for the F.A.S.T Campaign.

Services income

Our services income in 2023 was €1.95 million (2022: €1.4 million). This income mainly relates to our CPR training certification programme.

Other income

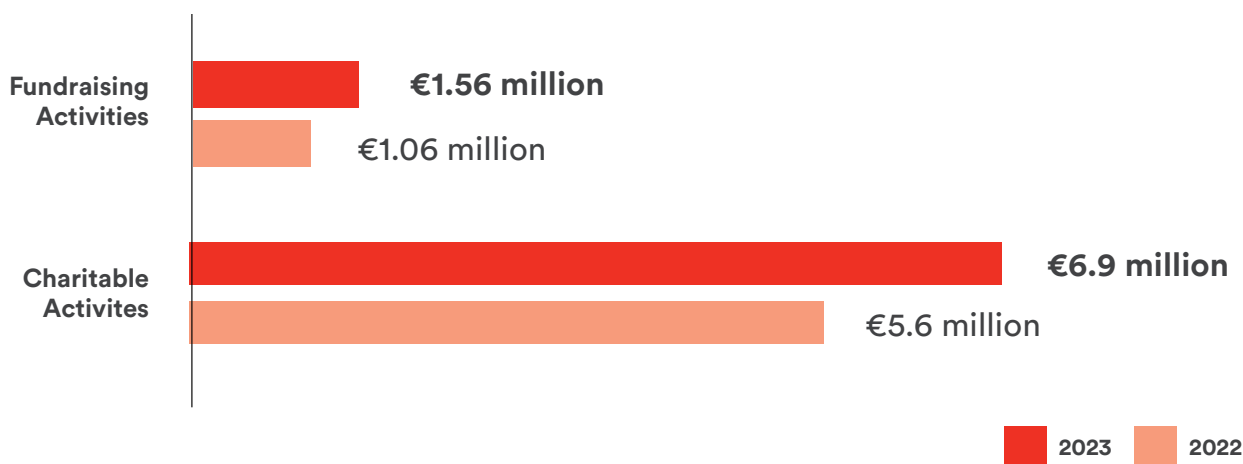
In 2023, the Foundation received €0.08 million (2022: €0.1 million).

Expenditure

The Foundation's expenditure in 2023 was

€8.46 million

an increase of 27% on the previous year,
(2022: €6.66 million).

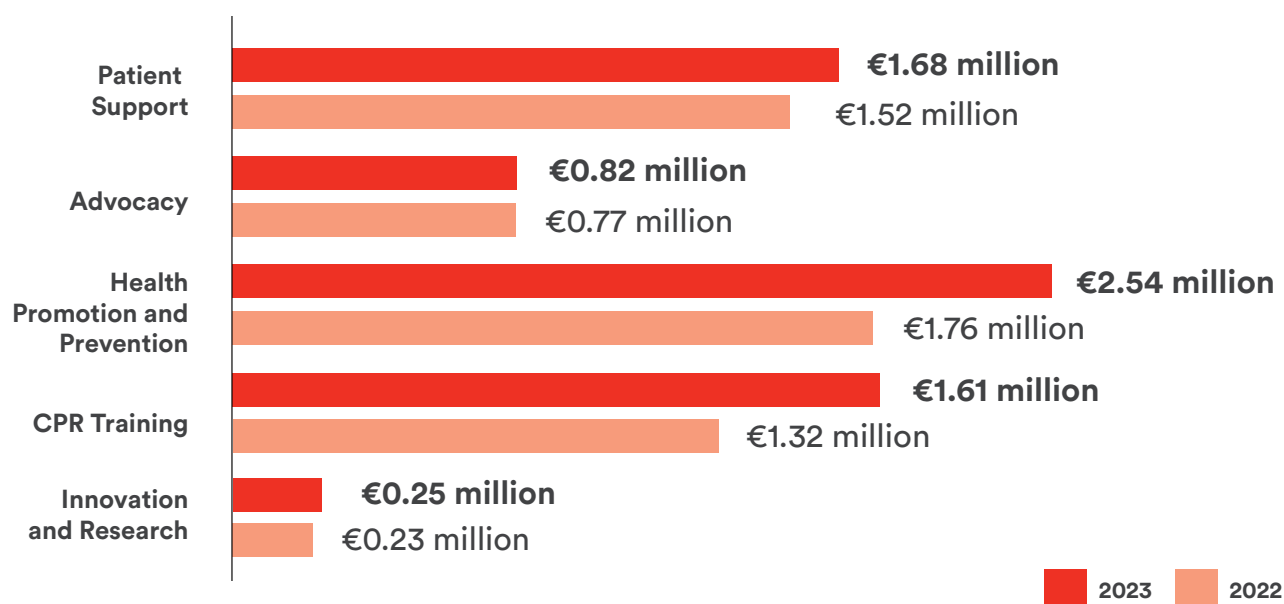


Fundraising activities

The Foundation is highly dependent on donors, including the general public, as just 9.36% of our income in 2023 came from grants (2022: 7.4%). In 2023, we spent €1.6 million on fundraising compared to €1.06 million in 2022 as the Foundation invested money to set up a Direct Debit Donations Acquisition project to build a future revenue stream.

Charitable activities

Expenditure on charitable activities in 2022 was €6.9 million, an increase of 23% on the previous year (2022: €5.6 million).



Patient support

Patient support services expenditure increased from €1.52 million in 2022 to €1.68 million in 2023 (10% increase) due to the ongoing development and expansion of our heart and stroke services.

Advocacy

Advocacy expenditure increased from €0.77 million in 2022 to €0.82 million in 2023 (7% increase).

Health Promotion and Prevention

Costs in 2023 increased from €1.76 million in 2022 to €2.54 million (44% increase). This increase was because we returned to providing full services which had been suspended during the pandemic.

CPR training

CPR training expenditure increased from €1.32 million in 2022 to €1.61 million in 2023 (22% increase). The cost increase is in line with the revenue increase.

Support costs

All the programmes above include an allocation of support cost. Support costs consist of an element of the costs of personnel and associated overheads of the CEO, finance, human resources, infrastructural support of facilities and information technology.

Also included are the governance costs of the annual external audit, internal audit and other legal and regulatory compliance requirements. These services play a crucial role providing core organisational support to ensure our services are delivered to the highest standards. The total support costs for the year were €1.11 million (2022: €0.96 million).

Financial position, other matters and reserves policy

Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of investments. The Directors have reviewed the 2023 Statement of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet, the approved 2024 budget and cashflow projections for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements. The Directors are satisfied that the Foundation has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the next 12 months. There is no material uncertainty that affects this assumption that the Foundation is a going concern.

Reserves policy

It is important that the Foundation maintains sufficient reserves to ensure continuity of its services, especially as the majority of our income is fundraised, with limited guaranteed income. Our reserves policy is based on a prudent assessment of the requirements of the Foundation in the event of unforeseen disruptions to our income. Our reserves comprise of unrestricted and restricted funds.

Restricted funds

These funds are subject to specific conditions imposed by our donors and are within the overall objectives of the Foundation. Restricted reserves at 31 December 2023 are €0.41 million.

Designated funds

These are unrestricted funds that are allocated by the Board to particular areas of planned expenditure. There are no designated funds for 2023.

Reserves

At the end of 2023 the Foundation reserves, excluding restricted reserves and fixed assets, stood at €8.0 million. €5 million of this total will be held to cover the operational needs of the organisation, with the balance to be used to fund the Foundation's top three key projects.

The projects are the patient support strategy and the childhood obesity and hypertension awareness campaigns. As planned in 2023, the Foundation expenditure was higher than the income as the Foundation drew down on its reserves to fund its key projects. Over the next two years, the Foundation plans to close the gap between the cost of running the Foundation and all our programmes, and what we raise through fundraising and state support.

The current level of reserves will enable the Foundation to continue to deliver critical services to those affected by heart disease and stroke, despite uncertainties such as the impact of geopolitical events and conflicts.

Investments

The overall investment strategy of the Foundation is long term capital preservation in real terms and to ensure that the funds not immediately required for operational purposes are invested. The Foundation had €8.34 million of investments at the year end and also €0.60 million in cash balances. The majority of cash is held in Foundation accounts with the Bank of Ireland. Goodbody act as the Foundation investment advisor.

The Foundation's overall investment policy objective is long term capital preservation in real terms targeting an average net return of 3% after inflation per annum and after all costs and charges; returns in individual years may vary but this is the average target return over the medium to longer term. The reference inflation rate over the medium term is the inflation rate as measured by the HICP index (Harmonised Indices of Consumer Prices – all items excluding tobacco) for Ireland, measured as a longer-term trend over the investment horizon.

The investment advisor has a discretionary mandate for selection of underlying assets which reflect the investment objectives of the Foundation with its moderate risk profile and ethical investment requirements.

The Audit and Risk Committee determines the amount of investments to be held and regularly reviews cashflow forecasts to ensure adequate available liquidity to meet operational needs. Liquidating investments can be achieved at short notice. The Audit and Risk Committee makes decisions on behalf of the Board on investment policies and reports to the Board on investment performance.

Environmental and social reporting

The Foundation is acutely aware of the strong relationship between action on climate change and cardiovascular health. The Foundation:

- is a founding member of the Climate and Health Alliance Ireland (CHA) and hosts the secretariat for this organisation. In 2023, the CHA launched its landmark 'Fixing Food Together' report on sustainable diets at its May conference and presented the findings of the report to the Climate Change Advisory Council.
- worked closely with the British Heart Foundation Northern Ireland as it launched its 'Air Pollution and Mortality on the Island of Ireland' report which for the first time detailed the level of air pollution on the island of Ireland and estimated the number of lives that could be saved by meeting WHO air quality guidelines.
- campaigned for the publication of the government's Clean Air Strategy which committed to meeting WHO air quality guidelines by 2040 and developing a new Clean Air Act.

The Foundation has an ethical investment policy where it prohibits direct holdings in investments that would conflict with its values, such as tobacco and fossil fuel companies. We also work to ensure that our investments are directed, as far as possible, towards sectors with strong ESG credentials.

Data protection

The Foundation has a qualified Data Protection Officer and the required processes and procedures are in place to ensure we are fully compliant with the GDPR legislation. All members of staff have been trained on GDPR and there is induction training for new employees. We are committed to maintaining a high standard in relation to data protection.

Post balance sheet events

There have been no events subsequent the year-end that require any adjustment to, or additional disclosure in, the financial statements.

Adequate accounting records

The Directors believe that they have complied with the requirements of Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014, with regard to maintaining adequate accounting records by employing accounting personnel with appropriate expertise and by providing adequate resources to the finance function. The accounting records of the Foundation are maintained at 17-19 Rathmines Road Lower, Dublin 6.

Relevant audit information

The Directors believe that they have taken all steps necessary to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and have established that the Foundation's statutory auditors are aware of that information. Insofar as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Foundation's statutory auditors are unaware.

Internal auditor

In 2022, the Foundation appointed Mazars to act as internal auditors as trusted independent advisors to protect the interests of the Foundation's stakeholders by providing assurance on the controls and mitigation of the risks of the Foundation.

Auditor

In accordance with Section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014, the auditor, KPMG, Chartered Accountants, will continue in office.

On behalf of the Board



Emer Shelley
Director



Joan O'Brien
Director

27 June 2024

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities in respect of the Directors' Report and the Financial Statements

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

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, they have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with FRS 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland*.

Under company law, the Directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Foundation and of its income and expenditure for that 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 applicable Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- assess the Foundation's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern; and
- use the going concern basis of accounting unless they either intend to liquidate the Foundation or to cease operations or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position, income and expenditure of the Foundation and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2014. They are 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, and have general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the Foundation, and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities. The Directors are also responsible for preparing a Directors' Report that complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Legislation in the Republic of Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

On behalf of the Board



Emer Shelley
Director



Joan O'Brien
Director

27 June 2024

Independent Auditor's Report to the members of the Irish Heart Foundation

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Irish Heart Foundation ("the Foundation") for the year ended 31 December 2023 set out on pages 67 to 82, which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the cash flow statement and related notes, including the summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 1. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish Law and FRS 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* issued in the United Kingdom by the Financial Reporting Council.

In our opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Foundation as at 31 December 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland*; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Foundation in accordance with ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the

Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

The Directors are responsible for the other information presented in the Annual Report together with the financial statements. The other information comprises the information included in the Directors' Report, message from the Chair, message from the CEO, who we are and what we do section, Directors and other information section, and Appendix: Breakdown of 2023 grants. The financial statements and our auditor's report thereon do not comprise part of 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 as explicitly stated below, any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether, based on our financial statements audit work, the information therein is materially misstated or inconsistent with the financial statements or our audit knowledge. Based solely on that work we have not identified material misstatements in the other information.

Based solely on our work on the other information undertaken during the course of the audit, we report that:

- we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report;
- in our opinion, the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- in our opinion, the Directors' Report has been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

Our opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014 are unmodified

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 Foundation were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited and the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions required by Sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Respective responsibilities and restrictions on use

Responsibilities of Directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Directors' responsibilities statement set out on page 64, the Directors are responsible for: the preparation of the financial statements including being satisfied that they give a true and fair view; 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; assessing the Foundation'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 they either intend to liquidate the Foundation or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

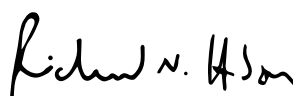
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee 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.

A fuller description of our responsibilities is provided on IAASA's website at <https://iaasa.ie/publications/description-of-the-auditors-responsibilities-for-the-audit-of-the-financial-statements/>

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the Foundation's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Foundation's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Foundation and the Foundation's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

27 June 2024



Richard Hobson
for and on behalf of
KPMG
Chartered Accountants, Statutory Audit Firm
1 Stokes Place
St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2

Statement of Financial Activities

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Note	Restricted funds 2023 €	Unrestricted funds 2023 €	Total funds 2023 €	Total funds 2022 €
Income					
Donations and legacies	3(a)	379,217	3,985,079	4,364,296	3,281,016
Charitable activities	3(b)	654,968	1,952,696	2,607,664	1,777,017
Investment income	3(c)	-	80,599	80,599	101,346
Total income		1,034,185	6,018,374	7,052,559	5,159,379
Expenditure					
Charitable activities	4	(616,139)	(6,280,030)	(6,896,169)	(5,596,048)
Fundraising activities	5	(415,733)	(1,143,504)	(1,559,237)	(1,064,553)
Total expenditure		(1,031,872)	(7,423,534)	(8,455,406)	(6,660,601)
Net gains/(losses) on investments	11	-	829,285	829,285	(1,617,169)
Net (expenditure)/income		2,313	(575,875)	(573,562)	(3,118,391)
Other movements directly through restricted funds	17	-	-	-	17,500
Net movement in funds		2,313	(575,875)	(573,562)	(3,100,891)
Total funds brought forward		406,382	12,724,332	13,130,714	16,231,605
Total funds carried forward		408,695	12,148,457	12,557,152	13,130,714

Balance Sheet

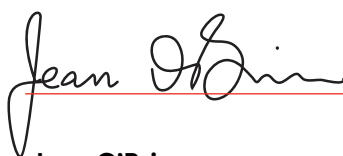
as at 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 €	2022 €
Fixed assets			
Intangible assets	9	73,948	-
Tangible assets	10	4,070,609	4,182,037
		4,144,557	4,182,037
Current assets			
Investments	11	8,344,519	7,880,600
Stocks	12	30,036	-
Debtors	13	338,342	394,770
Cash at bank and in hand	14	602,932	2,070,504
		9,315,829	10,345,874
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	(903,234)	(1,397,197)
Net current assets		8,412,595	8,948,677
Net assets		12,557,152	13,130,714
Funded by:			
Restricted funds	17	408,695	406,382
Unrestricted funds	17	12,148,457	12,724,332
		12,557,152	13,130,714

on behalf of the Board



Emer Shelley
Director



Joan O'Brien
Director

Cash Flow Statement

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 €	2022 €
Reconciliation of net expenditure for the year to net cash used in operating activities			
Net expenditure for the year		(573,562)	(3,118,391)
<i>Adjustments for:</i>			
Depreciation	10	135,370	125,003
Investment management fee paid out	11	45,965	51,823
Realised (gains)/losses on investments	11	(163,044)	337,203
Unrealised (gains)/losses on investments	11	(666,241)	1,279,966
Investment income	11	(80,599)	(101,346)
		<hr/> (1,302,111)	<hr/> (1,425,742)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	13	56,428	(12,346)
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	12	(30,036)	28,856
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	15	(493,963)	612,208
Net cash used in operating activities		<hr/> (1,769,682)	<hr/> (797,024)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Acquisition of intangible assets	9	(73,948)	-
Acquisition of tangible fixed assets	10	(23,942)	(27,871)
Disposal of investments	11	400,000	459,132
Net cash from investing activities		<hr/> 302,110	<hr/> 431,261
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents		(1,467,572)	(365,763)
Movement on restricted funds	17	-	17,500
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		<hr/> 2,070,504	<hr/> 2,418,767
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	14	<hr/> 602,932	<hr/> 2,070,504

Notes

forming part of the financial statements

1. Accounting policies

General information

The Irish Heart Foundation (“the Foundation”) is a company limited by guarantee without share capital and is a registered charity. It is incorporated in the Republic of Ireland with registration number 23434. The address of its registered office is 17-19 Rathmines Road Lower, Dublin 6, D06 C780. The Foundation is a public benefit entity. The principal activities of the Foundation are discussed in the Directors’ Report.

1.1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of investments. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is the Companies Act 2014, (“FRS 102”) The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) FRS102 “Accounting and Reporting by Charities” which is considered best practice for charities in Ireland.

The presentation and functional currency of these financial statements is Euro.

Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Directors have reviewed the 2023 statement of financial activities and balance sheet, the approved 2024 budget and the cashflow projections for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements. The Directors are satisfied that the Foundation has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the next 12 months. There is no material uncertainty that affects the assumption that the Foundation is a going concern. Therefore, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual financial statements.

1.2 Significant accounting estimates and judgments

In determining the carrying amounts of certain assets and liabilities, the Board makes assumptions of the effects of uncertain future events on those assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date. The Board’s estimates and assumptions are based on historical experiences and expectations of future events and are reviewed periodically.

1.3 Income

Income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities only when the Foundation is legally entitled to the income, the amounts involved can be measured with sufficient reliability and it is probable that the income will be received by the Foundation. The substantial majority of income is received from the Republic of Ireland, with limited income received from the rest of the EU or from non-EU countries.

Income is analysed as restricted, unrestricted or designated. Restricted funds represent income recognised in the financial statements, which is subject to specific conditions imposed by the donors or grant making institutions. Unrestricted funds represent amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the Foundation, in furtherance of the objectives of the Foundation. Such funds may be held in order to finance working capital or for investment. Designated funds represent income received without any restriction, and subsequently allocated to a particular area of expenditure by the board.

Donations and Legacies

Donations and legacies are recognised in the period the Foundation is entitled to the resource, when receipt is probable, and when the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Monetary donations from the public are recognised when donations are received. Tax refunds are recognised when they are received. Legacies are recognised when confirmation of unconditional entitlement to a specified amount is received.

Donations and sponsorships received from corporates are recognised on the same basis as grants from statutory sources.

Charitable activities

Income categorised under charitable activities is comprised of grants from statutory bodies and services income. Grant income is recognised when the entitlement to the grant is met. Income from grant agreements which are dependent on the performance of specific activities is recognised when the activity has been undertaken. Services income is recognised when the service has been provided. Income due but not yet received at the year end is included in debtors on the balance sheet and funds already received in relation to unfulfilled performance conditions are shown in creditors as deferred income.

Government grants

Income from government grants intended to compensate the Foundation for expenses incurred are recognised in the statement of financial activities on a systematic basis over the periods in which the Foundation recognises as expenses the related costs for which the grants are intended to compensate. The Foundation accounts for these government grants and the related expenditure on a gross basis in the statement of financial activities.

All statutory grants are subject to specific conditions and treated as restricted income.

1.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a legal or constructive obligation exists as a result of a past event, a transfer of economic benefits is required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be reliably measured.

Charitable activities

Resources expended on charitable activities comprise all the resources applied by the Foundation in undertaking the work to meet its charitable objectives. This includes the direct costs of undertaking these activities and the support costs incurred to enable these activities to be undertaken. All costs of charitable activities are recognised on an accruals basis.

Fundraising activities

The cost of fundraising activities comprises costs incurred in fundraising, including the cost of advertising, publications, printing and mailing fundraising materials, staff costs, individual giving administration costs, and an allocation of support costs. All costs of fundraising activities are recognised on an accruals basis.

Support costs

Support costs consist of an element of the costs of personnel and associated overheads of the chief executive, finance, human resources functions, infrastructural support of facilities and information technology. Also included are the governance costs of the external annual audit and other legal and regulatory compliance. Costs are allocated across the Foundation's activities to fairly represent the cost of delivering those activities. Allocations are based on the number and cost of direct and indirect staff involved, the use of premises and the dependence on information technology infrastructure.

1.5 Taxation

The Foundation is a charity and is not liable to corporation tax. Irrecoverable value added tax is expensed as incurred.

1.6 Intangible assets

Intangible assets represent the development costs of computer software and are recognised when the related costs have been incurred. Intangible assets are stated at cost less accumulated amortisation. Amortisation is calculated to write off the original cost of the intangible assets, less estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives. Amortisation is charged on a straight-line basis from the year in which assets are put into use. No amortisation is charged on assets under development until the development process is complete and the assets are ready for use.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is calculated, by reference to original cost to write off the assets to their residual value over their estimated useful lives on a straight line basis at the following annual rates:

Buildings	2%
Office furniture	10%
Equipment	20%
Computer equipment	20%
Motor vehicles	20%

1.8 Basic financial instruments

The Foundation does not have any financial instruments that are not considered to be basic financial instruments under FRS 102.

Investments

Investments are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, with movements in fair value recognised in the statement of financial activities. Investment income is recognised in the year in which it is receivable.

Trade and other debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised initially at transaction price plus attributable transaction costs, and subsequently at amortised cost, less any provision for expected credit losses.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash balances and call short-term deposits.

Creditors

Trade and other creditors are recognised initially at transaction price less attributable transaction costs, and subsequently at amortised cost.

1.9 Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

1.10 Employee benefits

The Foundation provides pensions to its employees under a defined contribution scheme.

All new eligible employees with effect from 1st January 2000 are included in the defined contribution scheme.

In relation to the defined contribution pension scheme, contributions are accrued and recognised as expenditure in the statement of financial activities in the period in which they are earned by the relevant employees.

Redundancy costs are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when there is a demonstrable commitment to termination.

2 Legal status of the Foundation

The Foundation is a company limited by guarantee and does not have share capital. At 31st December 2023, there were twelve Directors (2022: 12) whose guarantee is limited to €1.27 each. This guarantee continues for one financial year after directorship ceases.

3 Income

	2023 €	2022 €
a) Donations and legacies		
Donations	1,575,953	1,564,031
Legacies	727,174	255,320
Corporate events and activities	2,061,169	1,461,665
	4,364,296	3,281,016
	2023 €	2022 €
b) Charitable activities		
Grants-HSE and other statutory bodies	654,968	381,450
Services income	1,952,696	1,395,567
	2,607,664	1,777,017

c) Investment Income

In 2023, the Foundation received €80,599 (2022: €101,346) of dividend and interest income from its investments (note 11).

4 Expenditure on charitable activities

Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities	2023 Direct €	2023 Support €	2023 Total €	2022 Total €
Advocacy	714,790	103,030	817,820	766,549
CPR training	1,482,220	126,469	1,608,689	1,317,909
Health promotion and prevention	2,231,677	304,540	2,536,217	1,761,955
Patient support	1,312,485	368,098	1,680,583	1,523,497
Innovation and research	220,234	32,626	252,860	226,138
	5,961,406	934,763	6,896,169	5,596,048

Analysis of direct costs:	2023 Total €	2022 Total €
Advocacy (i)	714,790	672,644
CPR training	1,482,220	1,201,037
Health promotion and prevention (ii)		
Awareness and information	1,288,748	798,459
Community programmes	36,745	17,637
Health checks	404,966	265,889
Schools programme	319,570	347,203
Workplace	181,648	102,881
	2,231,677	1,532,069
Patient support (iii)	1,312,485	1,203,859
Innovation and research	220,234	204,468
Total direct costs	5,961,406	4,814,077

- (i) Increase in advocacy expenditure is due to the launch of the F.A.S.T. campaign in 2023.
- (ii) In 2023 as part of its flagship projects, the Foundation spent €459,247 on the high blood pressure campaign.
- (iii) Patient support cost increased in 2023 as the Foundation increased its service programmes to heart and stroke patients.

5 Fundraising activities

	2023 Direct €	2023 Support €	2023 Total €	2022 Total €
Operating costs	1,382,369	176,868	1,559,237	1,064,553
	1,382,369	176,868	1,559,237	1,064,553

Included in the above are costs related to the Direct Debit Donations Acquisition project which totalled €371,841 for 2023. (2022: €Nil).

6 Support Costs

	Facilities and IT 2023 €	Other indirect 2023 €	Total 2023 €	Total 2022 €
Charitable activities				
Advocacy	37,615	65,415	103,030	93,905
CPR Training	46,172	80,297	126,469	116,872
Health Promotion and prevention	111,182	193,358	304,540	229,886
Patient Support	134,386	233,712	368,098	319,637
Innovation and research	11,911	20,715	32,626	21,671
Total support costs allocated to charitable activities	341,266	593,497	934,763	781,971
Fundraising	64,572	112,296	176,868	173,291
Total support costs allocated	405,838	705,793	1,111,631	955,262

Support costs consist of an element of the costs of personnel and associated overheads of the chief executive, finance, human resources functions (aggregated within “Other indirect” in the table above), infrastructural support of facilities and information technology. Also included are the governance costs of the external annual audit, internal audit and other legal and regulatory compliance costs.

Costs are allocated across the Foundation’s activities to fairly represent the cost of delivering those activities. Allocations are based on the number and cost of direct and indirect staff involved, the use of premises and the dependence on information technology infrastructure.

7 Statutory and other information

	2023 €	2022 €
Net expenditure for the year	(573,562)	(3,118,391)
<i>Stated after charging:</i>		
Directors' remuneration	-	-
Auditors' remuneration – fees (excluding VAT)	28,000	26,500
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	135,370	125,003
Realised investment losses (note 11)	-	337,203
<i>Stated after crediting:</i>		
Realised investment gains (note 11)	163,044	-
Dividend and interest income	80,599	101,346

8 Wages and salaries

The average number of persons employed by the Foundation during the financial year is set out below:

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Charitable activities	55	44
Fundraising	8	10
Support	11	10
	74	64

The aggregate payroll costs, were as follows:

	2023 €	2022 €
Wages and salaries	3,504,190	3,000,896
Social insurance costs	384,280	327,160
Defined contribution pension scheme costs	221,871	207,619
	4,110,341	3,535,675

None of the Board members received any remuneration for their services or received any other benefits from the Foundation, and no Board member expenses have been incurred.

The number of employees whose remuneration (excluding pension costs) exceeded €60,000 is set out below:

	2023 Number	2022 Number
€60,000 - €70,000	7	6
€70,001 - €80,000	2	3
€80,001 - €90,000	1	1
€90,001 - €100,000	2	2
€100,001 - €110,000	2	1
€130,001 - €140,000	-	1

Included in the above are certain members of the key management team. The key management team includes the CEO, Director of Finance and Support Services, Director of Advocacy and Patient Support, Director of Health Promotion, Information and Training, Commercial Director and Medical Director. The total emoluments (including benefits and pension) paid in regard to the senior management team in 2023 was €697,208 (2022: €654,355).

The new CEO received a salary of €51,513 for 2023 plus 20% pension contribution and the outgoing CEO received a salary of €98,949 (2022: €140,000) plus 20% pension contribution. The amounts for 2023 reflect the time in service during the year.

9 Intangible assets

CRM system

Software

Cost

At the beginning of the year	-
Additions in the year	73,948
At end of year	73,948

Amortisation

At the beginning of the year	-
Charge for the year	-
At end of year	-

Net book value

At 31st December 2023	73,948
At 31st December 2022	-

(i) No amortisation charge arose in 2023 on the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) as the asset was not in use as at 31 December, 2023. The Board is satisfied that the project is progressing and that the system will be put into use in the foreseeable future.

10 Tangible fixed assets

	Buildings €	Office furniture €	Equipment €	Computer equipment €	Motor vehicles €	Total €
Cost						
At beginning of year	4,474,803	215,814	73,196	68,509	79,865	4,912,187
Additions in year	11,259	10,136	2,183	364	-	23,942
At end of year	4,486,062	225,950	75,379	68,873	79,865	4,936,129
Depreciation						
At beginning of year	444,534	109,720	64,727	31,304	79,865	730,150
Charge for year	89,617	21,659	4,675	19,419	-	135,370
At end of year	534,151	131,379	69,402	50,723	79,865	865,520
Net book value						
At 31st December 2023	3,951,911	94,571	5,977	18,150	-	4,070,609
At 31st December 2022	4,030,269	106,094	8,469	37,205	-	4,182,037

The motor vehicle owned by the Foundation is a Mobile Health Check unit.

11 Investments

	Listed investments €	Bonds €	Cash held for investment €	Total €
Valuation at 1st January 2023	7,213,737	250,000	416,863	7,880,600
Disposals	(400,000)	-	-	(400,000)
Investment Management fee paid out	(45,965)	-	-	(45,965)
Realised gain	163,044	-	-	163,044
Unrealised gain	666,241	-	-	666,241
Investment income	80,599	-	-	80,599
Net transfers	366,320	-	(366,320)	-
Valuation at 31st December 2023	8,043,976	250,000	50,543	8,344,519
Valuation at 1st January 2022	9,360,668	250,000	296,710	9,907,378
Disposals	(459,132)	-	-	(459,132)
Investment Management fee paid out	(51,823)	-	-	(51,823)
Realised loss	(337,203)	-	-	(337,203)
Unrealised loss	(1,279,966)	-	-	(1,279,966)
Investment income	101,346	-	-	101,346
Net transfers	(120,153)	-	120,153	-
Valuation at 31st December 2022	7,213,737	250,000	416,863	7,880,600

In 2023, there was a recovery in the investment portfolio. This resulted in unrealised gains of €0.67m and realised gains of €0.16m in 2023.

12 Stocks

	2023 €	2022 €
CPR Kits	30,036	-
	30,036	-

13 Debtors

	2023 €	2022 €
General debtors	178,520	285,110
Prepayments	99,436	83,145
Other debtors	60,386	26,515
	338,342	394,770

All debtors fall due within one year

14 Cash and cash equivalents

	2023 €	2022 €
Cash at bank and in hand	602,932	2,070,504

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 €	2022 €
Trade creditors	288,685	431,789
Accruals (i)	105,059	392,962
PAYE/PRSI	106,330	92,345
Deferred income (note 16)	403,160	480,101
Total	903,234	1,397,197

(i) Accruals for 2023 included cost of CPR service provisions received but not invoiced by year end of €nil (2022: €0.3m)

16 Deferred income

	2023 €	2022 €
Deferred income at 1st January	480,101	26,400
Income deferred in period	400,000	480,101
Amounts released from previous reporting period	(476,941)	(26,400)
Deferred income at 31st December	403,160	480,101

The majority of deferred income relates to funds received from donors for specific activities with unfulfilled performance-related conditions and the income is recognised in the Statement of financial activities when the activity has been undertaken. The remaining deferred income relates to services income.

At the end of 2023 the Foundation received €400,000 for the 2024 High Risk Prevention Programme which is the main component of the deferred income balance at 31 December 2023.

17 Analysis of charitable funds

a) Movement in funds

The movements in funds classified in accordance with the Foundation's accounting policies are as follows:

	Restricted funds €	Unrestricted Funds €	Total 2023 €	Total 2022 €
Total funds of the charity at beginning of year	406,382	12,724,332	13,130,714	16,231,605
Movement in funds				
Net (expenditure)/income for the year	2,313	(575,875)	(573,562)	(3,118,391)
Other movements directly through restricted funds	-	-	-	17,500
Total funds of the charity at end of year	408,695	12,148,457	12,557,152	13,130,714

b) Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds €	Unrestricted funds €	Total €
Intangible fixed assets	-	73,948	73,948
Tangible fixed assets	-	4,070,609	4,070,609
Current assets	808,695	8,507,134	9,315,829
Creditors including deferred income	(400,000)	(503,234)	(903,234)
	408,695	12,148,457	12,557,152

18 Commitments

The Foundation had no commitments at 31st December 2023.

19 Related party transactions

The compensation of key management personnel is set out in note 8. There were no other related party transactions in 2023 or 2022.

20 Post balance sheet events

There have been no events subsequent to the year end that require any adjustment to, or additional disclosure in, the financial statements.

21 Approval of financial statements

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 27th June 2024.

Directors and other information

Directors	<p>Professor Emer Shelley Aisling Blake (retired 28 September 2023) Wally Young Professor Joe Harbison Dr Walter Cullen Joan O'Brien Dr Anne Marie O'Flynn Professor Francis Finucane Jeanette Codd McDonagh David Dempsey Kevin Cardiff Dr Catherine Conlon (elected 28 September 2023) Brian O'Sullivan (elected 7 December 2023)</p>
Chief Executive Officer	Emma Balmaine
Secretary	Helen Redmond
Registered office	<p>17-19 Rathmines Road Lower Dublin 6 D06 C780</p>
Auditor	<p>KPMG Chartered Accountants 1 Stokes Place St Stephen's Green Dublin 2 D02 DE03</p>
Internal Auditors	<p>Mazars 3 Harcourt Centre 2 Harcourt Road St Kevin's Dublin 2 D02 A339</p>
Bankers	<p>Bank of Ireland 87-89 Pembroke Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 D04 X738</p>
Solicitors	<p>Denis McSweeney Solicitors 40 Grand Canal Street Upper Dublin 4 D04 N8X3</p>
Investment Advisor	<p>Goodbody 2 Ballsbridge Park Ballsbridge Dublin 4 D04 YW83</p>
Company registration number	23434
Revenue charity number	CHY5507
Charity regulators number	20008376

Appendix

Breakdown of 2023 grants

Grantors	Grant name/ project	Purpose	Term	Grant amount	Income for 2023
HSE	Health and wellbeing	F.A.S.T Campaign	Jan-Dec 2023	250,000	250,000
HSE	Community and voluntary grant for older people	Patient Support	Jan-Dec 2023	5,000	5,000
HSE	Health and wellbeing	Health Promotion and Prevention	Jan-Dec 2023	250,000	250,000
HSE	Health and wellbeing	Patient Support	Jan-Dec 2023	33,000	33,000
HSE	HSE National Lottery Grant 2023	Patient Support	Jan-Dec 2023	5,200	5,200
HSE	Volunteer stroke scheme project	Patient Support	Jan-Dec 2023	42,000	42,000
HSE	Health and wellbeing	Patient Support	Apr-Dec 2023	9,768	9,768
HSE	Evaluation and implementation of fiscal measures on high fat salt and sugar products	Research	Jan-Dec 2024	60,000	60,000
TOTAL					654,968



Irish Heart Foundation

The National Stroke & Heart Charity

Irish Heart Foundation
17-19 Rathmines Road Lower, Dublin 6, D06 C780
01 668 5001
irishheart.ie

Charity Registration No.: CHY5507
Charity Regulatory Authority No.: 20008376
Company Registration Office No.: 23434