

# Annual Report 2024



**Men's  
Development  
Network**

# FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



It is my great honour to undertake the role of Chairperson for the Men's Development Network and to be the first woman to take up this position. Activism, challenging injustice and a belief in equality is my passion and to continue this work, alongside the team in the Men's Development Network is an exciting venture for me both personally and professionally.

I have been involved with this incredible organisation for the past 12 years - initially as a facilitator for the Parenting Programme and then the Men's Leadership Programme and serving on the Board of Directors for the past three years.

I am motivated by and committed to the values that underpin the work of the organisation – values of equality, non-judgemental, professionalism, partnership and love. I am constantly impressed by the dynamic and committed staff team that work hard to deliver on the mission of the organisation and to support men, women and families to live healthier lives.

Reflecting on 2024, a key highlight for me was the launch of the 2023 annual report, in the Mansion House in Dublin. Being hosted in this space gave fitting recognition of the work of MDN as a National Organisation that is involved in policy making reflecting change from a grassroots level. The foundations of our work were also celebrated from the beginnings, the Engage Programme the Mend Programme and Men's Development and Leadership Programmes being cornerstones upon which we continue to build from.



The Taoiseach; Simon Harris addressed the room with his support and acknowledgement of the work of MDN and in particular the White Ribbon Campaign and that of leading the National Strategy for Domestic Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. On Feirm Ground 2 was launched at the National Ploughing Championships which I was privy to be in attendance. The Programme was launched by two Ministers on the day who were really impressed with the delivery methods and the impact of the programme in the community. This endorsement for our work from government Ministers and the Taoiseach is testament to the committed work done by all the staff on the ground and funding for these programmes secured.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank our CEO, Sean Cooke, the management team and each and every staff member. Thank you to my fellow Board members. I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge Noel Synnott, the outgoing Chair, who has been so generous in offering guidance and support.

Two of our staff members moved on this year and the board would like to thank both for their outstanding contribution to the Organisation. Colm Kelly Ryan for his valued work on the White Ribbon Campaign and a particular thanks to John Doyle who has retired from the organisation. His leadership of the MEND Programme from its inception has been steadfast in his belief in transformational change.

I would like to extend sincere gratitude to our many stakeholders. These collaborations and shared commitment are fundamental to the meaningful impact of the Men's Development Network. Each person connected to the service ensures our work remains sustainable and responsive to the complex and evolving needs of modern society.

Critically, I want to commend the men who engage with our services and programmes, who have the strength to be vulnerable, to reflect, learn and grow. Together, with the wider team, I look forward to 2025 and the challenges and successes it will bring and to continue on our journey of challenging for change!

Thank you.

**ROSE HEARNE**  
CHAIRPERSON

“ *Activism, challenging injustice and a belief in equality is my passion and to continue this work, alongside the team in the Men's Development Network is an exciting venture for me both personally and professionally.* ”



Chair Rose Hearne and former Chair Noel Synnott.



# Table of Contents



**Men's  
Development  
Network**

Better Lives for Men, Better Lives for All

STENZCO

5	OUR VALUES	24	REFERRAL HUB:
7	SPOTLIGHT: MOMENTS THAT MATTERED	25	OUR STAFF
9	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	27	HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT
11	CEO OVERVIEW	41	White Ribbon Ireland
13	CLINICAL SERVICES	45	FINANCIAL INFORMATION

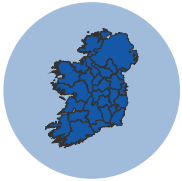


Men's  
Development  
Network

*Better lives for men,  
Better lives for all.*

20  
24

Year in  
numbers  
Snapshot



6

National programmes



1,110

Calls to the Male Advice Line



99

Clients referrals to counselling

#### MEND key figures



132

men assessed for domestic violence programmes

45

Men completed  
programmes

94

Partners or ex-  
partners supported  
through partner  
contact services

#### Communications

189.4%

Increase in social media\*  
interactions \*META

388.5%

Increase in  
newsletter sign-ups  
year on year

11

Media interviews  
facilitated.

#### Health & Wellness

47

OFG2 Workshops  
delivered

603

Agricultural  
professionals  
trained

387

Men's Health Week  
live webinar  
attendees

#### Development and Advocacy

467

People engaged across WRI events

5

Post-Primary partner schools collaborated with  
White Ribbon Ireland.

20

Men took part in 'New Conversations with leaders'



[www.mensnetwork.ie](http://www.mensnetwork.ie)



[men@mensnetwork.ie](mailto:men@mensnetwork.ie)



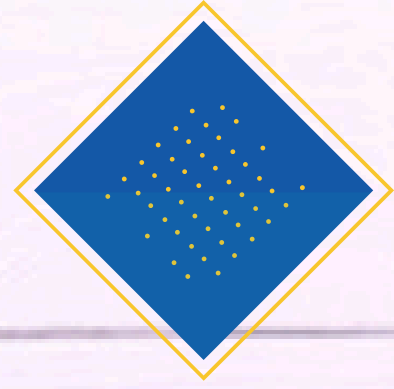
[@mensnetworkie](https://www.instagram.com/mensnetworkie)



051 844260

# OUR VALUES

---



## **EQUALITY**

To strive towards a more equal society in which all people are treated equally and without discrimination, will create the conditions for everyone to thrive.

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

A professional approach ensures both clients and partners are treated with respect and dignity and all areas of compliance are met.

## **NON-JUDGEMENTAL**

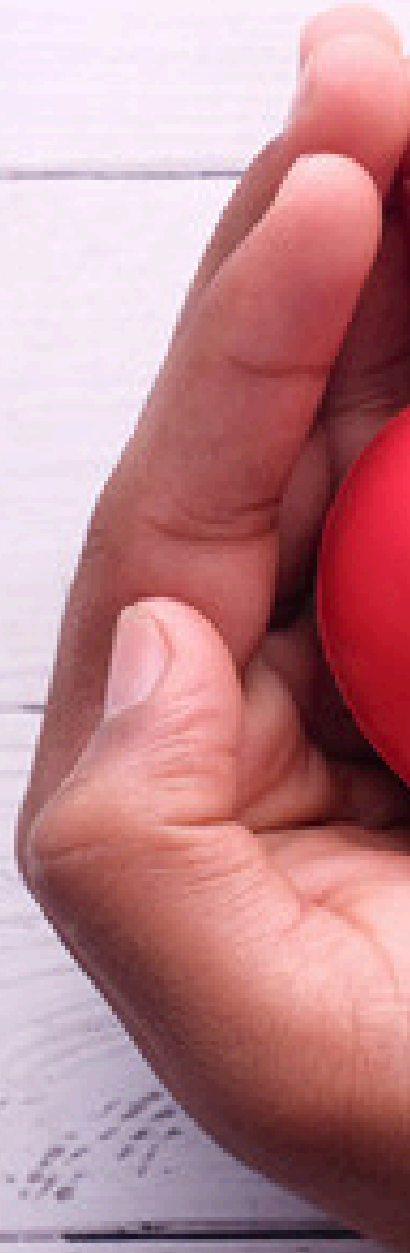
Coming from this perspective allows for tolerance, respect, and dignity to influence the conditions for change.

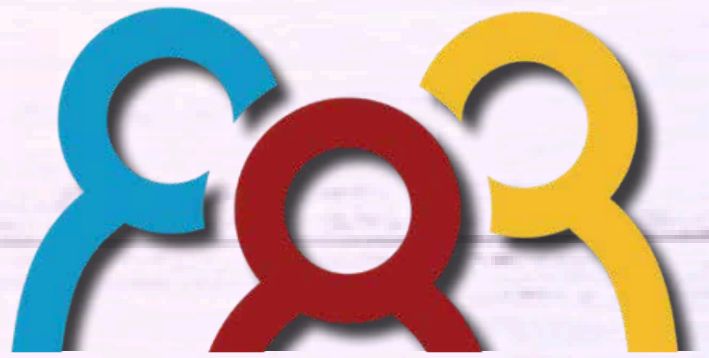
## **PARTNERSHIP**

Working in collaboration and having a non-adversarial approach to effecting change creates the conditions for true and sustainable change.

## **LOVE**

Is the cornerstone of our existence; without it the conditions for personal and societal growth are limited.





# Spotlight Moments

## Marking a Milestone, Making a Difference

In 2024, the MEND programme marks 20 years of vital, life-changing work. Over the past two decades, MEND has supported men to take responsibility for their behaviour, challenge harmful patterns, and build safer, more respectful relationships in their personal lives through the national Choices programme.

Developed as a community-based response to domestic violence under the framing of transforming masculinities, MEND works closely with partner support services and the wider domestic violence sector to keep the safety and well-being of women and children at the heart of everything we do.

As the programme continues to grow, reaching this 20-year milestone provides a moment of reflection, as well as a reaffirmation of our commitment to accountability, safety, and lasting behavioural change. Ultimately, working towards a future without violence is made possible by the work put in by our network of trained facilitators and support workers across Ireland.

As someone who has had the privilege of working within the MEND (Men Ending Domestic Abuse) programme, marking 20 years of this vital service is both a professional and deeply personal milestone. Over the past two decades, MEND has grown from a pioneering initiative to a national, evidence-based programme that continues to change lives and challenge abusive behaviour at its roots.

From the inside, I've witnessed first-hand how transformative this work can be, not only for the men who attend, but for their partners, children, and wider communities. The heart of MEND has always been about accountability, respect, and safety. Our goal is not simply to manage abusive behaviour but to fundamentally support men in making lasting changes, so they can build relationships that are non-violent, healthy, and grounded in equality.

The work is not easy. It requires time, patience, and a willingness from the men to confront difficult truths about themselves and their actions. But over the years, I've seen incredible progress. I've sat in rooms where men, sometimes for the first time, have understood the real impact of their abuse, not just physically, but emotionally and psychologically. I've seen them begin to listen, to take ownership, and to work toward change, not because they're being told to, but because they want to.

A critical part of this journey has always been the Partner Support Service. It is essential that the voices and safety of the women affected are heard and respected throughout the process. Their input helps hold the men accountable and ensures that any change is rooted in real-world impact, not just words spoken in a group setting.

MEND has grown in reach and reputation because of the commitment of its facilitators, support staff, and the broader teams. But the real testament to its success lies in the feedback we receive from those we support. Partners expressing a sense of increased safety. Children feeling less fear in their own homes. Men who say, "I didn't know I could change, now I do."

Looking back over 20 years, I feel immense pride in what we've built and the lives we've touched. And as we look ahead, I believe our work is more important than ever. We continue to face a society where gender-based violence remains a serious issue, but we also see hope, in every man who walks through our doors ready to change, and every family that finds a path forward toward healing and peace.

**MICHAEL DELANEY HENNESSY**

AREA PROGRAMME COORDINATOR MEND



# That Mattered

## Championing Change: Gender Equality in Focus at WRI

In September 2024, White Ribbon Ireland reached a milestone in its Post-Primary Schools Programme with a two-day experiential training in Dublin. Held on 20 and 21 September, the event brought together 30 participants from five partner schools and organisations across Leinster to build capacity to prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence. Led by Dr Jackson Katz and GBV prevention specialist La Shonda Coleman, the training focused on bystander intervention and leadership in violence prevention, with practical exercises and role-play to embed real-world skills. Delivered through cross-departmental planning within MDN, the event reflects our commitment to long-term change through education, advocacy, and community engagement.

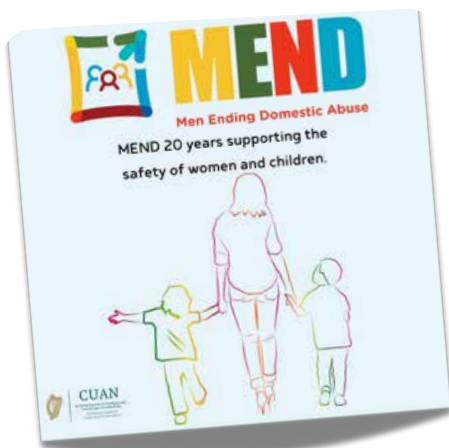


La Shonda Coleman shares transformative approaches to gender equity.

“We were proud to host this White Ribbon Ireland event, creating space for vital conversations on ending gender-based violence.”

— Fredrick Okungu

White Ribbon Programme Coordinator



MEND social media post, ahead of the 20 years of MEND celebration

A proud moment for MDN. Being named a Sunday Times Best Place to Work 2024 recognises the culture our team builds every day, rooted in our values of equality, non-judgement, partnership, professionalism, and love. It reflects our commitment to meaningful work, supportive supervision, learning and development, and a healthy work-life balance. This recognition helps us attract and retain great people and strengthens our voice as a national organisation. Above all, it shows that caring for our staff is as important as the work we do.



## Beyond 9–5: Extended Evening Support on the Male Advice Line

In 2024, the Male Advice Line (MAL) extended its weekday operating hours to better meet the needs of those reaching out for support. Previously open until 8pm only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the service is now available every weekday evening from Monday to Friday until 8pm.

This change recognises that domestic violence and abuse do not follow a 9-to-5 schedule. By expanding evening availability, the MAL provides a safer and more accessible space for men who may find it easier to call after work or during quieter hours.

There are also plans to extend the current weekend hours (2pm–6pm) to a full-day service from 10am–6pm, subject to funding. These developments are part of Men's Development Network's ongoing commitment to ensuring support is available when it's most needed on any day.



Social media posts reflect the new opening hours of MAL

“We're delighted to be expanding the Male Advice Line to reach more men when they need us. Every extension of the service is a step towards greater safety, accessibility, and dignity for those experiencing abuse.”

— Derek Smith MAL Manager

# Strategic Objectives

## Creating more spaces for new conversations with men

Our approach to engaging men has been developed over almost 25 years. A developmental approach, it meets men where they are at and provides a supportive space to reflect, identify their needs and provide actions to move forward. It also acknowledges that the existing societal structures provide huge challenges for men to become their best selves. We will try to expand this work at a local, regional, and national level.

## Increasing supports to men, women, and families

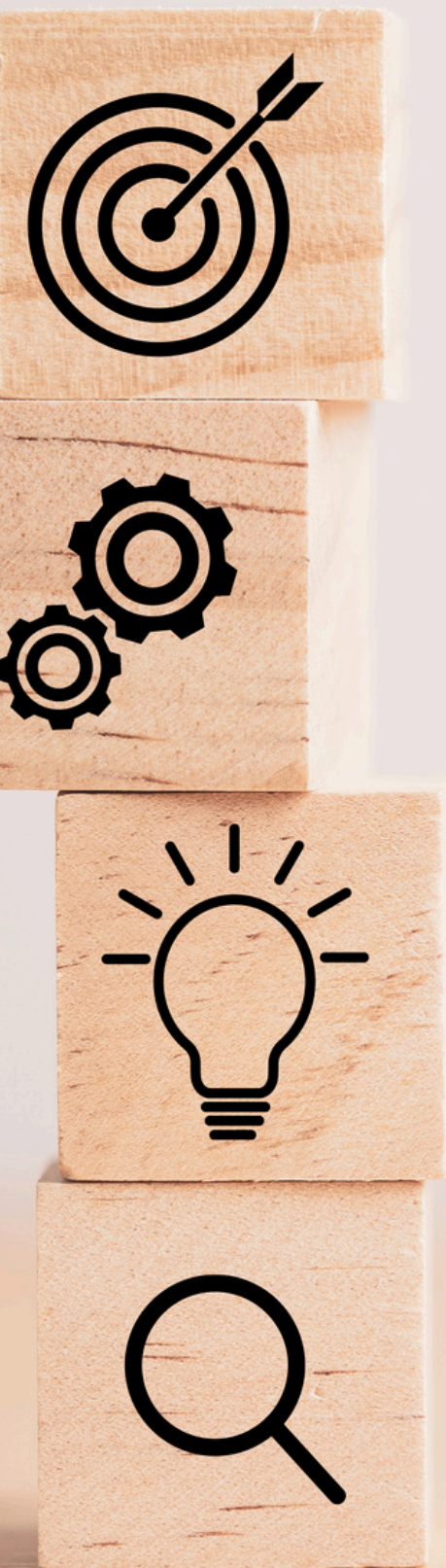
We will continue to develop programmes that support and increase the capacity of men, women, and their families to engage in positive steps to improve their own lives and those of their families. We will try our best to expand our clinical services to ensure men and their families have access to services such as counselling, the Male Advice Line, and behavioural change programmes.

## Advocating for social change and greater gender equality

There are many factors that influence the creation of an unequal society, including policy formation, social and gender conditioning, and social determinants. Through our campaigning work, we will continue to support and lead on projects to address these inequalities in partnership with other national agencies.

## Influencing the policy, practice, and processes of engaging men

Working within the existing networks, we will continue to promote our methodology of engaging men and highlighting the social conditioning contexts that contribute to inequality. As part of this promotion, we will develop training and resources that improve practices for service providers. Under this objective, we will improve our communications infrastructure internally and externally, taking advantage of online and social media platforms and CRM technologies.



“ As a relatively new employee at the Men's Development Network, I've been really impressed by the supportive and inclusive environment here. It's a place where I feel valued, and the work we do is meaningful. I'm excited to be part of a team that's so passionate about making a positive impact

- Sabrina, Client Support Worker. ”



# CEO Overview

As we closed out 2024 it was fantastic to reflect on our successes and learn from our challenges. Organisationally, Men's Development Network (MDN), continues to grow and reach more people who require our assistance and support on the most appropriate ways to engage men and boys on their health and well-being, gender equality and ending gender-based violence.

“Individually we can change our world,  
and collectively we can change  
the world.”

Our stated values are cornerstones to our work, and it is through the lens of these values we have reviewed the past year. For all our organisational advances we must remain vigilant as these values can be sometimes challenged and undermined. Across our world, significant attempts have been made to row back on important and hard-fought gains on gender equality and diversity. A culture of intolerance is emerging in which the very fabric of a stable society is being undermined. It is often said the standard bearer for how we view society is on how we treat the most vulnerable and those who are different. We may be a cog in the drive for equality and to end violence here at home, and Ireland may be a small nation on the world stage, yet it remains vital that we speak up, lead with compassion, and hold people and institutions to account. We do so, knowing that individually we can change our world and collectively we can change the world.



The 3<sup>rd</sup> National Strategy for Domestic Sexual and Gender-Based Violence is now moving into its third year, with 2024 being the first year of the establishment of Cuan the national agency with responsibility for its implementation. Enormous strides have been made by the agency. The Men's Development Network looks forward to continuing to work in partnership and collaboration to ensure the best outcomes can be reached. Our shared concern for the national roll out of Choices (National Domestic Violence Intervention Programme), needs to be prioritised alongside major awareness campaigns and financial investment, for engaging men and boys as allies to addressing gender-based violence.

The 2008/9 National Men's Health Policy is still a relevant document today and deserves the Government to restate its commitment to its recommendations, complementing its endorsement of the Healthy Ireland Men's action plan 2025. Major evidence supports the investment in specific men's health programmes to create better outcomes for men's health. While good progress has been achieved, certain problems stubbornly remain, such as suicide rates and self-care.

2024 has built on the previous year's engagements in collaborative and partnership approaches to our work. We have continued to work with our health partners on the development of the Healthy Ireland Men Action plan, the Department of Health & Agriculture & HSE On Ferim Ground programme, DRCC on the We Consent Programme, Women's Aid, Facing Reality, addressing pornography research, Safe Ireland and Move Ireland on the delivery of the Choices programme. New partnerships were also developed with the GAA and Ruhama on the Game Changer Project. Research relationships with Equimondo, Dublin City University, South East Technical University, and University of Galway have also been initiated and progressed.

The quality of our engagement in these research and consultative fora has been significant, offering informed insight on best approaches to engaging men and boys. Feedback from our training participants and clients indicates a high satisfaction rate on the delivery and quality of service and on the content and delivery of our various training outputs.

Through our work and services, we are open to all. We engage people where they are at, we listen, empathise and support. We create spaces of safety and warmth. We work with victims, survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence. We deliver programmes to health professionals, teachers, farmers, youth and community workers, all underpinned with respect and dignity, realising a 15% increase in engagements.



Seán Cooke, Barbara Condon (CEO of Ruhama) and Colin Regan (GAA Community & Health Manager). Pictured at the launch of the Game Changer programme in Croke Park.

Our advocacy across our programmes and research has promoted equality and broadened a greater understanding the role of men and boys have in achieving it. This in turn has influenced both practice and policy within the areas of education, the workplace and in government. Our advocacy has also consolidated our organisation's role as a partner in achieving gender equality and as an ally to women's organisations, culminating in full membership of the National Women's Council this year. Organisationally, we also improved our capacity to support our own staff, and this was reflected in being awarded the Sunday Times Best Place to Work award for 2024.

THE SUNDAY TIMES IRELAND  
**Best Places  
to Work 2024**

Much of our work is about connecting or maintaining connections. We know isolation can greatly debilitate the ability to live your most authentic life. We also know our work is embedded in making these connections. We know our staff value and celebrate these connections in their work, within their families and communities. This we, believe is one of our core values, LOVE and without it, the meaning in what we do evaporates.

In acknowledgement of such connections, I wish to thank John Doyle, on his retirement, for his positive influence on and within the MDN. His professionalism and calmness in all circumstances and situations, his deep commitment to equality, his willingness to collaborate, his empathy and the love shown to all are deeply appreciated and will not be forgotten. I would also like to acknowledge other staff who have made significant contributions and have move on, Colm Kelly Ryan, Tara Lawlor, Martin Forrest and Aoife Kyne

As our world, at this time, travels through many uncertainties, here at MDN, we will hold our values close, promote then through all our work and interactions and especially through our continued commitment of reaching out to one person at a time. Hopefully, our new strategy will reflect this new reality for the next five years.

**SEAN COOKE**  
CEO



# Clinical Services



In 2024, Men's Development Network's Clinical Services continued to support men (as well as their partners and families) across the country through a range of integrated, trauma-informed responses, including: counselling, outreach, advice, and behaviour change programmes. This vital work includes our MEND Programme, our MDN Counselling Service, the Male Advice Line and the Client Support Work Outreach Service.

Our services are made possible thanks to a dedicated team of contracted professionals, including facilitators, outreach workers and partner support workers, who play a key role in supporting clients through difficult times and are crucial to our operations.

The work in our clinical services is focused on supporting men in crisis through addressing the root causes of domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence (DSGBV), as well as collaborating with communities and agencies to expand access to essential services.

The following pages offer a snapshot of our services and progress throughout 2024.

Male Advice Line

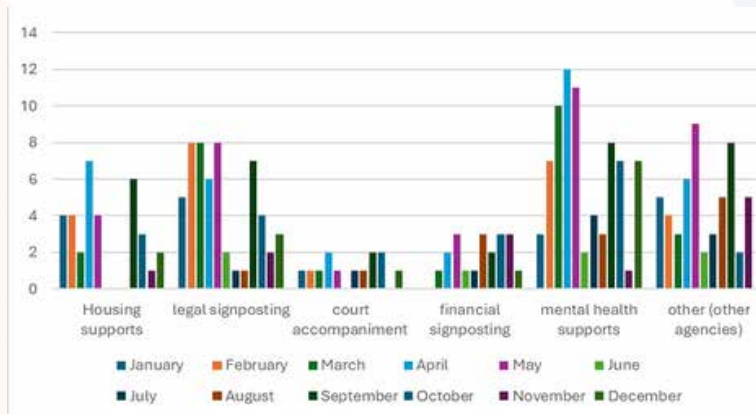


1800 816 588

# Client Support Work (CSW)

## Outreach Service

The Client Support Work Outreach Service delivered wraparound support to 59 men in 2024. While slightly down from the 67 supported in 2023 due to staff vacancies, this year still saw significant development in the service. With funding for five new support workers, the service expanded across 26 counties by providing essential one-to-one help for men experiencing DSGBV. Our dedicated support workers offered emotional support, court accompaniment, as well as counselling referrals, housing assistance, and legal signposting where necessary. A small-scale client feedback survey showed that through this work, 90% felt heard and understood and 100% would recommend the service to others. In this small-scale survey, mental health was the most common support area identified. The graph below highlights in greater detail the distribution of the most sought-after services on a monthly basis:



The graph above highlights in greater detail the distribution of the most sought-after services on a monthly basis.

“ This is a life **situation**; this is not their life. Our **positive message** is that ‘Things appear **brighter** when you **open up**’. ”

Derek Smith

- Counselling Co-ordinator & Advice Line Supervisor

## Client Stories

“James”\* was referred by the Male Advice Line and supported through coercive control in a same-sex relationship. Over the course of a year, he regained financial and emotional independence and successfully exited the abusive situation.

A client with a Safety Order against his wife received ongoing court and mental health support, helping him move toward judicial separation with the help of MDN and his solicitor.

Another client, experiencing coercive control and concerned for his daughter’s well-being, was supported through custody proceedings, therapeutic referrals, and is on the path towards further stability through the support of our CSW.

\*Name changed to protect identity.

## Key Highlights, Collaborations and Partnerships:

This past year saw MDN launch a targeted advertising campaign to raise awareness of the Male Advice Line and CSW outreach services, particularly in under-reached areas. Timed to align with the recruitment of new support workers, the campaign included radio adverts aired three times daily across regional stations such as Highland FM, Kerry Radio, and Midwest Radio, alongside half-page ads in local newspapers. The campaign was also promoted through MDN’s social media channels which helped to boost visibility and encourage referrals in newly supported regions.

As well as this, in 2024 staff engaged in a wide-ranging programme of training and development to strengthen client support and ensure best practice across services.

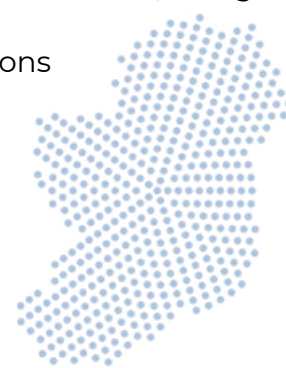
Core topics included GDPR, perinatal domestic violence, the rights of unmarried parents (TREOIR), and intercultural awareness and competence, delivered in partnership with RUHAMA. As CUAN prepared to take over responsibilities from TUSLA, it led a series of training workshops in the latter half of the year to support a smooth transition.

Staff were also trained on the enhanced internal CRM system (Esme) following recent infrastructure updates. Additional learning opportunities included Trauma-Informed Practice seminars (NOVAS/HSE), while two dedicated wellbeing and team-building days in Carlow and Wicklow helped to foster staff connection, reflection, and mental wellness.

In early 2024, through close collaboration with Family Resource Centres (FRCs), MDN identified a significant gap in awareness and training around male experiences of domestic violence. While many men access FRCs, often while dropping off or collecting children, staff reported difficulty engaging them in workshops or broader services.

Throughout 2024, our CSWs engaged with a wide range of partners, collaborators and various other services which included, but are not limited to:

- Men's Sheds
- Family law solicitors
- Child and Family Support Networks
- Family Resource Centres (FRCs)
- Youth and community centres
- Garda Síochána
- Tusla
- Health centres
- SONAS Safe Home (ongoing housing partnership)
- Pieta House
- Regional mental health services
- Barbers, gyms, sports centres, and golf clubs
- Third-level institutions
- SHINE
- NOVAS
- GROW



## ***MDN identified a significant gap in awareness and training around male experiences of domestic violence.***

In response, MDN began developing a dedicated training programme for community-based services that was aimed at increasing understanding of male DSGBV and equipping staff with tools to better engage and support men. The programme was shaped through internal collaboration and built on evidence-based research and statistics. It is scheduled for national rollout in Spring 2025.

## **Challenges and Future Priorities**

Reaching marginalised groups, particularly Travellers and migrants, remains a challenge. To address this, CSWs are connecting directly with community organisations and receiving cultural competence training.

### **Priorities for 2025 include:**

- Launching a text-based support service to increase access, particularly for men uncomfortable with phone calls.
- Continue targeting hard-to-reach groups of men by identifying specific agencies and organisations in this field and collaborating with them to provide support.
- The roll-out nationally of an accredited training programme facilitated by Men's Development Network on the subject of Male DSGBV. This will be designed specifically for staff of organisations who encounter men who may be experiencing DSGBV to enable them to feel confident and to have the tools/information on how to best support them (including: signposting to other appropriate services).

# MALE ADVICE LINE



In 2024, the Male Advice Line (MAL) received an average of 20 calls per week (80 per month) in 2024, excluding callbacks and out-of-hours messages.

A total of 1,110 calls were made to the line, with 320 outbound calls responding to emails (which is always increasing) and messages left outside operating hours.

Alongside these figures, the personal experiences and feedback from both service users and staff further illustrate the meaningful impact of the Male Advice Line:

“ A very good listening ear  
– MAL Service user ”

A MAL worker noted that several callers (3-4 per week) prefer speaking with female operators, even when expecting a male, and are equally satisfied with the support provided.

Another MAL worker highlighted that supporting male victims helps shift our cultural understanding of domestic abuse as a complex issue that can impact all genders. This work helps to reduce the false perception that domestic abuse is solely a gendered problem which can lead to more balanced and inclusive policies that protect all survivors which also reduce the likelihood of children witnessing or experiencing domestic violence.



# Meeting Growing Demand: Enhancing Accessibility

This past year, the MAL service experienced an increase in callers, including not only men facing domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence but also their relatives, friends, colleagues, and concerned loved ones seeking support.

This is also reflected in the steadily increasing referrals and inquiries from professionals such as doctors, solicitors, and therapists to the Male Advice Line.

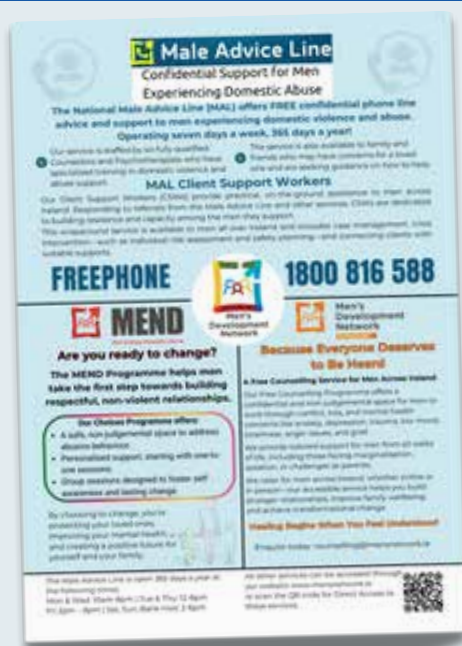
In response to the increasing demand and to better support those reaching out, opening hours were extended from 10am–6pm to **10am–8pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and from 2pm–5pm to 2pm–8pm**, allowing greater accessibility outside of regular working hours.



MAL advertisement in regional newspapers, raising awareness of support services for men.

## Facing Challenges, Building for the Future

The Male Advice Line continues to face several challenges, including supporting callers with mental health difficulties or those in crisis who require more specialised assistance (e.g. crisis intervention), overcoming language barriers, and addressing persistent traditional stereotypes such as “men don’t cry” or “man up.” Despite these obstacles, the service remains committed to providing confidential, non-judgmental support to all callers. As we plan for 2025, our priorities are expanding the line’s operating hours to include weekends, further strengthening partnerships with national and local radio stations to raise awareness and enhancing accessibility for a broader range of callers. These steps aim to ensure the service remains responsive to the evolving needs of those seeking support.



Advert for Clinical Services, featured in the Emergency Services Magazine, promoting the comprehensive support available to men, including counselling, advice, and behaviour change programmes.

Addressing persistent traditional stereotypes such as “men don’t cry” or “man up.”

# Male Advice Line

Confidential Support for Men  
Experiencing Domestic Abuse

“ The National Male Advice Line team hold that the person who calls the line is paramount, not age, not gender, not ethnicity, we are person centred and we care for any caller who makes that call to us ”

Derek Smith - MAL Supervisor



Open 365  
Freephone  
1800 816 588

“

Upon answering a call, a caller once expressed **surprise** that a woman had **answered the call**, I assured caller that a male operator was available should he prefer that, he answered no, saying that he would feel **more comfortable** speaking to a **woman**. On average, **3-4 callers** voluntarily **expressed a preference** for a **female** operator with another number of men stating that they may have **expected a male** to answer but were equally satisfied with a female operator

Róisín, Advice LINE WORKER

”



# COUNSELLING

Throughout 2024, the counselling team, which includes five counsellors, provided an average of 31 hours per week of both online and face-to-face sessions. In the past year, the service received 99 referrals, with 84 clients assessed as suitable for counselling.

At present, demand continues to grow, which has meant that we have had to establish a waiting list for our counselling service which highlights the increasing need for accessible mental health support. However, we are actively reinforcing our commitment to growing the service by exploring ways to expand capacity to reduce wait times and better meet the needs of those seeking support.

The success of our support in areas such as these has been reflected by the number of clients who have expressed gratitude for the safe, non-judgmental space counselling provides, particularly those experiencing homelessness who can engage in face-to-face sessions. Many have found reassurance in knowing they can return for support as needed which has helped them to navigate uncertainty with hope.

We are **privileged** to offer eight **free** sessions of **talk therapy**

While the service has proved to be a valuable complement to the Male Advice Line nationwide, it also provides an important and essential service for the local community in Waterford. In this regard, we are privileged to offer eight free sessions of talk therapy addressing issues such as childhood trauma, addiction, anxiety, relationship difficulties, anger management, identity challenges, grief, and domestic violence.

**5 COUNSELLORS**  
**31 HOURS PER WEEK**  
**99 REFERRALS**  
**84 CLIENTS ASSESSED**

# Building Community Connections

A notable achievement this year has been making counselling accessible to people experiencing homelessness in Waterford which has ensured that their voices are heard in a supportive and caring environment in the face of uncertainty in their own lives.

In terms of collaborations and partnerships, referrals from local organisations including Focus Ireland, HSE Substance Misuse services, Re-A-Suir, and homeless support services like Maguire House have steadily increased which has enhanced the network of care available to clients.

## Meeting Increasing Demand: *Challenges and Priorities*

Challenges include limited access for clients living far from the centre or lacking technology for online sessions, and referrals of individuals not yet ready or able to engage in counselling, especially those in crisis requiring specialised mental health support.

The team continues to prioritise counsellor self-care, supervision, clear boundaries, and client psychoeducation on counselling as a process rather than a quick fix. In the coming year, we aim to focus on establishing regular team gatherings to reduce isolation in remote/hybrid work, expanding the counselling team to meet growing demand, and increasing the service's reach to support more people in need.



“  
Everything started to **MOVE** again  
once I had started to talk to someone.  
— Service user

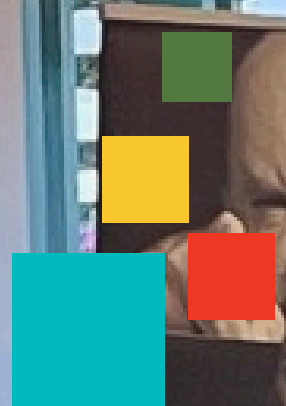
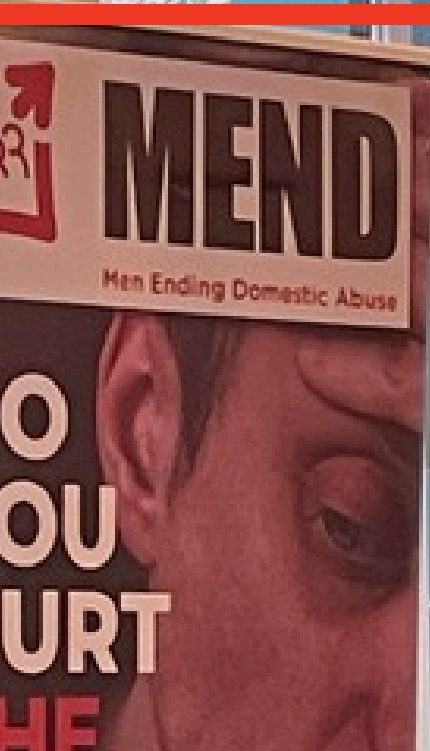
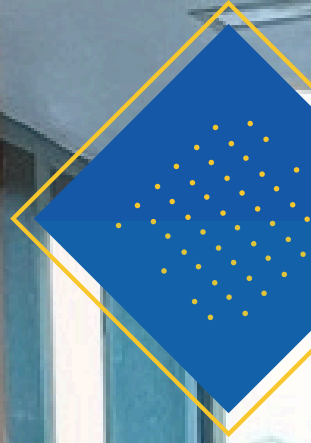
To contact us confidentially by email,  
please reach out to:  
[counselling@mensnetwork.ie](mailto:counselling@mensnetwork.ie)





# MEND

Men Ending Domestic Abuse



## MEND

In 2024, the **MEND Programme** continued to address domestic violence perpetration, although referral flows varied by region. Areas like Waterford showed strong engagement, while others, such as Kildare, experienced lower referrals leading to temporary pauses in group phases. As a result, group sizes ranged between 3 and 4 participants; well below the optimal 7–8 per group.

Despite these challenges, outreach efforts in the second half of the year improved referral consistency, especially following targeted events like the Kildare Seminar and the Wicklow Programme launch. This was further supported by the co-ordinators continued proactive outreach to statutory and non-statutory agencies, with ongoing efforts needed to secure sustainable referral rates across all programme areas.

### Key figures for 2024 include:

- 132 men assessed for domestic violence programmes
- 111 men commenced programmes
- 45 men completed programmes
- 94 partners or ex-partners supported through partner contact services



# MEND Milestones and Strategic Partnerships

2024 saw several significant milestones for MEND. The programme delivered the fourth Level 8 Special Purposes Award Facilitator Training in partnership with SETU Carlow and Move Ireland where the first residential component was implemented.

The Kildare MEND Seminar generated strong interest, renewing connections with key referral agencies and gathering over 80 new email contacts. A former client shared his lived experience at the event which was important to strengthening our outreach and awareness efforts.

**The 2024 WWPEN Annual Conference offered a valuable opportunity to deepen our understanding of intimate partner violence within heterosexual and LGBTQIA+ relationships.**

The Wicklow MEND Programme was officially launched in November 2024, with active participation and collaboration from both statutory and non-statutory organisations.

A pilot residential programme for men using abusive behaviours was run in October, following a successful funding application to WWPEN. Eight men attended the three-day residential, with their partners receiving support throughout. The weekend focused on creating a safe space for accountability, behavioural change, and healthier relationships.

In addition, two participants were selected to attend in a peer support capacity which has been a key step towards initiating a Peer Training Programme which is designed to develop peer-led facilitation skills, strengthen the support network, and ensure the programme's long-term sustainability.

Building on this momentum, the 2024 WWPEN Annual Conference offered a valuable opportunity to deepen our understanding of intimate partner violence within heterosexual and LGBTQIA+ relationships, as well as exploring women's use of force against their male partners.

We found this vital to our own practice where we will endeavour to promote more inclusive and sensitive approaches to intervention across the sector in the coming year. Alongside of this, our collaboration with CUAN progressed well on the back of positive meetings that allowed us to align programme goals and funding capacity to inform national expansion plans for the Choices Programme.

**“I think the challenges created are very helpful throughout the programme; they really held me accountable for my actions**  
— MEND Participant”

## Additional collaborations included:

- Attendance at the Victim Outreach Advisory Committee
- A Networking Day in September fostering team cohesion among Clinical Services staff
- Effective interagency cooperation in Wicklow
- Educational sessions with trainee psychiatrists and hospital social workers
- Productive engagements with Tusla and Probation teams at local and national levels, boosting referrals
- A joint review of Level 8 Training with Move Ireland and SETU to plan future programme development

# Navigating Challenges and Building for the Future

Challenges remain in securing consistent referrals, with some regions experiencing weak flows that impact group viability.

Coordinators continue to actively engage with agencies to improve referral rates.

Staffing has been a key concern, with the loss of several experienced facilitators, including a key Residential Programme team member. As well as this, some facilitators preferred to specialise in either group or one-to-one work so this required implementing some flexibility in programme delivery.

Additionally, some county/regional interagency groups remain reluctant to fully support work with perpetrators or male victims which has further highlighted the need for ongoing advocacy to ensure this work is recognised as part of the national DSGBV strategy.

Having [both] male and female facilitators in the group was just amazing. Hearing two perspectives, **especially a woman's**, was a huge learning experience for me."

— MEND Participant

## Our key objectives for 2025 are:

- Delivering the Level 8 training programme
- Strengthening collaboration with CUAN and other stakeholders to scale and sustain programme impact
- Formalising and budgeting for the Peer Support Training and Mentoring Programme to build peer-led capacity and improve participant engagement
- Continuing to enhance referral networks to support consistent programme delivery



# MEND

Men Ending Domestic Abuse

# Referral Hub:

## Scan and Go

Use your phone's camera to scan the QR code and go straight to the referral page for that service: Male Advice Line (MAL), MEND, or Counselling. Complete the short form to request support for yourself or someone you work with. All submissions are handled confidentially. If you cannot scan, please use the web link, email, or phone contact shown alongside each code



[mensnetwork.ie/mend-form](https://mensnetwork.ie/mend-form)



[mend@mensnetwork.ie](mailto:mend@mensnetwork.ie)



087 7168674



[mensnetwork.ie/mal-referral](https://mensnetwork.ie/mal-referral)



[mal@mensnetwork.ie](mailto:mal@mensnetwork.ie)



1800 816 588



[mensnetwork.ie/counselling-referral-form](https://mensnetwork.ie/counselling-referral-form)



[counselling@mensnetwork.ie](mailto:counselling@mensnetwork.ie)



086 8590983

# Our Staff

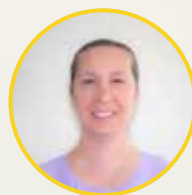
As of End of December 2024



**Seán Cooke**  
Chief Executive Officer



**John Kilgariff**  
Counsellor with Male Advice  
Line, Counselling



**Daniela Monza**  
White Ribbon Accreditation  
Officer



**John Doyle**  
Director of Services (Client  
Support)



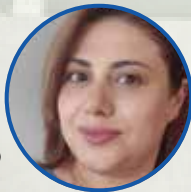
**Joseph English**  
Project Support Worker



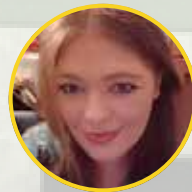
**Dr. Jordan Kirwan**  
Project Development Officer:  
Research, Policy & Advocacy



**Colm Kelly Ryan\***  
Director of Services  
(Health, Development &  
Advocacy)  
(\*left MDN October 2024)



**Ivan Almassri**  
Facilitator Support & Training  
Development Officer



**Melissa Cullinane**  
Project Administrator



**Lorcan Brennan**  
Training & Resource  
Development Manager



**Deborah Corcoran**  
Financial Administrator



**Cian Manning**  
Project Administrator



**Joyce O Sullivan**  
Deputy Director of Services  
(Client Supports)



**Stephen Fullerton**  
Communications Officer



**Marian Jackman**  
Project Administrator



**Michael Delaney  
Hennessy**  
Area Programme Coordinator  
MEND



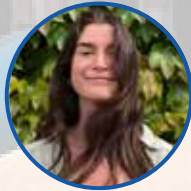
**Stephen Mbwika**  
On Ferim Ground Programme  
Coordinator



**Evan Cody**  
Admin Support



**Marie Horgan**  
Area Programme Coordinator  
MEND



**Róisín Chippendale**  
On Ferim Ground Training and  
Development Officer



**Laurence Foskin**  
Maintenance



**Dr Kenny Doyle**  
Head of Programmes (Training,  
Development & Advocacy)



**Sara Moreno**  
Men's Leadership Training and  
Support Officer



**Annette Taylor**  
Finance Assistant



**Derek Smith**  
Male Advice Line &  
Counselling Supervisor



**Fredrick Okungu**  
White Ribbon Programme  
Coordinator

The listed staff members worked with Men's Development  
Network during 2024.  
For full profiles, see: [mensnetwork.ie/staff](https://mensnetwork.ie/staff)

# COMPANY DETAILS

Due to the sensitive nature of some of our work, some staff are listed by first name and role only, and no photograph is shown. This is a safeguarding and privacy measure to protect staff and the people they support, and it reflects our commitment to dignity, respect and professional care.

**Ana**  
MAL Client Support Worker  
Dublin

**Mick**  
MAL Client Support Worker  
Dublin

**Jenny**  
MAL Client Support Worker  
South-East

**John**  
MAL Client Support Worker  
South-West

**Sabrina**  
MAL Client Support Worker Mid-South West\*

**Sinead**  
Mal Client Support Worker  
North-West

**Helen**  
MAL Client Support Worker  
North-East

**David**  
MAL Client Support Worker  
West

**Tara**  
MAL Client Support Worker Mid-South West\*  
(\*Left MDN January 2024)

**Aoife**  
MAL Client Support Worker  
West  
(\*Left MDN June 2024)

**Martin F**  
MAL Client Support Worker Mid-South West  
(\*Left MDN late 2024)

Name	Men's Development Network CLG
Chairperson	Rose Hearne
Secretary	John Brophy
Treasurer	Owen Hillery
Directors	Mia De Faoite
	Francis Hutchinson
	Noel Synnott
	Natalie Garland-Cooke
	Dr Caroline Munyi
	Gary White (Resigned May 2024)
Auditors	MK Brazil, Waterford
Bankers	AIB Merchants Quay, Waterford
Solicitors	HD Keane & Co Solicitors, Waterford
Reg Address	Equality House 49/50 O'Connell Street, Waterford, X91E866
Phone	051-844260/1
Email	men@mensnetwork.ie
Website	www.mensnetwork.ie
Social Media	@MensNetworkIE

## The Men's Development Network Company Limited By Guarantee DIRECTORS' ATTENDANCE REPORT for the financial year ended 31 December 2024

NAME	25/01 2024	07/03 2024	18/04 2024	23/05 2024	20/06 2024	10/07 2024	18/08 2024	31/10 2024	02/12 2024	Meetings	%
Noel Synnott	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	100
Mia de Faoite			✓		✓					2	22
FrankHutchinson	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	5	56
Owen Hillary	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	5	56
Gary White*	✓	✓								2	67
John Brophy				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	5	56
Rose Hearne	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	100
Natalie Cooke						✓	✓		✓	3	50
Caroline Muyni		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		5	56

\*Gary White left his role on the board in 2024

# HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

Building Sustainable Solutions for Health and Wellbeing

2  
0  
2  
4



The Health, Development and Advocacy Department at Men's Development Network is a dynamic and forward-thinking team that are committed to supporting men across Ireland in a variety of ways. Our work focuses on creating meaningful change by engaging men in gender-transformative programmes that promote equality, wellbeing, and respect.

Through our two national programmes: the Engage National Men's Health Training Programme and White Ribbon Ireland, we support men's health and well-being, while also empowering men to become allies in the movement for gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence, particularly violence against women.

Our wider work includes the Men's Leadership Programme, Parenting Support Programme, and FarmConnect, all of which help men to grow personally and strengthen their roles within families and communities.

Using trusted methodologies developed over nearly three decades, we deliver training, lead innovative research, and use digital tools like e-learning to make our work accessible and sustainable. At the heart of everything we do is one goal: to help men become their most authentic selves.



“The ongoing successful roll out of our work could not be achieved without the commitment of our staff and key partners, especially funders who resource the development of key initiatives, projects and programmes focused on promoting health and wellbeing supporting MDN to create better lives for men, better lives for all”

— Lorcan Brennan  
Training & Resource Development Manager



Throughout 2024, Men's Development Network's National Men's Health Programme (NMHP) continued to improve men's health and well-being across Ireland by raising awareness, providing accessible services, and strengthening partnerships. Key initiatives included the Men's Leadership Programme, On Feirm Ground training, Engage Connecting with MEN training, national webinars, frontline support, and tailored workshops and presentations.

On a daily, weekly and monthly basis many such initiatives continued to be rolled out, informed by a vision and focus of building capacity of front-line service providers and engaging men.

“By meeting men where they are, in the community, online and in the workplace, we create genuine connections that support lasting improvements in health and wellbeing

— Dr Kenny Doyle  
Programme Manager”

# Highlights of Our Work in Men's Health and Wellbeing

Alongside such work, one of the key highlights of 2024 was the June Men's Health Week (MHW), during which MDN, with key partners, hosted a successful webinar featuring former rugby star Rob Kearney. The session provided an important platform for discussing men's health, covering topics such as mental health, physical wellness, and the need for open conversations around men's health.

Additionally, the launch of the Men's Health Action Plan 2024-2028 in November marked another pivotal moment for the programme. In line with this work, MDN facilitated the launch of the plan with key partners as hosts of the official Action Plan webinar.

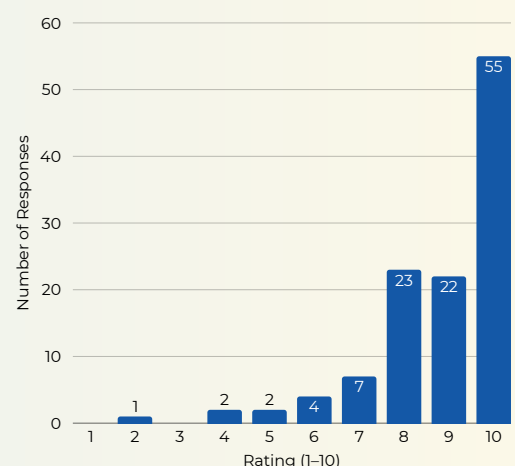


Cover of the Men's Health Action Plan 2024-2028, launched in November 2024



Social media post promoting webinar registration ahead of MHW

Feedback from the MHW webinar, rated by participants on a scale from 1 to 10



“

*Brilliant webinar thank you!*

*Simple but impactful discussions. Giving men's health a platform is what it is all about. Thank you.*

*I'm really glad I tuned in. These programs are very necessary*

*Men's health isn't discussed as often as it should so thank you for running these sessions!*

All quotes are anonymous and gathered from webinar attendees.

# Fostering Connections for Men's Health

Throughout 2024, the NMHP strengthened its partnerships with key stakeholders to address men's health and well-being issues across Ireland. A cornerstone of this work, and already highlighted, was MDN's role in informing the Men's Health Action Plan 2024-2028, a national strategy focused on tackling health inequalities and ensuring that men's health, particularly in the areas of mental health and access to services, is prioritised in public health policies.

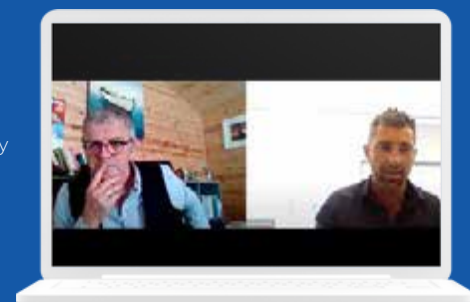
As highlighted above, during Men's Health Week, MDN co-hosted a webinar featuring MDN's Training Resource & Development Manager Lorcan Brennan as the presenter, engaging with a number of key participants including former rugby star Rob Kearney, which sparked important discussions about men's mental health, physical wellbeing, and the importance of normalising conversations about these topics. The webinar drew a wide audience and was a vital part of MDN's broader outreach efforts to engage men in health conversations.

Furthermore, MDN supported the Football Cooperative's Mansion House launch of their Social Return on Investment report, with our Training & Resource Development Manager, moderating the panel discussion alongside former Minister Colm Burke TD and then Lord Mayor Daithí de Róiste. The report, produced by Southeast Technological University, found a social return of over €17 for every €1 invested in men's health through sport. This event underlined how physical activity can drive both social and mental wellbeing, reinforcing the vital role organisations like the Football Cooperative and local sports partnerships play in engaging men in health-promoting activities.



Lorcan Brennan, hosting the panel discussion at the Football Cooperative's launch event, engaging with panel members on the social return on investment in men's health.

MDN also worked closely with Men's Health Forum Ireland (MHFI), a leading body in advancing men's health across Ireland. MHFI play an integral role in the Men's Health Week as a key lead in promoting collaborating with MDN towards making the week a success. MHFI's involvement also extended to the development of the Men's Health Action Plan 2024-2028, with MDN and MHFI contributing insights to inform the strategy for improving men's health nationwide.



Lorcan Brennan interviewing former rugby star Rob Kearney on the importance of men's health and wellbeing

In addition, MDN continued to work with the HSE and Men's Sheds. The collaboration with Men's Sheds has been key in reaching local communities and engaging men who might not otherwise access health services. Partnerships with the HSE have focused on improving mental health support for men, ensuring that resources are available for those in need.



MDN's support at the Football Cooperative's launch of the Social Return on Investment report, highlighting the positive impact of sport on men's health and wellbeing.

These collaborations have expanded MDN's ability to offer engaging support to men, ensuring greater access to services, raising awareness, and tackling the unique health challenges that men face.

### Webinar Stats:

**REGISTRATIONS: 1,150**

**ATTENDANCE: 387**

**ATTENDANCE RATE: 34%**

**Q&A QUESTIONS ASKED: 33**

## Bridging Gaps in Engagement

Engaging certain groups of men remains a significant challenge, particularly those living in rural or marginalised communities who may be less inclined to participate in health-promoting activities. Additionally, despite progress made in normalising conversations around men's mental health and wellbeing, societal stigma can still be a barrier to men accessing health information and engaging in educational programmes. Our webinars have focused on extending our reach, connecting with men in isolated areas and providing valuable opportunities for them to participate in health-promoting activities that might otherwise be inaccessible. While this approach offers a promising foundation for future growth, we recognise that not all men are comfortable with technology or have reliable internet access. Moving forward, we must continue to develop complementary, inclusive approaches to reach these men, ensuring equality of access and strengthening our impact through partnership and non-judgemental support.



## Building on Success: *Our Roadmap*

### **Expanding and Upscaling Evidence-Based Interventions**

Building upon our established knowledge of what works effectively with men, the NMHP will continue to participate in the roll out of the national initiative and trainings highlighted above. All these initiatives and trainings engage both men and frontlines services with health, wellbeing and focus on creating positive interventions alongside evidence-based signposting. We also aim to leverage existing research, resources, and training materials to upscale our programmes and increase the capacity of health professionals and service providers to engage men successfully.

### **Improving Accessibility and Engagement**

Recognising the barriers to engagement faced by certain groups of men, especially those in rural or isolated areas, the NMHP will continue to develop accessible health promotion initiatives. Webinars and online training sessions will be further enhanced, alongside complementary offline in room approaches, to ensure inclusivity, particularly addressing those men who experience challenges with technology or connectivity.

### **Enhancing Online Health Information and Signposting**

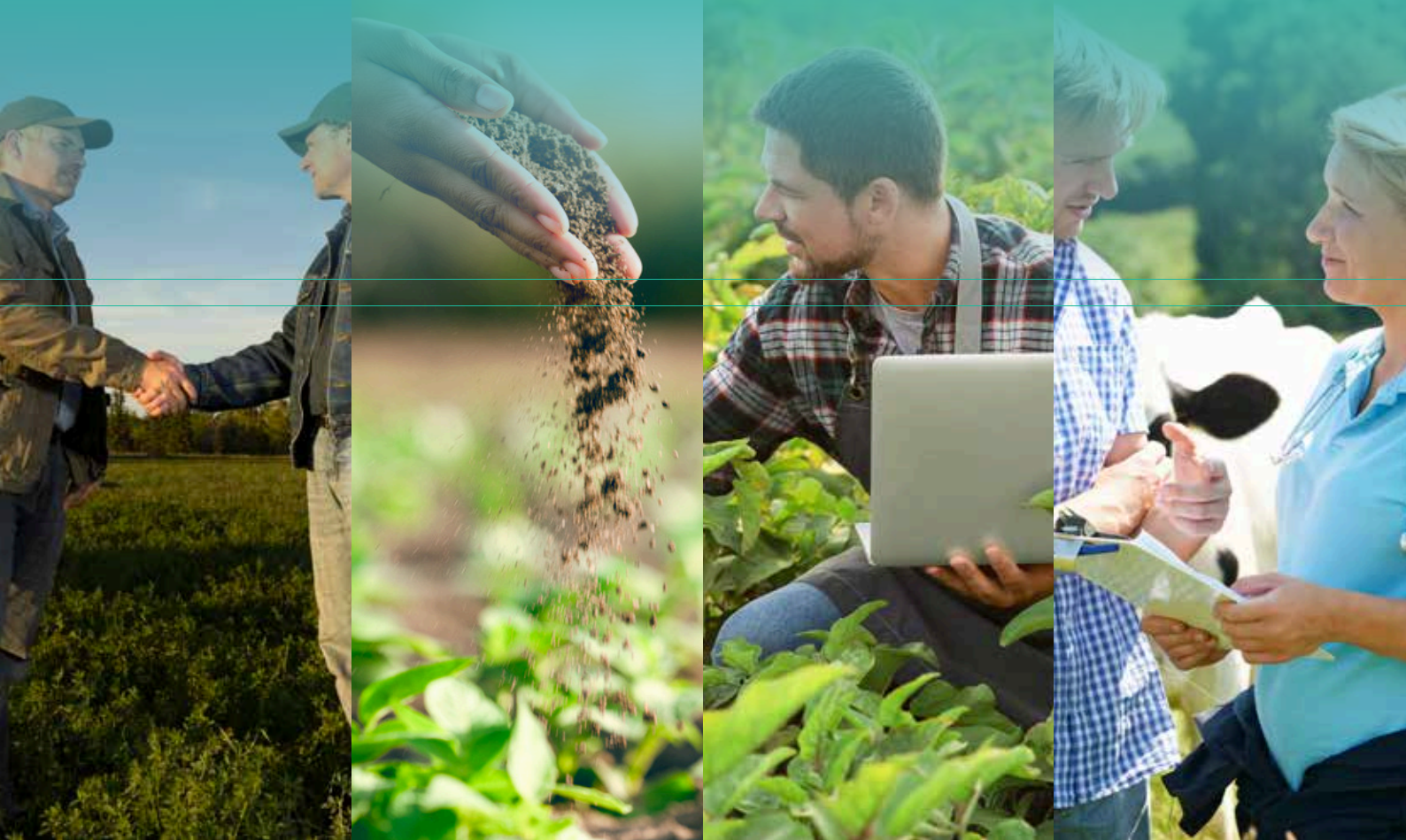
In 2025, our key priorities will also include further enhancing our website to offer comprehensive, targeted health information specifically for men and boys. This will include clearly structured, age-appropriate advice, ensuring that relevant resources are easily accessible to our audiences. We will also actively signpost visitors to partner organisations and trusted external resources, further strengthening our collaborative approach to promoting men's health and wellbeing. By improving the online user experience and the clarity of available guidance, we aim to increase engagement, empower men to proactively manage their health, and foster stronger partnerships.

# On Feirm Ground 2

WELLBEING FOR FARMERS

“ It has given me more confidence as an advisor to help me to understand how to recognise someone who was struggling and the best way to help a farmer that might be under pressure.

— Ag. Professional Advisor ”



# ON FEIRM GROUND 2

In 2024, On Feirm Ground 2 (OFG2) marked a year of significant growth and national expansion. Delivered under the Engage National Men's Health Training Programme and funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), the HSE, and the Department of Health, OFG2 trained hundreds of agricultural professionals to act as "Health Connectors" which are trusted figures who can engage farmers on their health and well-being and connect them to support when needed.

“The course was very informative and enjoyable. It was a relaxed friendly environment. We received many tips and toolkits on how to help a Farmer who may be struggling. I would highly recommend this course to anyone thinking of joining.”

— Ag. Professional, DAFM

The programme is rooted in a strengths-based, community-led approach which recognises that farmers often face unique pressures and are more likely to open up to people they already know and trust. OFG2 equips those who regularly interact with farmers (including DAFM staff, private vets, vet nurses, agri-advisors and others) with practical tools to identify signs of distress, engage in supportive conversations, and signpost help.



On Feirm Ground 2. Training in Action:  
Empowering Agricultural Professionals Across Ireland

“Tips and toolkits to help struggling farmers —highly recommend — DAFM Staff

## National Rollout and Participation

Since launching in April 2024, OFG2 has delivered 47 workshops across Ireland, with 603 participants taking part. The majority of trainees were DAFM staff, but the programme also welcomed participants from private veterinary practice, agricultural advisory services, farming organisations, and beyond. The hybrid structure – a two-hour e-learning module followed by a six-hour in-person workshop – enabled flexibility and strong engagement, with a 75% e-learning completion rate and over 800 hours of online learning logged.

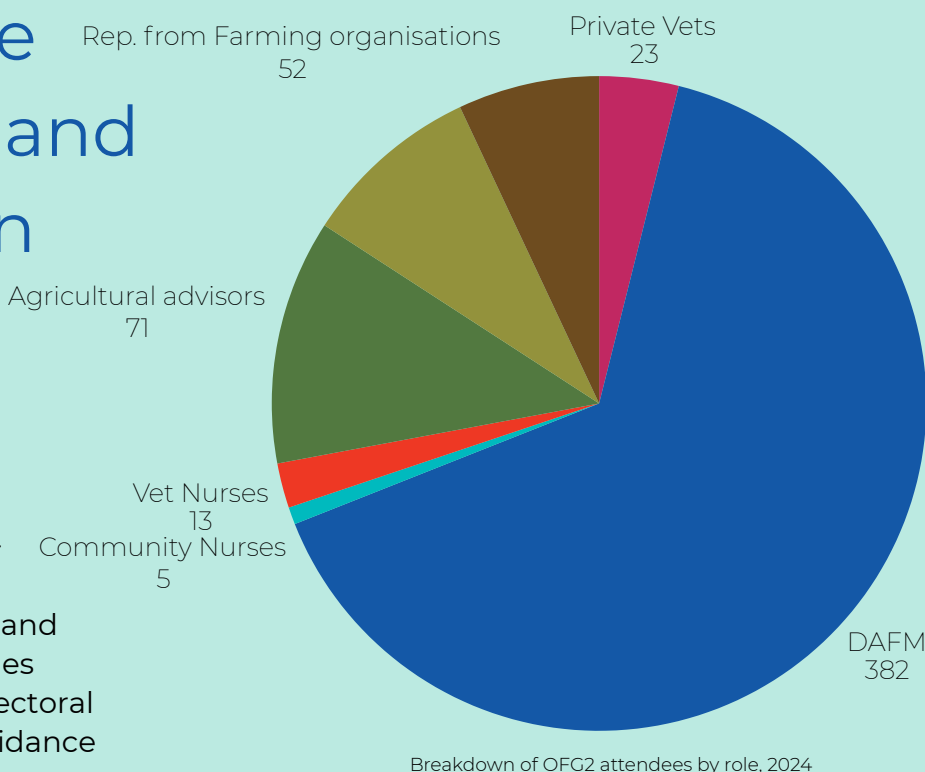
Workshops were held in locations from Carlow to Galway, attracting participants aged 18 to over 60. The sessions were interactive, reflective, and were designed to empower professionals to support farmer wellbeing with empathy and confidence.

“One of the better trainings I've attended... gained so many insights into farmers' pressures

— Vet Nurse, Athlone

# Programme Development and Recognition

2024 saw a complete redesign of the OFG curriculum and materials to better reflect the diverse professional backgrounds of participants. The programme team also grew, with a dedicated coordinator and programme officer supported by a pool of trained facilitators nationwide. An Advisory and Oversight Committee, which includes representatives from funders and sectoral stakeholders, provided strategic guidance throughout.



Breakdown of OFG2 attendees by role, 2024

A standout moment of the year was the ministerial launch of the On Feirm Ground 1 evaluation report, co-hosted by Ministers Colm Burke and Martin Heydon. This high-level endorsement reflected the growing recognition of OFG's role in addressing rural mental health inequalities.

**"It has given me some confidence as an advisor to help me understand how to recognise when someone's struggling and the best way to help a farmer who might be under pressure."**

— Ag Advisor

## Looking Ahead: *Sustained Growth and Future Potential*

As demand grows and more professionals seek training, OFG2 is set to continue expanding in 2025. With a well-established model, dedicated staff, and strong partnerships across the agriculture and health sectors, OFG2 is not only supporting the well-being of farmers, but also reshaping how rural health is understood, supported, and sustained across Ireland.

As OFG2 continues to grow, 2025 will focus on deepening its reach and sustainability.

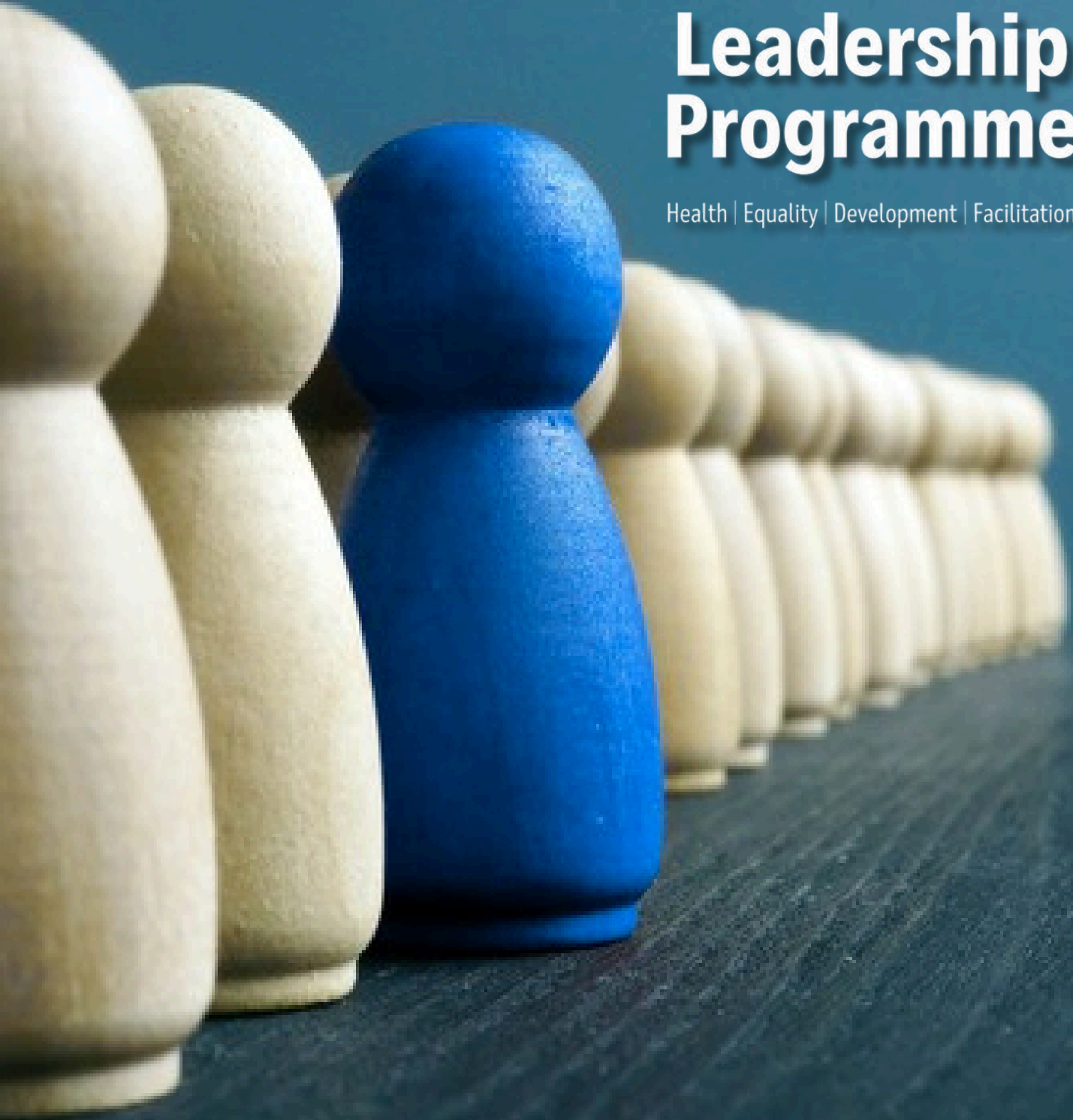
### **Key priorities include:**

- Expanding partnerships with third-level institutions to deliver OFG2 training to final-year students in agricultural science, veterinary, and veterinary nursing programmes.
- Reapplying for Continuing Veterinary Education (CVE) accreditation from the Veterinary Council of Ireland, building on the successful awarding of 8 CVE credits in 2024.
- Continuing the nationwide rollout by offering workshops across all counties in the Republic of Ireland to ensure access for all agricultural professionals.
- Strengthening collaborations with sector leaders such as Teagasc, DAFM, Veterinary Ireland, and the Irish Farmers Association. These partnerships have helped raise visibility for the programme and support sustained engagement.
- Building on visibility and promotion, with OFG2 having been featured in the Veterinary Ireland Journal, presented at national conferences like Vet24 and the Irish Equine Veterinary Association, and included in community events such as the Kerry Mental Health Fest.
- Maintaining strong links with Munster Technological University, whose support in developing the e-learning modules ensured engaging, accessible content tailored to the agricultural sector.



# Leadership Programme

Health | Equality | Development | Facilitation



# NEW CONVERSATIONS WITH LEADERS

In 2024, MDN developed and started delivering the National Men's Leadership Programme "New Conversations with Leaders" (NCWL). The programme engages participants for six months and takes place over different phases: 2 residential trainings and 4 online webinars. At the core of the programme is the understanding that men need to come together to bring on the change that they want to see in society, for themselves as well as for others. A lot of attention is therefore given to bringing together men from different cohorts that represent the diversity of society in Ireland today. Additionally, emphasis is put on the fact that participants have an active leadership role in said communities.

Bringing together a group with diverse perspectives and outlooks on life fosters a space of peer-to-peer learning, where the lived experience of others is centred and where empathy and understanding are key. During these 6 months together, the group explore different topics related to masculinity, gender equality, leadership and social justice, they learn to identify shared struggles and network to offer each other support and find common solutions. This helps them feel empowered in their day-to-day practice but also creates a sense of community, a group they can fall back to in case of need.

**20 PARTICIPANTS**  
**4 ONLINE SESSIONS**  
**5\* INPERSON TRAINING SESSIONS**

\*2 sessions scheduled for 2025

“Useful tips for facilitation, setting group rules, principles of self-care, aspects of other cultures.”  
— NCWL participant

The first iteration of the programme was quite successful. Participants overall appreciated the attention given to fostering a safer space, felt like they could make themselves vulnerable in a circle of men that they just met and were surprised by the positive bonds they made in such a short time. One participant stated, *“I am proud I can be authentic and vulnerable, and this makes me strong”*. Many mention having gained valuable insight from persons with lived experience and through first-hand knowledge, with one of them stating, *“proud and honoured to have interacted with over a handful of really inspiring men and building the start of a connection to explore further”*.

Other benefits of the programme mentioned in the evaluation are a clearer understanding of societal issues and how to take leadership in cooperation with others. What was extremely powerful to see was the shared understanding that despite the diversity of the group, most of the participants were there for similar reasons and to overcome similar obstacles.

## Collaborative Impact:

Throughout 2024, our Leadership programme benefited greatly from strategic collaborations and insightful partnerships. These partnerships played a critical role in enriching our programme, broadening perspectives, and enhancing the depth of learning for our participants.

We partnered with the National Women's Council, represented by Leadership Officer Liliana Fernández, whose contributions brought a critical gender equality perspective, deepening our participants' understanding of intersectional leadership.

Engagement with Micheal Darragh MacAuley, CEO at Sanctuary Runners, provided valuable insights into inclusive community-building and social cohesion.

His practical experiences encouraged participants to think creatively about engaging marginalised communities and fostering inclusivity.

Collaboration with Noel Richardson from the Centre for Men's Health at SETU was instrumental in highlighting the importance of leadership in addressing men's health disparities. His participation underscored the role of leaders in advocating for men's wellbeing, a core component of MDN's overall mission.

We were also delighted to host Thomas Schallhart, activist at Critical Queer Solidarity, who spoke at our webinars, offering a vital voice on diversity, equality, and advocacy. His involvement helped participants challenge assumptions and build a broader understanding of inclusive leadership in a rapidly evolving societal context.

“Proud and honoured to have interacted with over a handful of really inspiring men...”

— NCWL participant

“I have become more confident in my leadership skills. A lot of new strategies and techniques to help re facilitation and groups  
— NCWL participant



**Action Changes Things**  
Social media post from New Conversations with Leaders, spotlighting how our programme inspires bold steps and real impact.



NCWL participants pictured with MDN staff at the training weekend.

## Future Focus: 2025 Priorities

Looking forward, the New Conversations with Leaders programme has outlined key areas of focus aimed at enhancing our impact, expanding our reach, and enriching the participant experience.

Firstly, we are excited to run the programme with a new cohort. Building on the successes and learnings from our previous groups, we aim to further refine our training, fostering stronger networks among leaders committed to creating positive social change.

Secondly, we remain committed to providing continuous support and further developmental training to our current participants. Recognising that effective leadership is an ongoing journey, our efforts in 2025 will include follow-up workshops, mentoring opportunities, and additional resources aimed at deepening the impact and sustainability of the skills acquired.

Finally, we plan to facilitate an EU mobility opportunity for both staff and members of the group. This initiative aims to foster international collaboration, expose participants to new leadership perspectives, and strengthen cross-cultural competencies. Engaging with European counterparts will enable the exchange of best practices and innovative strategies, benefiting not only participants but also the broader Men's Development Network and our stakeholder communities.

# Supporting Boys in the Algorithm Age

## *Research and Advocacy*

Researchers at the Anti-Bullying Centre in Dublin City University produced a resource which examines the effects of harmful masculinity influencers on teenage boys. The guide was the outcome of a research project which was lead by Dr Darragh McCashin and Dr Catherine Baker from Dublin City University along with Dr Fiona O'Rourke. This new resource provides guidance to schools, teachers and parents/guardians on how to address the impact of online masculinity influencers and associated content on children and young people, particularly teenage boys. Our Programme Manager Dr Kenny Doyle participated in the production of this resource as a participant in the research advisory group which gave guidance and oversight on the project. He was also an invited speaker at a webinar which launched the event in November 2024. Speaking at the launch Kenny said 'This resource will be of great use to teachers, parents, sports coaches youth workers and anyone who works with young people, it is beholden to all of us to be conversant in the topics covered in this resource'.

## Continuing the Journey

In 2025 we aim to design and launch a dedicated masculinity resource hub on mensnetwork.ie. The hub will bring together clear, evidence-based guidance and practical tools to help schools, families and communities respond to harmful online content. We intend to produce downloadable posters for classrooms and clubs, short explainer videos for lessons and social channels, ready-to-use tools for educators, and conversation guides for parents and carers. We also plan to develop plain-language information for men and boys on respectful relationships, media literacy, help-seeking, and bystander action. Each resource will include signposting to supports and reporting routes.



Scan to view the resource in full



Resource cover: DCU Anti-Bullying Centre guidance on harmful online masculinity influencers



# White Ribbon Ireland

Men Ending Gender-Based Violence



[mensnetwork.ie/white-ribbon-ireland](https://mensnetwork.ie/white-ribbon-ireland)



[wri@mensnetwork.ie](mailto:wri@mensnetwork.ie)

# WHITE RIBBON

In 2024, White Ribbon Ireland (WRI) continued to grow as a leading national campaign focused on ending gender-based violence through education, advocacy, and community engagement. Guided by the values of inclusion, allyship, and prevention, this year's work spanned post-primary schools, workplaces, and national platforms through three key strands: the Schools Programme, the Organisational Programme, and the launch of the Game Changer project.

## White Ribbon Post-Primary Schools Programme

The Schools Programme expanded significantly in 2024, reaching 51 participants across five schools. The programme's blended approach combines an interactive e-learning curriculum with experiential training and strategic partnerships.

The e-learning platform, developed in collaboration with Munster Technological University (MTU), covered six modules including gender-based violence, school-related harms, and engaging men in prevention. Participants praised the platform for its accessible language and reflective approach:

**“It made me reflect on my own behaviour and language in the classroom... I'm more conscious of how I speak and behave.”**  
— Post-Primary Educator

The experiential training, held in Dublin in September 2024, was led by internationally recognised experts Dr. Jackson Katz and La Shonda Coleman. Participants engaged in bystander intervention and violence prevention role-plays. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with one educator saying:

*“Best training I've had in 36 years of teaching. Should be CPD in all schools.”*

The programme also forged deeper relationships with schools, with actions such as student charters, corridor signage, and school-led initiatives for White Ribbon Day. Partnerships with national bodies like the NCCA and Consent Ed aim to strengthen alignment with SPHE curriculum goals and avoid duplication of efforts.

**“Best training I've had in 36 years of teaching. Should be CPD in all schools.”**

— Post-Primary Educator

La Shonda Coleman (right) and Jackson Katz (below) lead sessions for educators during WRI's two-day Post-Primary Schools Programme.



The WRI schools training was picked up by national and local media.



# White Ribbon Organisations Programme

Launched in mid-2024, the Organisations Programme helps Irish workplaces foster safer, more inclusive environments free from domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence (DSGBV). Built around a three-year 'Bronze, Silver, Gold' accreditation model, the first year focuses on staff-wide awareness and skills-building.

# Game Changer Project

In 2024, White Ribbon Ireland joined forces with the GAA and Ruhama to launch Game Changer, a three-year national project aimed at challenging gender-based violence through sport. Officially launched by the then Minister for Justice Helen McEntee on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, the initiative uses the GAA's platform to reach communities with a powerful awareness campaign.



A video campaign featuring four inter-county GAA stars called for a safer, more equal society and promoted allyship among men and boys. White Ribbon will lead the educational component of the project in 2025, building on the successful Schools Programme to deliver content tailored to specific age groups and roles within clubs across Ireland.

White Ribbon's work this year engaged over 460 people across schools, organisations, and events. Despite the challenges of limited

## Programme content includes:

- Self-directed e-learning on DSGBV and its root causes
- Facilitated workshops on workplace harassment and intervention
- Practical tools such as confidential signposting stations and customisable policy templates

Training materials are being piloted and finalised with the goal of full implementation in 2025.

Scan the QR code to view the Game Changer launch video



staffing and increasing demand, the campaign continues to grow in national relevance. From classrooms to boardrooms to playing fields, White Ribbon Ireland is equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to speak out, stand up, and lead change.



“MDN has given me the opportunity to put my community development and academic experience into practice. The supportive workplace culture makes it a genuinely enjoyable place to work, and I’m excited to continue being part of the important and exciting work ahead”

— Jordan Kirwan  
Project Development Officer



# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## Income & Expenditure 2024

	2024	2023
INCOME	€	€
HSE	180,000	185,388
Department of Justice	962,685	890,000
TUSLA/Child and Family Agency	364,750	329,547
Programme Income Deferred	84,433	(298,841)
Donations	932	874
Department of Health	50,000	50,000
Department of Agriculture, Food, Marine	119,168	228,197
Ruhama	53,500	-
Other Income	42,766	26,754
	1,858,234	1,411,919
Expenditure		
Wages and Salaries	949,844	638,799
Social Welfare Costs	102,483	68,941
Staff Training	21,188	10,284
Rent Payable	31,796	13,310
Insurance	8,120	8,030
Light and Heat	8,816	9,551
Facilitation Supervision	433,193	387,825
Repairs and Maintenance	6,334	13,617
Printing, Postage & Stationary	29,219	19,725
Advertising	23,222	6,314
Telephone	22,104	19,222
Computer Costs	38,068	37,279
Travel Expenses	68,098	50,215
Legal and Professional	9,915	7,051
Bank Charges	936	1,146
General Expenses	7,781	4,826
Research Costs	-	4,831
GDPR Costs	5,890	5,890
Subscription/Membership Fees	4,162	3,157
Auditor's Remuneration	8,466	9,061
Depreciation	8,175	8,175
	1,787,810	1,327,249
Finance		
Bank Interest Paid	17,384	15,737
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	53,040	117,362

# Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

	2024 €	2023 € as restated
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible Assets	340,378	348,553
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	1,910	1,910
Cash and Cash Equivalents	581,148	599,525
	583,058	601,435
<b>Creditors:</b> amount falling due within one year	(475,652)	(544,121)
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	107,406	57,314
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	447,784	405,867
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due after more than one year	(213,318)	(224,441)
<b>Net Assets</b>	234,466	181,426
<b>Reserves</b>		
Retained Surplus	234,466	181,426
<b>Members' Funds</b>	234,466	181,426

Signed on behalf of the Board of Directors by:

ROSE HEARNE

*Rose Hearne*

JOHN BROPHY


*John Brophy*

Extracted from the Financial Statements  
of Men's Development CLG for the year  
ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024





Equality House

 49/50 O'Connell Street,  
Waterford, X91E866

 051-844260/1

 [men@mensnetwork.ie](mailto:men@mensnetwork.ie)

 [www.mensnetwork.ie](http://www.mensnetwork.ie)

 @mensnetworkie



**Men's  
Development  
Network**

Better Lives for Men, Better Lives for All