

Chair's Statement

As we enter our 21st year as a charity, we have many reasons to be proud of what Missing in Ireland Support Service CLG.

This year has been a combination of consolidation, having come through the challenges of the Pandemic and then the cost of living crisis that hit the entire charitable sector, the charity has maintained its position and continued to make a difference to the status and awareness of missing both in and from Ireland.

Consolidation has come through ending the year with a reasonable surplus and with a committed team of staff and volunteers. Our online strategy has proved successful, so that we are best placed for assisting those who need us through the platforms most relevant to people today.

The continued development of new relationships and partnerships have given us the means to support and work alongside other Organisations we have previously struggled to reach or properly be there for. We have maintained a continuing and comprehensive look at what we are really here for, how we best meet our aims in an ever-changing world and how we ensure we are properly there both for those we know we already serve well and for those whom we have failed to reach in the past.

As a Trustee Board, we have continued to struggle with the task of attracting new and properly qualified Trustees to complement our existing team.

As Chair, I would like to thank not only the Trustees for their tireless work and input to the Charity but also to the entire team of staff and volunteers who make us more than just a charity; a genuine lifeline for when someone goes missing.

At the heart of what we do are the lives of those who go missing and those they leave behind. How we serve those affected by the subject of missing may change but our core purpose remains the same. The dignity, respect, support and hope that we try to offer all of those we engage with must always underpin everything we do. I am confident that, as this report shows, the charity is achieving this and is set to continue to do so for the next 21 years.

Dermot Browne

Chairperson

Missing in Ireland Support Service CLG

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts Year ended 31 December 2023

1. Reference and Administrative

Charity Name Missing in Ireland Support Service CLG

Registered Charity CHY 16205

Company Number 389677

Registered Office

6-7 Hanover St East

Dublin 2

D02 W320

Helpline 1800 442 552

Trustees

Dermot Browne - Chair

Dermot Connaughton - Company Secretary

Lorraine Browne - Treasurer

Gina Reamonn

Seamus Keena

Rachel Edwards (GB)

Rachel Drennan (GB)

Auditors

Damien Hannigan & Co,

7 Oliver Plunkett Street,

Mullingar,

Co Westmeath

Website www.missingpersons.ie

Facebook: Missing Persons Helpline Ireland

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2. Structure, Governance and Management

Nature of governing document

Missing in Ireland Support Service CLG became a registered charity in 2004 (charity number CHY 16205) It is a charitable company with no issued share capital being limited by guarantee. Its governing instrument is its Articles of Association, and the Trustees are its members. Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding €1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up.

The objects as stated in the Articles of Association are:

- (a) to provide counselling and support to families in conditions of need, hardship or physical or mental distress as a result of a member of their family having disappeared without trace.
- (b) to provide help and support to persons who have left home without informing their family and friends or carers of their whereabouts and who are suffering conditions of need, hardship or physical or mental distress.
- (c) to educate the public in the social and economic problems resulting from the disruption to family life caused by the disappearance of a member of the family and the problems caused by individuals who have disappeared without trace.

Organisation

Missing in Ireland Support Service is led by a diverse and experienced Board of Trustees who ensure the charity delivers its aims. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for governing the charity's strategy and finances and monitoring its performance.

Day-to-day activities are the responsibility of the Helpline Co-ordinator. The Helpline Co-ordinator reports to the Trustees through the Chairperson. The Board places particular emphasis on maintaining high standards of governance. It has adopted the Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland. It is also compliant with the requirements and standards set by the Charities Regulator in Ireland.

Recruitment and appointment of Trustees

Most Trustee vacancies are advertised in a range of media, and candidates are required to submit a CV and undergo an interview with the Chair. The procedure for the appointment of Trustees is set out in the Articles of Association.

Induction and training

New Trustees are given a comprehensive briefing pack that includes information about the charity, their role, and the issue of missing persons .

Pay policy

The aim of our pay policy, which applies to all employees, is to offer remuneration that is fair, appropriate for the role they perform and the responsibilities they undertake to deliver our charitable aims. The Trustees consider the key management personnel of the charity to be the Chairperson.

Remuneration for staff, is set giving due consideration of the nature and responsibilities of specific role and hours of attendance.

None of our Trustees or volunteers receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity.

In order to best serve people affected, the charity is committed to working in partnership with a range of organisations from the public, private and charity sectors. A multi-agency response to disappearances is critical to success and something we are proud to foster. We work in partnership with An Garda Síochána to highlight details of all published Missing Persons Alert Notices and offer our independent and confidential support to families and friends of people who are reported missing. We are recognised leader in the field of missing persons in Ireland and have working relationships with similar Organisation in a number of other countries.

Through our National Missing Persons Helpline we provide information, support or advice via phone, Email and online.

3. Purpose, Aims and Charitable Activities of Public Benefit

Vision

Every missing person is found safe.

Mission

To be a lifeline when someone disappears.

Aims

- To provide help, hope and a safe way to reconnect for missing persons.
- To put people with lived experience at the heart of our work, amplifying their voices to achieve change.
- To build networks of support for all affected persons.

Charitable Activities of Public Benefit

Trustees have complied with their duties outlined in the Charities Act 2009 to have paid due regard to the Charity Regulator's guidance on public benefit in deciding which activities the charity should undertake.

Missing in Ireland Support Service CLG/National Missing Persons Helpline, aims to improve the wellbeing of people with a missing loved one, and of the missing persons themselves. Around 5,500 people of all ages and backgrounds are reported missing to Gardaí each year, many more than once.

Missing in Ireland Support Service/National Missing Persons Helpline, offers free, confidential support every day of the year.

The charity works in collaboration with An Garda Síochána to ensure that missing persons and their loved ones can be referred to our support services. Providing confidential and non-judgemental advice and support, 365 days a year.

Mental health is the most significant reason for an adult to go missing. For vulnerable missing adults, Missing in Ireland Support Service/National Missing Persons Helpline provides free, confidential, advice and support every day of the year. A missing adult can pass on a 'safe and well' message to their family or carers, often leading them to reconnect directly.

Missing in Ireland Support Service/National Missing Persons Helpline supports people with a missing loved one to develop resilience to cope and to manage relationships with others so they feel less alone. Our Family Peer Support service provides a sense of belonging to a community of people in a similar situation to help reduce isolation.

On receipt of a Garda Missing Persons Alert, the charity provides free publicity services to help find missing people, via Facebook, Twitter (X) and LinkedIn.

Our team is then on hand to receive information and sightings from the public, as well as contact from the missing person, every day of the year.

Volunteers

Without volunteers, we could not be a lifeline when someone disappears. Volunteers gain new rewarding experiences, and develop new skills. Volunteers make a real difference to the community of people affected by a disappearance. From raising vital funds, organising events, sharing appeals for missing persons, to providing in-depth Helpline support. The financial statements do not recognise the significant financial value attributed to volunteer time.

4. Achievements and Impact

Services Performance

We estimate that over 60,000 people each year are directly affected by a disappearance - based on the 5,500 people who disappear each having at least 12 affected family members and friends.

That number is shockingly high. As the only national charity supporting missing children, adults, and their loved ones, we are determined to increase the number of people helped, focused on greatest need.

Missing in Ireland Support Service CLG provides a Helpline for adults who are missing as well as for their loved ones. In addition, for families who need ongoing emotional support, the charity offers access to specialist support workers and counselling.

We support Garda and family searches for missing persons through our public appeals. We are acutely aware that all Missing Persons Alerts will leave a digital footprint and can in some cases can have a negative impact on wellbeing, especially in the first few days of a disappearance.

We now use our valued public appeals partner - The Grafton Barber - to raise awareness of longer-term missing persons where the initial investigation has not found them through other means, and for the highest risk missing people, whose lives are in danger.

Families of missing people

We directly supported many hundreds of families this year. Our support includes tailored practical help for families' searching for a missing loved one and emotional trauma support. Family members accessed our online family support resource which provides advice and support for different stages of the 'missing' journey, how to work with the media, and how the Gardaí and voluntary Search and Recovery Groups can help search for a missing person. We continued to deliver and develop our family peer support forum as a safe space for families to support each other, share advice and find out about opportunities to get involved with the charity.

Making publicity appeals for a missing person is one of the practical ways that the charity helps people with a missing loved one. This year a number of people we searched for were found safe through our public appeals.

Totals helped

In 2023, we had 3,177 direct contacts with our online support and information services.

Fundraising Statement

Missing in Ireland Support Service CLG is reliant on public donations and grant aid from COSC/Department of Justice to be a lifeline when someone disappears. Supporters of the cause send a powerful message that they care about people and the society we live in.

Missing in Ireland Support Service CLG is committed to complying with the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public.

Missing in Ireland Support Service CLG has a Donor Charter which is consistent with the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public.

We received no complaints regarding fundraising this year.

Missing People occasionally uses commercial participators to process donations on our behalf.

5. Financial Review

Missing in Ireland Support Service CLG continued to exercise financial diligence during the year due to the uncertain financial climate in the country. The charity recorded a surplus in the year due to a once off donation from a corporate entity. Were it not for this generous act, there would have been a deficit of €1,384 - **this donation will not be repeated.**

Total income for 2023 was €70,762.82, including a grant from COSC/Department of Justice and a single donation of €40,000.

Total expenditure was €32,146.

It is an ongoing challenge to maintain a regular and dependable income stream in the current challenging economic climate. With overheads increasing exponentially each year we can only foresee a situation where we will have to draw on our reserves in order to continue offering our services.

Volunteers again contributed significantly to the charity, far beyond the income recognised in these financial statements.

Signed: *Dermot Browne*

Chairperson

20 January 2023