

Crime Victims Helpline.ie



Annual Report 2024

Content

Chairperson's Welcome	1
Message from the CEO	2
About the Crime Victims Helpline	3
Highlights of 2024	4
Service User Feedback	6
2024 in Numbers	7
2024 Finances	13
Board of Directors and Staff	14
Charity and Company Information	15

Chairperson's Welcome

It has been my pleasure and honour to serve as Chairperson of Crime Victims Helpline (CVH) from July of this year and I am delighted to introduce our Annual Report for 2024. I invite you to explore this report for a detailed overview of CVH's achievements, financial performance, strategic initiatives and highlights from the past year.

I want to pay tribute to my predecessor, Michael Tyndall who was with CVH for many years, firstly as a Board Director and then as Chairperson. A hard act to follow, I am grateful for his legacy of exceptional leadership as well as his high governance standards and unwavering dedication to CVH and its mission to help victims of crime.

2024 was a very successful year for CVH. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our team and the support of our stakeholders, we are proud to have expanded our services and enhanced operational efficiency through extending our Helpline hours and upgrading our technology. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to sincerely thank our exceptionally dedicated team of staff and volunteers who give their all to provide practical and emotional support to victims of crime, helping them in an empathic, non-judgemental way at a very stressful time in their lives. I especially want to thank our wonderful CEO, Michele Puckhaber, for her passion to help victims, her inspirational leadership and never-ending efforts to improve the services which CVH offers.

I am most grateful to the Directors throughout 2024, for their commitment as well as their guidance, expertise and attention to governance in supporting CVH's aim to help victims of crime in the best way possible. I have greatly valued their ongoing support since I took over as Chairperson. We also welcomed a new Director, Eoin Heffernan, to the Board this year and his experience and insights are already making positive contributions to CVH.

We are extremely grateful to the Department of Justice for the necessary funding to enable us to deliver our services and for their enthusiasm and support for what we do. CVH complies fully with the requirements of the Grant Agreement issued by the Department of Justice and we look forward to continuing this valuable relationship into the future as we develop and expand the strong organisational structure already in place.

I feel privileged to be chairing CVH, a very effectively managed organisation which incorporates good governance and financial controls whilst never losing sight of our overall altruistic mission. We are aware of the vital need for charities to ensure public trust in them and we adhere strongly to the Charities Governance Code and all requirements of the Charities Regulator.

Looking forward, we are preparing a new Strategic Plan for 2026 through to 2030. We have confidence that the combination of our inspirational, dedicated CEO, selfless staff and volunteers, stakeholders and Directors, and our patron (retired Judge Gillian Hussey) mean that CVH remains strongly positioned to enhance and expand its services and continue its support victims of crime. Sadly, crime will always be inherent in society and we are grateful for all these supports that enable us to play our part in assisting those affected by it.



Clare Cresswell
Chairperson



Message from the CEO

Dear Friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2024 Annual Report of the Crime Victims Helpline (CVH).

As we reflect on the past year, I am deeply grateful for the resilience of those we serve, the dedication of our team, and the support of the Department of Justice. In every call, message, and email, we are reminded of the profound trust that victims of crime place in us during some of the most challenging times in their lives.

In 2024, we responded to the evolving needs of victims across Ireland with compassion, professionalism, and determination. We continued to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of our services and increased the opening hours of the helpline. As a result, we experienced a 15% increase in incoming calls and a 5.5 % increase in overall contacts.

2024 marked a moment of transition for our organisation. We said farewell to Michael Tyndall, who stepped down as Chair of the Board after ten years of distinguished service as a Director. Michael's steadfast leadership and commitment to good governance played a pivotal role in shaping CVH over the past decade. His integrity, wisdom, and deep understanding of our mission have left an enduring legacy, and I am profoundly thankful for his contributions.

I also extend heartfelt thanks to Naoise Kelly, who stepped down from the Board in 2024 after ten years of dedicated service as a director. Naoise's involvement with CVH stretches back even further through his many years as a volunteer. His commitment, compassion, and courage to make "good trouble" have made a lasting positive impact on our organisation and on the lives of the people we support. I am deeply appreciative of everything he contributed throughout his long-standing association with CVH.

CVH's evolution and achievements of the past year were only possible through the extraordinary effort and dedication of our small team. To our staff and volunteers: thank you for your empathy, your expertise, and your unwavering commitment to those we serve. To our Board of Directors, thank you for your vision and leadership. And to our funder, the Department of Justice, thank you for believing in our mission and your on-going support.

I invite you to explore this report to see the impact of our work. As we look to the future, we remain steadfast in our mission: ensuring that every victim of crime in Ireland is listened to, supported, and informed.



Michele Puckhaber
CEO



About the Crime Victims Helpline

Crime Victims Helpline is a free, confidential, and non-judgmental support service for all victims of crime in Ireland. We listen with empathy, provide emotional support, and offer clear, accessible information about the criminal justice system.

Our service is available through phone, email, text, and webchat, ensuring victims can reach us in a way that feels most comfortable to them. We assist individuals in understanding their rights as victims and provide practical information about the criminal justice system—from reporting a crime to attending court and beyond.

In addition to direct support, we help victims by connecting them with other organisations and services that can meet their specific needs, such as local or specialised victim support services. Whether someone needs to talk, information to make informed decisions, or help finding specialised assistance, we are here to guide and support them every step of the way.



✓ Provide meaningful, person-centred support at the point of need

- At Crime Victims Helpline we provide people who have been impacted by crime with the space and time to speak with someone who can offer a listening ear; and we provide information, guidance and signposting to relevant services. Through these supports, we aim to empower people who have been impacted by crime.
- We provide a service which is easy to access, which is free, independent and confidential.
- We simplify and streamline a complex criminal justice system and victim support sector.
- As a service we pride ourselves on providing a responsive person-centred service. As such we are dynamic, flexible and adapt our service to meet the changing nature of the criminal justice system, the changing nature of crime, and the needs of victims.

Highlights of 2024

European Day for Victims of Crime



Charleen Murphy recounts the physical, mental, emotional, and professional toll of a brutal assault by a man who had been harassing her online.

On Thursday 22nd of February, the Crime Victims Helpline co-hosted a conference with the Centre for Crime Justice & Victim Studies (CCJVS) to mark European Day for Victims of Crime. The theme of the conference was 'Victims' Rights in Ireland: Current Challenges'. The conference featured a range of speakers from academia and victims' rights organisations, who shared their research and expertise on victims' rights and experiences in Ireland.

The event also featured an interview with Charleen Murphy, digital creator and award-winning co-host of the podcast "Hold My Drink" about her experience as a victim of crime and her engagement with the criminal justice process.

The conference was attended by over 80 delegates from key criminal justice stakeholders, victims support organisations and academics. Coverage of the event was included in a number of media outlets, including RTE Radio 1 and Newstalk.



Susan Leahy BCL, LLM, PhD (left), Co-Director of the Centre for Crime, Justice and Victim Studies, at the University of Limerick and Michele Puckhaber (right), Chief Executive of the Crime Victims Helpline

Highlights of 2024

Awareness Raising Video and Cinema Ad

As the population of Ireland grows and changes, it is vital that the services of CVH are known and available to all. With the guidance of the video production company The Reelists, CVH created a short video featuring our wonderful volunteers, family, and friends that highlights our role in supporting all victims of crime in Ireland. The video played in cinemas across the country in 2024. If you missed it in the cinema, you can view it by clicking on the picture below or by visiting CVH's YouTube Channel.



National Ploughing Championships



Rebecca Fitzmaurice,
CVH Volunteer Coordinator

CVH was honoured to be invited by the Department of Justice and the Garda National Victim Liaison Unit to take part in the National Ploughing Championships. As a featured stop along the "Victim's Journey", the event provided an excellent opportunity for CVH to engage with a wide range of attendees over the three days. Many visitors were eager to learn more about the services CVH offers, while others took the opportunity to share their personal experiences or express concerns about crime in their communities. The event also allowed for valuable connections with colleagues across the criminal justice system, helping to strengthen collaborative relationships.



17 - 19 Sep 2024
Ratheniska, Co. Laois
National Ploughing Championships

Service User Feedback

Obtaining feedback from people who have used our service is essential for maintaining high standards and ensuring that the Crime Victims Helpline continues to meet the needs of victims of crime.

In 2024, CVH introduced service user satisfaction surveys to gather insights into the experiences of those who reached out for support. The results were overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the high quality of care provided by the helpline.

A total of 66 respondents rated their satisfaction with the service, with an average score of 4.5 out of 5. Notably, 75% of participants gave the highest possible rating (5 out of 5), emphasizing the consistency and excellence of the support offered.

Respondents particularly valued the empathy, promptness, and clarity of information provided. Here are a few representative comments:

- *"[Staff member] was amazing, so kind and helpful. Thank you."*
- *"Thanks for the quick response each time."*
- *"The person I was speaking to was very kind and understanding. It helped having someone to listen to me."*
- *"[Volunteer] was very helpful and provided very thorough information in response to my question."*
- *"She explained everything clearly."*

These testimonials affirm the helpline's role as a compassionate and professional resource for those in need.

However, not all feedback was positive. Some service users expressed frustration about the limited support and resources available for certain types of crime. One victim of burglary remarked:

"I want the same help as someone of heavy crime. How is there not more for me [and] my family?"

Currently, aside from the Crime Victims Helpline, there are no dedicated services for victims of so-called general crimes—such as theft, burglary, robbery, and assault—beyond Victim Support at Court, which only provides assistance during trial proceedings. This leaves a significant number of crime victims without practical, in-person support for essential needs like meeting with Gardaí or completing compensation applications. In response, CVH has drafted a pilot proposal to provide enhanced support services for victims of these underserved crimes.

The user satisfaction survey has been expanded with new questions to gather deeper insights. We look forward to using this valuable information to further improve and tailor CVH services so that every victim, no matter the crime, has access to the highest quality support.

2024 in Numbers

In 2024, the Crime Victims Helpline (CVH) experienced a **5.5% increase in total contacts compared to 2023**, with 6,869 engagements recorded. This rise reflects growing awareness of and reliance on the helpline, particularly through digital channels.

CVH took steps over the course of 2024 to expand our capacity through the addition of helpline open hours, strengthening our volunteer programme and the greater utilisation of Helpline Support Worker Relief staff. **Despite a 15% increase in incoming calls, CVH saw a 29% decrease in missed calls, and a 30% decrease in voicemails.**

Contacts by Type	
Phone	4701
Email	1741
Text	211
Post	109
Webchat	107
TOTAL	6869

The majority of contacts, 77%, came directly from victims of crime. 8% came from members of the public, 7% from a friend or relative of a victim, 6% from Garda Victim Service Offices, Gardaí and the Garda Ombudsman.

CVH records the gender of the person contacting us if they self-identify but we do not generally ask for this information. An exception to this is in relation to domestic violence, where separate services exist for men and women. In 2024, 58% of service users were female identifying while 42% were male identifying.

As in previous years, assault and harassment/stalking* were the two main types of crime that CVH was contacted about in 2024. **However, theft-related contacts rose by 66% (from 80 to 133), and burglary contacts increased by 46% (from 79 to 115).** In contrast, there was a significant decline in reports related to sextortion, non-consensual image sharing, and extortion, suggesting possible shifts in crime patterns or public engagement on these issues.

**In 2023, stalking became a standalone offense in Ireland. The statutory definitions of harassment and stalking are very similar and it is outside of CVH's training and expertise to differentiate between the two crimes. As such, they are counted together in our statistics.*

Type of Crime	No. of Contacts
Assault	623
Harassment/Stalking	595
Fraud	275
Rape/Sexual Assault	153
Theft	133
Criminal Damage	117
Burglary	115
Threats to Harm/Kill	112
Antisocial Behaviour	93
Hacking/Data Protection Breach	81
Extortion (Sextortion)	60
Car Theft	54
Child Abuse (Historic)	52
Road Traffic Incident	51
Coercive Control	42
Threat to/Sharing of Intimate Photos	40
Other	32
Extortion	29
Arson	23
Child Abuse (Recent)	23
Robbery	22
Trespassing	20
Homicide	17
Violation Safety/Barring Order	9
Human Trafficking	4
Abduction	2

2024 saw an alarming increase in the number of people contacting CVH regarding hate-motivated crimes, most notably racist hate crimes.

The Criminal Justice (Hate offenses) Act 2024 came into force on 31st December 2024. The new legislation provides for increased prison sentences for certain crimes, where proven to be motivated by hatred, or where hatred is demonstrated.

Motivation	No. of Contacts
Domestic Abuse	200
Racist Hate Crime	44
LGBTQ Hate	13

Location	% of Contacts	% of ROI Population (2022 Census)
Dublin	39%	28%
Cork	9%	11%
Galway	5%	5%
Kildare	4%	5%
Limerick	3.5%	4%
Meath	3.5%	4%
Tipperary	3.5%	3%
Clare	3%	2.5%
Waterford	2.5%	2.5%
Wexford	2.5%	3%
Wicklow	2%	3%
Mayo	2%	3%
Donegal	2%	3%
Louth	2%	3%
Kerry	2%	3%
Westmeath	2%	2%
Kilkenny	2%	2%
Leitrim	1%	1%
Longford	1%	1%
Sligo	1%	1%
Cavan	1%	2%
Roscommon	1%	1%
Laois	1%	2%
Offaly	1%	2%
Carlow	1%	1%
Monaghan	1%	1%

CVH is a national helpline, and it is a priority that we are known across the Republic of Ireland. In line with previous years, the distribution of contacts largely mirrored national population patterns.

Dublin accounted for 39% of location-identified calls, significantly above its 28.3% share of the national population.

Cork followed with 9.2% of contacts, closely matching its 11.3% population share.

Galway, Limerick, and Kildare each contributed between 4% and 5% of contacts, reflecting proportional engagement.

In 2024, CVH made over 3,500 referrals to a large variety of different organisations, supports and resources. This reflects the wide-ranging needs of people who are harmed by crime. As we have seen in previous years, the vast majority of referrals were made to the Gardaí and Garda Victim Service Offices.

Referral	No. of Referrals
Gardaí	943
GVSO	735
FLAC	350
Counselling	284
Hotline.ie	164
Garda Ombudsman (GSOC)	116
Counselling in Primary Care	109
Domestic Abuse National Helpline	67
GP	65
Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme	64
Victim Support at Court	51
Social Media Platform	47
Rape Crisis National Helpline	40
DPP	32
Citizens Information	25
DEASPA	24
Male Advice Line	20
St Vincent de Paul	19
Samaritans	17
Doras	17
One in Four	16

Referral	No. of Referrals
Men's Aid	14
Threshold	13
Local Councillor/TD	13
Residential Tenancies Board	13
Women's Aid (stalking referral)	12
Immigrant Council of Ireland	12
Pieta House	10
Senior Alert Scheme	10
ASSC	9
Connect	9
INAR/iReport	9
Tourist SOS (formerly ITAS)	9
Sexual Violence Centre Cork	8
Care After Prison	8
Sage Advocacy	6
Friends of the Elderly	6
Fraudsmart.ie	6
Competition and Consumer Protection Commission	6
Alone	6
Childline	4
Data Protection Commission	4
IRVA	4

Referral	No. of Referrals
Parentline	4
International Victim Support Service	4
CARI	3
Court Services	3
Support After Homicide	3
Advic	3
Seniorline	2
Irish Prison Service	2
Crisis Text Line	1
PARC	1
Pavee Point	1
Teenline	1

2024 Finances

CRIME VICTIMS HELPLINE (A Company Limited by Guarantee)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Note	2024 €	2023 €
Current assets			
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	5	2,012	1,284
Cash at bank and in hand	6	35,374	25,045
		<u>37,386</u>	<u>26,329</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	7	(10,760)	(11,300)
Net current assets		<u>26,626</u>	<u>15,029</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>26,626</u>	<u>15,029</u>
Net assets		<u><u>26,626</u></u>	<u><u>15,029</u></u>
Reserves			
Income & expenditure account		<u>26,626</u>	<u>15,029</u>
Members' funds		<u><u>26,626</u></u>	<u><u>15,029</u></u>

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board:

SCHEDULE TO THE DETAILED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024 €	2023 €
Income		
Grant Income	188,504	157,500
Donations & other	1,696	82
Deferred income	-	7,766
	<u>190,200</u>	<u>165,348</u>
	2024 €	2023 €
Administration expenses		
Staff salaries	117,831	106,503
Employer's social insurance contributions	12,259	11,233
Employer's contributions to staff pensions	3,949	3,293
Awareness Raising	14,184	11,163
Bank charges	194	171
Computer costs	3,599	3,542
Conference & meetings	525	654
General office expenses	4,239	2,965
Insurances	1,392	1,394
Interpretation & Translation	121	18
Legal and professional	835	852
Postage	732	452
Sundry expenses	-	233
Telephone	12,577	11,226
Training and memberships	3,501	1,747
Travel and subsistence	708	466
Auditors' remuneration	1,957	2,000
Dormant Fund Projects	-	7,766
	<u>178,603</u>	<u>165,678</u>

Board of Directors

Crime Victims Helpline is committed to having the highest standards of good governance. Directors are independently elected and no Director receives any remuneration whatsoever for their service.

The trust and support of the community are not something that we take for granted. Any queries in relation to the governance of Crime Victims Helpline can be directed to info@crimevictimshelpline.ie

Clare Cresswell, Chairperson
John Kelly, Company Secretary
Declan Harrington, Treasurer
Margaret Clapham
Naomi Coleman
Eoin Heffernan (appointed 2024)
Susan Leahy
Naoise Kelly (resigned 2024)
Michael Tyndall (resigned 2024)

Staff

Michele Puckhaber
Chief Executive

Caoimhe McKeon
Service Coordinator

Marie Murray/Rebecca Fitzmaurice (Job Share)
Volunteer Coordinator

Chloe Leech
Helpline Support Worker (Relief)

Lisa Cullotty
Helpline Support Worker (Relief)

Andrea Whelan
Helpline Support Worker (Relief)

Charity and Company Information

Crime Victims Helpline is a registered charity
16894 (CRO)
20061890 (Charities Regulator)

Company Limited by Guarantee 409235

Registered Office
6/7 Hanover Street East, D02 W320

Crime Victims Helpline is supported by



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice